

**Religion of Science:**  
Articles by Ralph D. Winter  
in Chronological Order

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## The Retreat of the West

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This topic, “The Retreat of the West,” is the name of the first chapter of a book I wrote some years ago entitled, *The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years*. There is not much value in my just repeating what is in that chapter. It would be of greater advantage if I should enlarge the context of this phenomenon of “The Retreat of the West.”

### Defining the West

The West, of course, is a rather silly word. What is west of what on the globe? Everything is west of something. We are talking about a cultural West. Western culture is predominantly a Christianized phenomenon. It does not mean that Westerners are Christians, except in culture. It does mean that a Westerner is a person whose ethical judgments, worldview, philosophy, and cosmology, have been predominantly the result of Westernization. That is, the person has been shaped by the Hellenistic (non-Christian), the Judeo-Christian, and the Western European Christian experience. Eastern Christians are also “Western” in the larger sense of Western culture. In other words, Russians are part of the Western cultural tradition.

When the Russians cross over into China, they are Westerners, even if they are living in Siberia (north of China). China is non-Western, because Chinese thinking and culture, at least prior to Mao Tse-tung, was for the most part unaffected by the West. Communism itself is a Western phenomenon. Westernization has taken place, not only through missionary penetration of the provinces of China, but every single card-carrying communist is a Westernizer. His materialism derives from Christianity. That much, and many other things, we have in common with communism.

The ravages of communism across the world, as an atheistic, anti-religious system, are to a great extent just bizarre perversions of a Christian inheritance. Christianity is the most materialistic of all known world religions. In fact, it may have no choice because, as one great theologian said, “God was the first materialist.” He created the unfathomable atom, along with sub-atomic particles which hold together all this complexity that is beyond our comprehension. God created it all! He took that entire molecular, inorganic chemical reality, played a tune on it, whence came a whole new series of chemical combinations, called the organic chemical universe. Then from those chemicals he brought forth life forms of all kinds, like those unimaginably tiny little creatures, the Plague germs that killed off 33 million people in Europe at a time when the population was only three times that large. (Or was this the work of an enemy distorting God’s good intentions for his creation?) All of this is God’s creation; and it is the Christian who understands this and is awed.

The Christian does not worship it, but respects and sees the glory of God in the handiwork which he has displayed for us: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork.”

### **Christianity: Faith or Religion?**

Christianity itself is anti-religious. Read chapter 1 of Isaiah. Read chapter 23 of Matthew. Christianity is not really a religion, according to some theologians; and when it becomes a religion, it is no longer a faith. Now, that is a slight overstatement. I do believe there are some profoundly religious people who are also Christians, but it is Christianity alone—evangelicalism in particular—that allows the possibility of nonreligious people to be Christians.

Referring to people who do not go through any fancy rituals, who are not beholden to any observable patterns, an evangelical could allow such as Christians. Now even evangelicals eventually fall into patterns; if you walk into the most highly unstructured evangelical service, you can tell exactly what is coming next. So don't let anybody in a non-liturgical tradition claim that he is non-liturgical in the ultimate sense.

But despite habits, structures being what they are, the fact of the matter is that Christianity, in a certain sense is not a religion—not a religious system. It is a faith. It is a way of life. In this sense it is the only candidate for world faith. All other religions are truly religions, and even Christianity becomes a religion all too easily. Is Westernization to blame for this?

### **Christianity: A “Religion” for the World vs. a World Religion**

Christianity is the only world religion, in a certain sense. When people speak of world religions, they only mean long-lasting religious systems; and there are not many of these. Any long-lasting religious system with lots of followers in any certain place is called a world religion. This is nonsense! To be a world religion, that is, to be a religion for the whole world, you have to have some sense of an affinity with the world; and there is no other candidate for that description beside Christianity.

Christianity is the only religion (if you wish to call it that) which is willing to take upon itself the cultural clothes of every tradition in the world.

Islam is the only competitor that could be remotely compared to Christianity as a world religion, and Islam itself is a heretical variety of Christianity. However, Islam is much more of a religion, in that it requires the Arabic language in its holy book and facing towards Mecca for prayers by its adherents. Islam is what the communists in Indonesia have called an imperialistic religion. The communists, before they fell from power some years ago, said that the Indonesians were dupes to accept a foreign religion. But they were unable to pin this criticism on the Christians. The Christians had churches that were built in Indonesian architectural styles; their Bible was in Indonesian languages; their hymns and music partook, at least to some extent, of the Indonesian cultural tradition. In that sense, Christianity was not as much a foreign invasion as was Islam. And, by the way, Christianity got to Indonesia before Islam did! Islam is a very recent thing in Indonesia.

The Bahai religion is an attempt—which I think of as much too small a movement to be called a world religion—to follow Christianity in this multi-cultural approach. Their

problem is their scriptures. You can go around and talk to Bahai people, and they will tell you about these ineffable, ethereal scriptures—but these scriptures are untranslatable!

### **The Impact of Westernization**

The point of all this so far is that there are many children of this Westernization process; communism is one of the children. It faithfully reflects many of the ethical concerns of Christianity. The ethical system which the communist society espouses, but which it does not have the power to live up to, is a Christian system for the most part. Their emphasis on the equality of all people, their emphasis on confession, their cell structure—all this was borrowed directly from Christianity. Their sense of history comes directly from Christianity. Communism is a bizarre, heretical, virulent evil, and to a great extent, a mechanism of Western civilization.

This Westernization process produced an immense fertility of mind, of industry, of political and demographic power. There is no example in human history among the annals of mankind throughout the world of any movement gaining such momentum, building up population and wealth and power so rapidly, as that which occurred in Western Europe—precisely where (to some extent) the Bible was unleashed.

That power spilled over in many ugly, tragic ways, as well as in beneficial ways, all across the world. One examples was the Crusades. In some ways the modern colonial movement was far less “holy” and far less Christian than the Crusades, but for most of its early history, under the Portuguese, Spanish, and French colonization was definitely a Christian Crusade. All ships carried priests—missionaries with the intent to convert people to Christ as King.

When the Protestants got into the act, their first largescale presence on the open seas were pirates! The pirates were Protestants; and you can imagine how easily this fit into the Catholic stereotype of Protestantism. Some of these pirates actually did have chapels in their hideaway outposts across the Caribbean. They were religious men, with all their cutthroat piracy they were trying to do God’s will. When Protestants got into the act, colonization no longer had a Christian dimension to it. The Dutch were allowed into the ports of Japan without any problems at all, even after Japan was totally sealed off to all other colonization. The reason for that was because no one would have ever suspected the Dutch Protestants of bringing along Christian missionaries. The Dutch did bring chaplains with them into Taiwan; and at one time there was a fairly promising movement. They eventually did bring chaplains into Indonesia, the so-called Dutch East Indies, but they were simply less religious than other colonizing powers.

Notice that this immense muscular outburst, whether you call it a crusade or not, was largely a result of the help of a community produced by the tincture of Christian faith in Europe. There was a lot of Christian vitality and devotion, of high-mindedness, of social and political reform—the ending of slavery being one of the most obvious reforms brought about by Christianity. Slavery was not something invented by Christians. In fact there have been far more white people enslaved by white people, than black people enslaved by white people to this date in history. Who are the Slavs? They were for centuries—for over a millennium—the great human quarry of slaves, which were taken



and sold for use in Africa. So slavery was not the result of Christianity; slavery was there before Christianity ever arrived.

Christianity was what eventually percolated into the higher circles and, through John Wesley and the Evangelical Awakening, into the conscience of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect. Clapham was a district of London where these evangelicals lived. They were called a sect, although they were really only a subordinate party in Parliament. They led the anti-slavery movement.

The impact of Christianity, unknown and undetectable in secular books, accounted for the rise of Western civilization, its vitality and its military power. It is a strange thing that the very muscle wielded by the Crusaders in cutting off people's heads was muscle produced by Christianity. Christianity makes people healthy. It "turns the hearts of the fathers to the children." There is a lower infant mortality immediately when a population becomes Christian. Orphanages, hospitals, and insane asylums appear, and other unfortunate conditions are ameliorated because of Christianity. The benefit produces power, even for those who do not acknowledge it; and it eventually spills over across all the world.

The impact can either be called colonialism (with an adverse twang to it), or it can be called a blessing. I do not know of any clear thinking citizen of a former colonial country who would not be able to tell you how ambivalent the people are about the former colonial presence. John Philip from India, who was in my class last year, will tell you that there are many people in India today who, if they had their choice, would ask the British back. Now, they would probably have to think twice! There would be lots of people who would be opposed to it; and there would be terrible results. The British are a bunch of bigots and snobs, hopelessly tyrannical, almost as bad as the Americans!

It is incredible that any one nation would rule another nation. Allan Moorehead wrote a book on the South Pacific called *The Fatal Impact*. These imperial ambitions literally were fatal to thousands of people as the European diseases flowed in and killed off thousands within those populations. It was fatal in another way, too, as their cultures were destroyed.

It may be found hard to believe that at some point in history, after four hundred years of this massive, muscular, irreversible outreach controlling every square foot of the world, this vast and, for most people, irreversible movement of Westernization began to crumble and retreat.

### **The Only Source of Merit in Western Society**

I do not think that there is the slightest intrinsic virtue or superiority in Western man. I do think that there is a great deal of superiority in Western culture insofar as it has been affected by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I will not give one millimeter of credit to any other source! It is Christ.

As I hear about the unbelievable atrocities in modern-day wars and ethnic conflicts in different parts of the world, such as East Africa, I am just as aware of the orgies of brutality and bestiality among the tribal people of my own past. Consider, for example, the Irish. They were headhunters. They would sail their boats up the Irish Sea, go into a little village thirty miles away and kill every man, woman and child in it. Then they would pile all those heads into their boats and come back—almost sinking—to

hollow them out, process them, and drink out of them. Irishmen were drinking out of skulls as late as the sixteenth century!

Whom are we kidding? Satan is the god of this world. We all come from a background of satanically controlled cultures; and there is no intrinsic merit in Western society apart from the impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ, direct and indirect. Science itself is a result of the cosmology that is unique to the Judeo-Christian tradition. You cannot be a scientist if you do not believe in the laws of nature. You cannot be a scientist if you are merely a Hellenistic philosopher.

Plato believed in a pantheon of quarrelsome gods, whose quarreling decided whether it rained or did not rain. You could not possibly have been a scientific observer of the weather if you were a Plato. There is nothing about the Hellenistic tradition that would ever have allowed science to develop. The so-called Greek science, about which many books have been written, is in a totally different category than Western science. The latter is due to God-conscious reflections by Christian people upon the orderliness and beauty of a creation which God designed.

### **The Unbelievably Good Result of the West's Retreat**

There came a time when God obviously said, "Time's up" for Western societies. The crumbling of that vast worldwide empire is the story of the Retreat of the West. The retreat of the West is the retreat of Western political and military power. It is not a retreat of the cultural or economic power, or of the religious influence of the West. Many people assumed—and maybe hoped—that with the withdrawal of the troops and the colonial offices of the Western powers, they would have withdrawn all other influences. But, as you see in my book, in many cases the cultural impact of the West actually escalated in the absence of the stuffy, censorious, and condescending colonial rulers.

After the British had been gone from Ghana for ten years, the Ghanaians actually became more pro-British than they had ever been with the British still present! The other important thing in this story is that, in most cases, the gospel of Jesus Christ actually was given freer reign. It was not the gospel that retreated! The *Twenty Five Unbelievable Years* tells the story of the unbelievable fact that the church of Jesus Christ, after that period of Western retreat, emerged stronger, more powerful, more deeply rooted, and more indigenous than before!

## The Ethnolinguistic Reality: The Complexity of the Task

(1994) (*IJFM* 11:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/11\\_4\\_PDFs/08%20Winter.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/11_4_PDFs/08%20Winter.pdf)

*Science is used as an analogy several times in this article.*

I often talk about the mystery of the universe. The scientists are more and more baffled about where it came from or what it is. Every day, it seems like, it's more complicated than it was before. We live in the era of the befuddled scientists, who are smarter than any scientists who ever lived before, but also more aware of their limitations. The same thing applies to the origin of life and the origin of civilization.

Into this puzzling mass of evil and incredible cruelty and depravity and brilliance and evidence of God's creation and the damage of Satanic fury, the "Reconquest" enters. The Reconquest is the another mystery. Even the Bible refers to it as a mystery. The Jews thought that God was trying to benefit them—only them. That they were supposed to be part of the global Reconquest wasn't supposed to be a mystery—but it was. Paul refers to it as a mystery in Ephesians 3.

The Reconquest is indeed the main subject of the Bible. We really need to see only one book, not 66. It's probably very disconcerting for outsiders (people outside of the church) to understand us when we start to talk about 66 books in the Bible. It would be better to say that we have one book with two parts, a single book that has an inspired introduction—which constitutes Genesis 1–11—that gives the backdrop of the good creation, the evil penetration, the hopeless result. Now, that's a beautiful backdrop for the rest of the redemptive story of the Bible, which essentially is the Reconquest.

### Peoples' Concept

Abraham is the key person in that Reconquest: He is called out to be a blessing to the peoples of the world. This is where the term peoples very centrally enters the story of the Bible. It is not a modern invention of sociologists, anthropologists or missiologists, but really a rediscovery of what the Bible was talking about all along.

The mission mandate, starting with the first pages of the Bible, in the minds of a growing number of Hebrew scholars and Old Testament scholars, actually has been covered up in earlier literature in this century by the phrase "Abrahamic Covenant." However, if we were to go far enough back, we would hear it referred to as the Great Commission again. Somehow, in every era of mission renewal, we rediscover the Bible, write a bunch of books, then forget about them, and then ignore the significance of thing we found and reduce it to phrases like, "the Abrahamic Covenant," when in actuality it was the Great Commission—the mission mandate of the Bible.

But notice the frequency of the phrase peoples in the Bible. The English translation gives us terms such as nations, families, peoples—different translations use different words. Even the Hebrew uses different words. Now when we're counting peoples, would we count the *mish pa'hah*? For instance, when the people of Israel went into the land of Canaan there were 60 *mish pa'hah*, that's my list of 60 peoples. But

David Barrett insists that there are only 12, but he uses the word goyim. You see, the Bible uses both words.

I personally don't recall ever opposing the use of other categories of "peoples," but I have found that many people are very disconcerted if you intimate that the Bible itself, much less anthropology, conceives of peoples within peoples. They get very uncomfortable. They would rather like it to be French, German, Latin, Spanish. They can't imagine these languages being grouped into phyla and families and so forth. It just really disconcerts many people who want to have it simple. But the Bible itself is not simple, it speaks of peoples within peoples.

Basically what we're up against is to determine what is a people? You can diagram peoples in different ways. You could diagram them into subgroups that divide into subgroups. The whole history of science is the progressive revealing of much-resented increased complexity. When my father went to school, atoms were seen to marbles. When I went to school, they were little solar systems with things going around on the outside. When my kids went to school, inside the nucleus there were all kinds of particles. Now they've finally discovered the quarks or whatever, and inside these 32 subatomic particles and their symmetry and so forth represent a whole new world—who knows what worlds are even smaller than that—and we're just beyond ourselves. It seems like the more we know, the less we know! It's very embarrassing for scientists, of all people, who would like to be able conquer reality.

In my opinion, we need to take a little dose of humility. We so casually speak of unreal categories. For instance if a friend of yours says that their sister is studying to learn to speak Chinese, you wouldn't bat an eye at that statement. But if she said, "I'm learning to speak European," you'd laugh at her. However, we don't realize that both statements are equally foolish. We normally don't know enough about the Chinese mega-people to realize that Cantonese and Mandarin are as different as Italian and German.

It's very reassuring for things to be simple, and very discouraging for things to get increasingly complicated. Maybe God has allowed us to gradually uncover the reality bit by bit so that we would be able to learn it along the way, so that this increased complexity doesn't overwhelm us.

### **The Mississippi River**

Recently I was speaking to a group in England and I was supposed to talk about unreached peoples. I got hold of an atlas of the United States, turned it upside down, and took a piece of paper, and traced off the Mississippi River Valley—all the different rivers, including the Arkansas River, Ohio River, Missouri River, and so forth. Then I threw that on a screen and asked, "Now, what is this? It looks almost like an upside down bush. It all comes down to the top"—which of course is the bottom of the map—of the Mississippi River. I continued: "But now, how many rivers are there? What are their names? Can you give me a list? We're not going to be able to do the work we need to do if we don't have a list. Tell me!"

Well, what is a river? When the Mississippi goes north and then forks off into the Missouri River and then continues illogically with the name Mississippi, which is the shorter part of the river (of course, the people who named the river didn't know that). But what right did they have to name it the "Mississippi" versus the "Missouri"? And they've already let the Ohio River peel off.

So what kind of a business is this? Problem is that we've simply used the wrong framework of description for the reality which we're studying. To make a list of the rivers of that basin is inherently illogical. It does not allow us to see the reality. Or it obscures the reality, if we're serious about any kind of list of rivers. Furthermore, we might ask, "When is a river a stream, or a brook, or a crick, or a creek?" We have all these words, but they are just inadequate to describe the reality we're studying and want to describe.

### **The Morocco List**

Recently I was in Morocco and I boned up for the job. I took along with me a list of the peoples of Morocco. I knew in my heart that a list is itself unfaithful to the reality. As soon as one makes a list, the reality is altered. But I took my list, and I showed it to my oldest daughter, who's a real sharp gal, who majored in linguistics, and who had been there for 15 years. She read through this list of peoples. Then suddenly she burst out laughing. I felt a little bit embarrassed and said "Come on, what's so funny about this? This is an impressive list." She said, "Well, Daddy, this one word here refers to the whole group." The word *Shlu* (?) is the whole group; this is the word for all Berbers—not even just the Berbers in Morocco.

But then there are other complexities. In Morocco there are three regions— they often talk about the Berbers in the north, the middle, and the south. Then, in each of these three regions there are different dialects. And no one should hold me accountable for the precise number; which is precisely the whole point of this thing. We don't know— although there is a Wycliffe researcher there who has a far more precise map than any of us. The real point is the structure of ethnography. Those dialects in the three regions break down and subdivide into what is called confederations. These are the words that are commonly used. Then within the confederations there are tribes.

Some of these tribes have very similar languages and cultures, and being so close to each other, like the members of a nuclear family, they kill each other. (As an aside, that's the most common murder. It happens most frequently within nuclear families, where it's not a matter of misunderstanding what people say; it's the very opposite, where you know exactly what is meant.) So missionaries can't always assume that if you get the Gospel into this or another tribe, that all these others will automatically follow suit.

### **Warring Factions**

Sometimes it does happen. For instance, in Nagaland there were 14 different groups. The Ao Nagas heard the Word first. They shared it with the next-over tribe, and it went all through Nagaland that way, from tribe to tribe, with the result that 75% of the Nagas today are Christians.

But it isn't always that way. Christian Kaiser, the famous German missionary of the early part of this century, went to Papua New Guinea, as it is now called. He went up into one of the lowland tribal groups at the base of a huge, roaring river coming down from these terrifically high mountains, and won these people to Christ. Then he wanted to go up the river to the next one and do the same. Even though they spoke a language that was very similar (just like in Nagaland), they didn't like each other (unlike Nagaland). So we can't predict in either case what would happen—a dominoes effect or no dominoes.

It's like the Hopi and the Navajos who are very similar in many ways—they understand each other perfectly—but they don't like each other. You have to have Canadians come as missionaries to reach the Hopi because the Navajo can't.

### **The Intractable Problem**

Wycliffe Bible translators is the largest, most highly-trained, most competent mission agency that has ever existed in Protestant history. They have mastered, through years and years of incredible intellectual endeavor, all kinds of problems with translation and interpretation and much more. The one absolutely intractable problem which causes them more grief than any other single problem is the question of, "How many people will read this Bible if we produce it?" So they have a whole brand new division that is focused on this challenge. They have translators, they have support personnel, and they have surveyors. Their exclusive task is to bump into this intractable problem and decide, for instance in Morocco, where and when and how to put whom to translate the Bible. That's the reason they're studying this reality. However, they can't tell you in advance what will or won't be a basin of communication for a given tribe or number of tribes. A single translation may bridge three tribes or only one, but they don't know this in advance.

It's just like the scientists, I'm sorry to say. We have to take a little measure of humility. We cannot deny the fact that we can't know in advance all that we would like to know. We need to yield the ground to the reality out there and be content to say, "Look, how many peoples are there in Morocco?... Well, there's Berbers and there's Arabs, and a few French. Ah, yes, and a few American tourists." Well, that's a fairly good way to describe Morocco, especially if we add that the Berbers outnumber all the rest about three to one. But we might ask, "What about the Berbers?... Yes, there's the Northern, and the Middle, and Southern, each with their tribes, dialects and confederations."

It's much like the Mandarin, which has a marvelously creative breakdown of the 100 or 200 Mandarin languages that are mutually unintelligible to each other. They have, creatively called these the Northwest Mandarin and Northeast Mandarin, and Southwest Mandarin and Southeast Mandarin. Isn't that creative? Of course, that's just a blurry confusion of the complex reality. It really is a blurry confusion of what's out there! The media people are beginning to paste a trade language over the whole of China, and so forth. But that doesn't mean the people themselves speak that language, because only 14% of China speaks Mandarin in their homes.

These are complex realities that we have to deal with, and we go on fooling ourselves if we insist that we have to have one list that everyone can agree on. Wycliffe can do its work on the confederation level, as I would predict, in most cases. They would assume that all of these tribes would be able to read this New Testament.

Gospel Recordings on the other hand, targeting the ear gate (which is very much more sophisticated than the printed page, which drops out a great percent of the message coding in language), can't stop at the written level. They have to go to audio level because these people (especially if they kill each other) recognize the dialect on the cassette—obviously not recognizable on the printed page. So for their purposes, Gospel Recordings always has to do a larger number of translations. Wycliffe is doing what it's doing, for their purposes, with all the intelligence and their competence, while Gospel Recordings is doing what it's doing, according to their purposes. It's not that the Gospel Recordings

people are wrong or that Wycliffe is wrong. Each is using a different tool targeting different levels of communication. This type of complexity would also apply to church planting, because that would define a different level of reality with a different dynamic.

### **Minimal Accomplishment**

The second reality has to do with quantifying the necessary minimal accomplishment in church planting frontier mission efforts. Allow me to use an illustration.

Have you ever heard that anybody had a “mild” case of AIDS, or was “mildly” pregnant? No one would say, “Well, we have to find out to what extent they’re pregnant, or to what extent they have AIDS. What is it? Is it 10% of the white cells that have been invaded, or 5%? When it crosses 2%, we’ll call them AIDS patients; otherwise we won’t.”

The point is when you’re dealing with a self-generating movement like the Christian movement, quantities are not important. But qualities are what really are counts. There are people who have had brushes with AIDS, and they didn’t really get it. There was a mild invasion and there might have been an embattled reaction, and that dread virus was defeated, or maybe there was some residual pocketing-off of that thing.

But once that thing gets going and is implanted, so far as we know now the person is infected—you’ve got it. That is despite the Japan conference on AIDS, which they hoped would clarify things, because it only indicated the problem was more complicated to solve than they thought it was. Scientists of all types always are finding out that things are more complicated than it seems. Like them, we too are finding that out.

When the authentic Gospel of Christ penetrates a society and people understand it in their own language, and they have access to the Bible, and they’re moving ahead in the Lord (it is a growing concern), there are very few cases in history where that type of movement stopped. Knowing this, the mission question is very precise: How to get that *quality* in there. The *quantity*— whether it is 5% or 2% is really not that important, and we really need not argue about those things. Rather we know what needs to happen in qualitative terms. I’m afraid we can fritter our time away forever getting gnat’s-eyelash statistics. It’s fun to work with computers. Everyone who knows me knows I like computers. But you know, the question is simpler (as well as more complex). It seems to me, that we may be answering the wrong questions, and there’s nothing more absurd than answers to wrong question.

At the very first formative meeting AD 2000 plan for Singapore, for the following year in ’89, I spoke about the number of unreached peoples. You know me. I’ve contrasted my approach with Patrick Johnstone’s; who is a person hoping-for-the-best numbers while mine is a preparing-for-the-worst numbers. So, unless we’re going to print two sets of numbers all the time, we probably would need to say, “Look. Let’s be very conservative. Let’s prepare for the worst.” That is precisely the number series I’ve been using.

Most lists include everybody. The question is, what is the level we need to tangle with especially in frontier missions? We need to be very cautious about statistical monstrosities that are going to tell us all the answers in advance. We’d better get out there and dig in and try to reach these people, and find out when a church-planting movement is going to bump into the barrier, whatever the barrier might be. It isn’t a

question of linguistics necessarily. It could be cultural barrier, it could be prejudice, it could even be an economic issue. *We have to reach every human being in the world, and we have to penetrate the group in which they would feel at home worshipping our Lord.*

Here is another dimension of the complexity. In Papua New Guinea, those groups up the valley, each having 16 slightly different dialects that were warring and killing each other, would eventually come together in a single Lutheran Synod by 1925. We ask, What's going on now ? We're ruining our statistics. We're coalescing groups. But what about the Norwegians and the Swedish? They used to pretend there were two different languages, but in fact, there were dozens of languages among them. Somehow, with a little bit of the love of Christ, those groups merged. All of this indicates that we're looking at self-generating growing movement. It's a moving target.

### **Conclusion**

So I'm saying that there are only two basic dimensions of the ethnolinguistic reality which reach beyond the simplicity of our mechanisms of description. I think we need to take that into account. I think if we do, we're not going to feel pressed to argue about which level is the most important . We have to deal with all of the levels. Each level is "a gateway group" as the Southern Baptists nowadays are calling groups like this. If you get into this group here, maybe you can get into this group also, and so forth, and so one group is a gateway for another. Great!

I think that we need to recognize that to complete this task one of the most important factors is to get out there and to dig in, knowing that we will run into the barriers and complexities when we get there. We'll have to cope with them at that point on the ground. It's sort of like invading Haiti—we're not sure what we're going to find until we get there.



## Editorial Comment on De-westernization and Science

(*Mission Frontiers*, November-December 1996)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment64>

What I'm covering in this editorial:

1. De-Westernization, or where do we go with the scary subject of our last issue? That's the mammoth challenge of expecting new non-Western forms of Biblical faith within Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism which will likely not call themselves Christian.
2. What about the "Supplement" to the last issue?
3. A marvelous but confusing global map of the world's peoples—an explanation!
4. Many have asked about my wife's medical condition.
5. What happened at our 20th Anniversary Celebration?
6. Two books. One about Darwinism and design in nature. One about Jesus—which ties in amazingly with Item #1.
7. The upcoming conference on the 146 "Gateway People Clusters" —a true, global first. Too bad we couldn't have seen the need for this 100 years ago.

Dear Reader,

After the blockbuster issue raised in our last bulletin, should we now go on to something else? But, what in the world could follow that subject?

Wouldn't that be like trying to ignore an elephant in the living room? We can't escape it! That issue is still with us. It is the one subject we cannot brush off or sidestep.

What issue do I speak of? Well, in part, the idea of odd or even heretical movements becoming significant as the global Westernized Christian movement is rapidly stalling before the three major remaining blocs: Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Can heresies have silver linings, becoming orthodoxies tomorrow? Is this going to happen whether we recognize it or not?

Remember the Catholic leaders in Luther's day who devoutly hoped for so many years that Protestantism would fade out of the picture? Well, Protestantism is still a heresy to many Roman Catholics! (And vice versa.)

Here is a thought: Christian spin-offs with real, Biblical vitality don't go away merely by being labeled heresies. But they can change.

Can we live with heresies—or at least unorthodox theologies and emphases—even large, vigorous movements which may even spurn relations with us and our precious Western way of adapting the Bible?

But, just a minute. I don't want to ignore the list of items which I will cover in this editorial—as you see in the box in the next column. I have already started item number one:

### Item #1. De-Westernization

What response are we getting from the last issue? One letter only is negative. It misreads the article, "Is an Explosion of Faith Coming to India?" to imply that when a Hindu worshiper reduces the number of household idols he or she then can be considered

Christian. The letter asks me to recant that position. Since I cannot imagine even taking such a position, I don't think "recant" is the right word. Furthermore, I did not even write the article.

At the opposite extreme are two letters from world famous missiologists.

C. Peter Wagner's warm letter says,

*I'm typing this in Japan, stopping over on my way to Thailand. On the plane I read the Sept/Oct issue of Mission Frontiers which you modestly say is the most important issue of Mission Frontiers ever published. I agree! The information in that one issue rivals the information contained in any one missiological textbook I know of (possibly excluding McGavran's Understanding Church Growth) in potential implications for completing the Great Commission....*

*This matter is worth giving it time. If there is anything I can do to help move this innovation through the early adopter stage (where most of the flack will come) let me know.*

Roger Greenway wrote:

*I found the article, "Is an Explosion of Faith Coming to India?" in the Sept/Oct Issue to be fascinating. Let me explain why.*

*In 1960 I was flying on a DC-3 from Sri Lanka, where my wife and I were missionaries, to Madras, India. I was seated next to an American who was doing research on the subject of the "secret Christians" of India. He said that the amount of data he had uncovered far exceeded his expectations...*

*He claimed that the number of secret believers exceeded the number of church members...*

*They were people like "Rajan" in the article. They accepted the supremacy of Christ and the authority of the Bible, and met in small, secret groups for prayer and fellowship...*

*If back there in 1960 the researcher was even partially correct in his estimates...how many (secret believers) exist today? In the providence of God, the title of the article may be closer to the truth than we realize.*

Other letters have enriched our understanding, and are mentioned in the Supplement (next item).

### **Item #2. The De-Westernization Supplement**

This material adds a lot of excitement to the text of the last issue. Have you noticed how often we need to refer our readers to some additional sources, depending on their special interest. It is truly impossible to give depth to every subject we take up. But we want to give strings readers can pull to get additional insights. More and more this bulletin will be a strategic "index" readers can employ to explore further things of special interest to them. This is why we now have the full-page response form as an extra cover page.

### **Item #3. The Brilliant New Global Map Explained**

Seventy thousand copies of a marvelous, brilliantly colored global map of the world's peoples (not countries) is now out and around. It is the collaboration of the

Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and Global Mapping International. However, it is being made available through the cooperation of dozens of organizations, including ours.

Thus, for the first time in high quality color you can see plotted out the “peoples” of the world, not just the “countries” —10,657 peoples classified by John Gilbert of the Southern Baptist board into five different types of groups or peoples. (12,869 peoples, adding 2,206 additional peoples—as yet unclassified as to A, B, C, D, E status—are available on disk for \$2—see cover response page where you can order both the map and the disk.)

Even without the map, the breakdown you see in the box is a helpful way to look at the different peoples of the world.

[Note, incidentally, that all of our literature, *Mission Frontiers*, Perspectives Study Guide, mobilization materials, etc. use a different meaning for A, B, C, D, as referring to world population, not peoples:

A = believers—10% of world

B = nominal Christians—20%

C = exposed non-Christians—30%

D = (living within unreached peoples)—40%.

No problem since our scale refers to individuals not peoples.]

For those who already possess this map, a much more detailed explanation is available at no charge (see cover response page). Those ordering the map from us will receive the explanation automatically.

#### **Item #4. My Wife's Health**

Hundreds have written letters and we want to express our deep gratitude for them and for the avalanche of prayer. She has had two major operations in the last month and is in the hospital (22 Nov) still very weak. Unrelated, but far more serious is the diagnosis of “multiple myeloma” which is a very rare form of cancer (less than 1 of 10,000 cases of cancer) for which there is no known cure.

Please continue to pray.

#### **Item #5. Our 20th Anniversary Celebration**

This occurred right in the middle of all the turmoil about my wife’s health (she sent faint greetings from her hospital bed in an informal video clip). We had a marvelous time and turnout, looking back over the past and into the future. For those many who sent greetings and regrets and anyone else interested, we have available a four-hour condensation on a single extended-play cassette. See cover response form. A picture story will be in the next issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

#### **Item #6. Two Books**

##### **A. *The Jesus I Never Knew***

This is a superb display of what it takes to be a missionary—first you must de-contextualize your own form of the faith. Philip Yancey, in some ways a child of the ’60s, invested thousands of hours in study and open and frank discussion with people in a wide span of social strata. He is both humble and audacious with many an arresting

phrase coupled with disarming personal honesty. He laments the superficiality of much of Christendom and yet holds on tight to the unshakeable meaning behind it all.

However, the main reason I bring this book to your attention is not merely because I have been stirred and blessed by it—as I have just started reading it—but because it is an outstanding example of what Christianity looks like to someone who is trying earnestly to struggle free from the wrapping paper of his own culture in order to see things in a truly fresh light.

This is what missionaries have to do—or their words will fall on deaf ears. Yancey is writing to a generation that, for a tortured moment at least, tried to reinvent civilization and throw off the assumptions of their given tradition, and in trying to do so proved the near impossibility of anything like complete de-contextualization.

In fact it was so difficult merely to throw out one's own culture that many of the flower children settled for American Indian patterns of dress and spirituality. The '60s were an astounding period of culture rejection accompanied by a wholesale, country-wide trek into the wilderness of world religions which has not left us—what with Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist temples arising all across America from day to day. We can't hide from this.

No, missionary contextualization (or de-Westernization) is crucial even if we are going to reach our own new generations. This book is a striking example of what it is going to take.

### ***B. Darwin's Black Box***

This is the second book I have not finished reading—but which I am already so excited about that I have to recommend it to you.

Both of these books are powerful. They are treasures. Either of them in the hands of a cross-cultural missionary is dynamite, since both of them significantly rise above human culture in what they focus upon. Together they probe the most asked questions in the world today: Who is Jesus? and What is the very reality science is studying? Each of these is a burning question in the educated spheres of the three major blocs with the least response to Christianity, that is, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Here is what this second book, by Professor Behe, does for you. Star Trek portrays spaceships so large that some of them are like small towns. In the real world we do not know of any such things, but we are beginning to recognize that the tiniest form of life—the cell—is an enormously complex “spaceship” employing navigational propellers as well as incredibly diverse internal structure including the redoubtable DNA molecule with its millions of component atoms. Too bad that humans are the wrong size to deal with this amazing and tiny world of life.

No one would ever suppose that the intricate design of a Star Trek spaceship was produced by non-intelligent natural processes. You can't get very far into this book (indeed a page or two in the appendix will suffice) without realizing with a flush of emotion that EACH of the “1,000s of millions of cells” in a tiny baby is fully as complicated as a Star Trek space ship—and equally as unlikely to have dumbly “evolved” apart from a planning process, that is, design.

This truly remarkable book is, yep, the work of a beer drinking highly secularized author. Yet, Dennis Prager dragged Behe into his talk show, I understand, which indicates that the Spiritual significance of this fascinating mass of detail is prominent.

Really, you can so easily get absorbed in this tiny “out of sight” world that looking up from the book is a withdrawal experience. Where have I been? I had a scientific education which I have been building on ever since. No book has ever laid it out so clearly as this one—that the real world includes a very small world of designed complexity which is in no way simpler than the larger world of objects people our size can touch and feel.

Just like Alexis de Tocqueville, who introduced his fellow Frenchman to the novel civilization of America, Behe, in his modestly named Appendix, takes you by the hand and walks you through a living cell which suddenly takes on the complexity of the more visible features of Manhattan Island—buildings, streets, vehicles, but also windows inside of which are desks, people, fax machines, telephone wires connecting every single office on the island, etc.

Indeed, I think Behe may have found the Appendix the most interesting part of the book to write. Could he condense into 22 pages the overwhelmingly triumphant insights of a half century of biochemical research? What brave probes of reality are these lab men! Frankly, if all you read is the Appendix you could conclude on your own—as Behe did—that the very basis of the Darwinian assumption is quite unthinkable. This book pops into being with an impact similar to what the child blurted out in the famous story of the King who had no clothes.

In these two books the majesty of God’s creation unfolds as powerfully as I have ever seen it. If they don’t give you a holy awe of “what we are dealing with in life,” I am afraid nothing will. Here you have two very brainy, very hard working, very honest people, each in his own sphere patiently introducing you to ultimate reality. They themselves write with the same breathless awareness you will have as you try to follow them. While these authors have, humanly speaking, truly mastered their subjects, the fact is they have humbly allowed that reality to master them!

#### **Item #7. Small but Significant—global conference on “Gateway People Clusters”**

This conference may include as many as 400 from all over the world. The purpose this time will be to concentrate on the world’s people, cluster by cluster. See page 44 for more of the details. It will be held at the U.S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California. It will not be open to the public, but Mission Frontiers will be glad to report results and make an informal video which will give you a sense of being there.

Six categories of Peoples (groups), 12,863 total, Five types on So. Bap. Map

I. Three kinds of Unevangelized peoples (8,669 total) [Roughly, those who have not truly heard the Gospel] —Two kinds of Unreached peoples (6,322 total) [Roughly, those lacking a viable indigenous church movement]

Type A 1,681 million people within 2,161 peoples (groups) (on map) called “World A Peoples” (on map) dark red

Type B 1,372 million people within 4,161 peoples (groups) (on map) called “Unreached Peoples,” (on map) light red

Type C 1,455 million people within 2,347 peoples (groups) (on map) called “Unevangelized Peoples,” (on map) yellow

II. Two kinds of Evangelized peoples (1,988 total) [Roughly, having heard but not necessarily accepted the Gospel]

Type D, 1,136 million people within 1,945 peoples (groups),(on map) called “Evangelized Peoples” (on map) green

Type E, 3 million people within 43 peoples (groups) (on map) called “Christian Peoples” (on map) purple III. Peoples unclassified as yet = 2,206 in number, some unreached? (+10,657 classified = 12,863 on disk).

## **The Rise of Science and the Enlightenment.**

(1997?) WCF Module 3 (Fulfillment) Lesson 52 Overview.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed920da662a00451d7fle6f/1591288026955/Rise+of+Science%2C+Enlightenment.pdf>

*This is a transcription of an Introduction and Review of a lesson for the World Christian Foundations graduate curriculum, Module 3 (“Fulfillment”), Lesson 52: “The Rise of Science and the Enlightenment.”*

### **Introduction**

We are pushing on further into the pulse at the end of the fourth epoch [of history]. We have talked about the Renaissance and the Reformation, and the fruits thereof. They are bitter fruits from the standpoint of the breakdown of the Catholic unity, which was somewhat mythical, actually, but important.

### **Political Thread**

But the main thing now is to realize there are so many things blowing off at once that it is almost impossible to keep track of them. The way historians do this is to take a certain thread running through this period.

They take the political thread, for example, and notice that a lot of very powerful rulers emerge. Not just a ruler for all of Europe, like Charlemagne or Charles V in the earlier period, but rulers in France, in Spain, in England, in different parts of Germany. This is called the Age of Absolutism, when kings had incredible concentrated power. Louis XIV is probably the epitome of all this. This is one story.

But there are other things going on which link to this story, and rarely do historians link these things up. We have started out with a so-called religious revolt, or “the Reformation’s pearl” would be a better way to speak of it. Why mention the political?

### **Wars**

You could, if you want, trace the wars. Military history would be an absolute menagerie of detail and confusion, if you tried to trace it through all the different states and so forth, up through this period. It is very easy to get lost in the detail in this period.

### **Development of Science**

Again you could trace the development of science. For example, there is Copernicus, who lived roughly at the time of Luther. Then when he died, Galileo comes in. Then Galileo dies and Newton is born in the same period. Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton are “laid end to end,” so to speak, running through this period. Contemporary and overlapping with Galileo is Kepler, who in many ways, though not as well known, is even more important than Galileo. Thus we have got a story that could be called scientific.

You could also talk about philosophy and the philosophers. You could trace theology and its developments. There is an incredible vitality and agitation of all kinds! You could even speak of the rise of the common man. I would actually like to promote that phrase, along with “the rise of absolutism,” because in my mind the reason for absolutism was the fact that there was so much ferment. You had riots, uprisings of all kinds: intellectual, musical, artistic, philosophical, military, political, theological—you name it! What are you going to expect under the circumstances? Absolutism, holding on tight, just to keep order.

Now for an American this is a terrible thing. But actually a lot of lives were saved simply by firm central control. On the other hand, it is also true that this would not last. The very ferment itself created, and then eventually disposed of, these absolute monarchies. People rose up, especially in England as compared to France, and said, “Look, the Bible tells us that we’re free!” The Bible behind the scenes is probably the one most clear-cut prime mover.

Now, you could give credit to the printing press. Yes, the printing press unleashed all kinds of new ideas, and mixed everybody up, and produced confusion that makes the Catholic idealists for central unity keep weeping forever after. But frankly, the printing press by the time of Luther had produced something like two million pieces, three-fourths of which were religious, and even more in the Reformation itself. It is a gorgeous, complicated, confusing situation.

Enlightenment refers mainly to the new ideas that science churned up: the sense of release, the sense of conquest of nature, humanism flowering in the sense of rationalism vs. theology. The fact is that during that period, it was one continuous story. I would suggest that you page back through some of these earlier chapters; they are earlier chapters, but they are not earlier history. All of these three or four chapters happen at the same time, between roughly 1500 and 1750.

Now 1750 is the pinnacle of the Enlightenment. This is ahead of us now, and we are ushered then into a period from 1750 to 1815. This is another one of Latourette’s recessions, or he calls it “repudiation and revival.” He has to call it revival, because frankly, from the evangelical point of view, his repudiation in the area of rationalism, philosophy, and so forth, is contemporary with huge, enormous unleashed powers of revival. So you do not find much that is going backwards, by the time you get this far down in history. Practically everything is going forward, in terms of increased influence around the world, of the religious forces that are enhanced, but certainly not created, in the Reformation.

The Enlightenment and science are not a single story, unrelated to the rest. Page through these other chapters and find out that you have got Kepler and Galileo; you have got Elizabeth I; you have got Jansenism in the Catholic Church. A little bit later you have got Pietism welling up; you have got Spencer, George Fox. All of this is going on in the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. And these things are all related. All I would say is, let us try to get the big picture. This is a single story. We are not just learning “one more blooming thing after another.”

For example, you can compare this with the Carolingian Renaissance and the following years, in the so-called renaissance of the twelfth century, during which the great achievements were religious. The Gothic cathedrals you can compare with the



Enlightenment, where the great achievements were the palaces, which were far more elaborate than the cathedrals ever were. So here is quite a shift in temper.

Religion controlled everything; it was absolute in some great extent in the Carolingian and the twelfth century renaissances. But in this Renaissance, or this further flowering of vitality, now you have enough freedom for there to be reaction against religion, and opposing views. But those opposing views, while they may be highlighted by the secular scholars, are in most cases nowhere near as powerful as the religious deepening, broadening and flourishing.

If you want to, you can get lost in any one of the rivulets through this period, but I would encourage you not to do so. This is part of a single story, a continuous story, that keeps on moving at a faster and faster pace.

## Review

This may seem like just one more little study in a long series of things. But in a way, it deals with one of the most significant questions of the entire curriculum. We are talking about international development; we are talking about global civilization. The unanswered question in all such studies is: What makes it tick? What creates civilization? What is it that builds it? What is the glue? What is the prime mover of all that?

This is going to be a real mystery for everyone, unless a person is quite cocksure and perhaps not very humble. This will have to be a mystery for the rest of our lives, which we can chew on, we can work on, we can look for the answers to. This development in Western civilization at this period is the sort of thing which has great promise and great danger, as we will see later on. The offhand comments of Voltaire, deriding the clergy, were followed by the drowning of thousands and thousands of clergymen. He did not realize that; he would not have wanted it. But the fact is you cannot toy with the structures of society without getting into a dangerous situation. No matter who you are, no matter how high-minded your motives are for criticizing the status quo, revolutionaries, whether they are mere philosophers toying with ideas, or whether they are out in the streets, are always questionable and dangerous, as well as beneficial.

So here we have a profound mystery, and the aspect of it that we are focusing on (the science and the Enlightenment), is often thought to be the prime mover, and in some ways it is. But it is also the effect of other causes.

*1. The readings talk of the rise of "absolutism" following the great reformation(s) of the 16th century. In what ways is it possible to speak of an even more fundamental "Rise of the Common Man"? What relation does this have to the rise of Absolutism? How can both be true?*

Philip II of Spain, for example, was a very devout person as well as Napoleon—who did not establish any one church but he paid the pastors, both Catholic and Protestant, later on. This is part of the story. But the question is, what is it that is the leaven of the lump? You can see the loaf rising, you can see the flourishing of all these arts and sciences, ideas and changes of government which brought into play many destructive forces as well as democratic developments and so forth. But what is the prime mover?

I believe the rise of the common man is one of the things that all these new forces ultimately have to cope with. That development in turn, I believe, can be seen as essentially a religious development, whether they were Catholic pastors in the western part of France, holding out stoutly for their religion against the rationalists, or whether they were country preachers in England, using every bit of freedom the English tradition allowed them. There is this change on the part of people, in large number, that eventually brought down many of the assumptions of the past.

*2. Paraphrase Latourette's comments about science and the Christian movement.*

Latourette, for example, does directly tie the development of science to the Christian movement. He certainly believes that it was the Christian worldview that permitted science, as compared to the pantheon of quarreling deities that inhabited the theological universe of the Greeks. They had capricious gods who could change their minds, and cause storms and pestilences, all kinds of problems for humankind. When the Christian world view came into the picture—you can call it the Judaic world view to be more fair, because the Islamic tradition held it as well, and they too nourished science—science became a possible faith, rather than impossible. And those pages bear this out.

*3. Do your readings imply that science and the Enlightenment impact the Church or that they are an effect of the impact of growing Christian vitality? Or both?*

Question #3 is again a question of cause and effect, and this is, I believe, what dominates our study of this whole period. There is so much going on that we are tempted to study strands and think of those strands as being automatic or self-developing strands, when there is interplay all across the board. We often talk about the impact of the Enlightenment upon the church, and that is a relevant subject. But at bottom, it was the other way around. The Enlightenment itself was the product of the church. Thomas Aquinas, centuries before, had talked about equality and the impossibility of forcing beliefs upon people. Now when the Enlightenment authors come out with this, it seems like it is an invention, and this is going to impact the church. In a certain political sense, it did impact the church, of course, and it eventually led to things like the French Revolution, where 30,000 pastors were driven out of France. Nevertheless, these ideas themselves, both in science and in the Enlightenment, derive from the church tradition.

*4. Political decentralization and theological diversity, we have observed, went together in the Reformations. How did the Enlightenment enhance both developments even further?*

Question #4 is sort of a Catholic question, or I should perhaps say that Catholics would raise this question. Catholics to this day look back upon all this turmoil and all this tumult, and you know, you cannot blame them. They represent what was originally in their mind as a stable workable tradition. Then chaos ensued, and the Reformation fanned the flames of breakdown and chaos. Then one thing after another ensued and all sorts of chaos broke out! That is the Catholic point of view.

The political decentralization and the theological diversity, here referred to, which is deplored typically by the Roman Catholic instinct and perspective, probably would have been inevitable, had the Bible been readable or available to a lot of people, which it was. The Catholic Church itself made it available. Obviously, if the Bible is translated

thirteen times into German before Luther, during the Catholic period, it was not that the Catholic Church was opposed to that. The Catholic Church began to oppose the Bible when it appeared that the Bible was the source of all this tumult—which it was!

The Enlightenment simply came along and underscored and reinforced those ideas that developed from the reformation of theology and the reformation of the breakdown of politics and so forth. The Enlightenment brought into play forcefully the idea that man was the arbiter of all things, not God; that reason rather than theology or faith should rule. This essentially ended forever the thought that we could go back to an age of faith, where the theology was decided by the aristocratic powers, and everyone simply followed suit, and there would be no pluralism.

The word pluralism, by the way—a modern word—is virtually non-existent in all of the readings we have been doing. But that is the thing that was coming, which would ultimately allow different ethnic traditions, different expressions, and different personalities as well. It allows for and defines freedom of religion; it makes it impossible, as our Constitution has it, for the establishment—that is to say, the official backing—of any one church tradition. This, of course, did not mean that religion itself was to be abolished, but that the linking of a government and a uniformity of religion would be questioned.

So there is very much a linkage between that breakdown of a uniformitarian hypothesis, whether we are talking about politics or religion or philosophy or science, or whatever. People were free to propose their own ideas of science, without going to jail. At the same time, they could propose their own theological ideas; they could propose their own philosophical ideas.

It is interesting that David Hume comes along, in the full flower of the Enlightenment, surfing as it were on the surfboard of Reason, and says that reason itself cannot determine anything. So you see, doubts come around even to the question of doubts: you doubt doubts. Or you reason doubt's reason. So everything goes. Of course, looking back, we are not so fearful of all this. You must understand, however, the reasonable fears especially of godly governors, potentates, kings and rulers, and so forth, of unrest. Because this sort of thinking often produced loss of life, it often produced conflict, it often produced breakdown of order, civil order, mobs and destruction. It was not unreasonable for the absolute powers to tighten up as much as they could, not just to be famous or to be powerful, but to preserve order.

It is very hard for Americans to admit that that kind of government could ever have had benevolent goals, but often it did. It is interesting that Napoleon himself, so to speak, tried perhaps consciously to recreate the Charlemagnic unity, which ended wars. When Charlemagne conquered, there were no more wars. But when that breakdown occurred, wars of all kinds, between all kinds of little parts of Europe, took place for years on end. You can easily see that there are two sides to the whole attitude of what should or should not have been done.

This is not the end of the story. The more gruesome fruits of this delayed renaissance in the realm of philosophy will have its manifestation in the French Revolution. One of the leading thinkers of the earlier period was Erasmus, a very theological type of person. Voltaire is the leading thinker of the later Enlightenment. He too believes in God, believes in the established authority of the Church, and so forth, but he tweaks everything, criticizes everything. He hobnobs with famous and illustrious

people, but he is a constant critic. Only days after his death there are scientists being decapitated in the French Revolution. He himself, as I say, would have turned over in his grave had he known about this.

We are dealing with explosive forces and the greatest excitement is yet to come. But at least, this is an interesting and fascinating transitional period.

## **Editorial Comment on New Horizons**

**(including evidence of diabolical ingenuity)**

*(Mission Frontiers, September 01, 1998).*

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment56>

This issue grasps for insight into “the new horizons” of mission. Not because we are running out of things to do. No...but because these stirring NEW HORIZONS are piling up on us. Like the unexpected power of a huge volcano, the global success of the Gospel has forced major changes in the landscape. However, the immediate reason for focusing on New Horizons in Mission is this: we were called upon to do this by the program committee of this year's annual meeting of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (to which 100 mission agencies send their executives). The EFMA asked our staff to take over a one-and-a-half-hour slot in the first day of their program in Atlanta on the subject of new horizons in missions. This issue is all about that. Meanwhile, this editorial focuses on the ONE “New Horizon” we decided to drop out at the last moment.

Dear Reader,

Only once before in my lifetime—seriously—have I come up against a new insight that has so mightily shaken my life and my perspective on missions. In these pages I have been nibbling at this for months. Now I want to present it full bore.

I confess I am often a bit scared or uneasy when I go to put something down in an editorial which can startle or confuse readers—or infuriate them. Only yesterday in my devotions did I run across a phrase describing a new thought that massively disturbed Peter. Acts 10:17 says “Peter was greatly perplexed in mind.”

For me this is a parallel situation. That was perhaps the only time in Pete’s life anything so shaking had occurred to him. OK, that’s me. From now on, as with Peter, what’s left of my life may be quite full of surprises.

This new insight for me is, as a matter of fact, what we (I) left out at the last minute at the Atlanta meeting (see box).

Two of the “New Horizons” in the list our staff team prepared to present at that meeting fell to me. The last minute I decided to leave one of them out, just as I could wish, humanly speaking, that I might leave it out here—just leave it be and not get into it!

But, as you get older you face tougher and tougher decisions. You see things more clearly. The more you learn the easier it is to fit in additional information.

OK, OK, you say, I’m stalling. Guess so. Here it is: I believe that our recent scientific blindness to germs, and still more recently to viruses, and still even more recently to prions, has a parallel in the theological and missiological arena.

First, isn’t it strange that in our church life we don’t hail, praise, and wonder spiritually about every new scientific insight into the complexity and inherent beauty of nature? Do we really see the glory of God in “His handiwork?”

Or, why do we disguise of whom we speak of when we speak of “nature” —when we may actually refer to things that are clearly the design of God?

Of course, our secular world speaks that way. But note: when we speak of curiosities in nature we may actually be speaking of either God or Satan’s design.

I found a sentence yesterday in a recent book by a good friend, a phrase which I myself could easily have employed—until recently.

No longer. My friend said (as I would have, unthinkingly) that a certain ugly, cruel reality “is truly nature’s fight-back.” How do we blame “nature?” Who is nature? God or Satan in this case?

In this case my friend referred to what I now, recently, call clear evidence of diabolical ingenuity, ingenuity in the finding of new, more virulent ways for microbes to be engineered into killer bugs—just as terrorists are finding new and more clever ways to be killers.

OK, so WHO is this “nature”? Is God behind these new and more virulent bacteria? Are we shielding God to attribute these ghastly things to “nature”?

I don’t think so! We are in actual fact shielding the Evil One. That’s dangerous. If the Bible is at all correct in saying that “the whole world lies in the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19), then why not name that evil one? Again, an outstanding scientist, Hugh Ross, is right: the only thing today more politically incorrect than to refer to God in public is to refer to Satan in public. In contrast, Scripture says bluntly:

“The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil” (1 John 3:8)

If that is the awesome purpose of the Son of God, then that is also the full scope of the mission of His church. When He asked us to pray, “Thy kingdom come,” He evidently asked for more than we commonly realize. Isn’t it true, after all, that “we fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this earth.”

For God’s will to be done means for Satan’s works to be undone. But if we go on hiding Satan’s works behind euphemistic phrases like “nature’s fight-back,” do we not delay and obscure the nature of the opposition God expects to make to Satan’s works?

In the last issue of *Mission Frontiers*, I explained how, according to Gregory Boyd (see below), our theological tradition has gone significantly off course since Augustine, subtly moving us away from direct conflict with Satan. We need—according to Augustine—to see the “mysterious good” behind all evil. Apparently this divergent perspective has delayed and diverted energies from specific inquiry into the origins of disease, moving all such evil out of the range of the urgent counter attack. And this results in a functional fatalism. Have you ever heard a sermon urging people to fight Satanic malaria in the laboratory? It is Hinduism when you can’t kill a deadly cobra. It is fatalism that is not true to the Bible.

If you want a specific example of this divergent perspective from a very godly man who was apparently carried away by Augustine’s ideas, let me quote the justly famous Brother Lawrence:

The worst possible afflictions and suffering appear intolerable only when seen in the wrong light. When we see such things as dispensed by the hand of God, when we know that it is our loving Father who abases us and distresses us, then our sufferings lose their bitterness.

I would not for a moment deny that God often makes good things come out of bad things—that is not Satan’s intention! But neither is it God's intention when Satan makes bad things out of God's good things.

The Greeks were confused. They concluded simplistically that all things physical, all bodily pleasures were evil. For example, Greek thinking is the Roman Catholic source for the idea that the only justification for marital relations is procreation. The Greeks rightly see evil in the grim evidence of destructive life forms seemingly interwoven into every level of life, from the level of dinosaurs to the level of bacteria that are fighting to the death against invading bacteria.

The Greeks left it to us to separate out the good and beautiful, to uncover the works of God in the physical realm, and still to avoid covering up the works of Satan. “The whole world lies in the control of the Evil One.”

This is why we must have mixed feelings about those who would run out and indiscriminately “protect nature.” Nature abounds with evidences of the incredible beauty of God’s creation. But “nature” also embodies extensive evidence of the distorting and destructive works of the Evil One.

If we go on attributing evil to the initiative of God just because He often uses evil for good, don’t we fall into the snare and delusion of Satan?

At this point let me refer again to Gregory Boyd and the remarkable study of his, *God at War*, published by InterVarsity Press.

Gregory Boyd is a professor of theology at Bethel Theological Seminary in Minneapolis. He has dared to take exception with Augustine of Hippo, who is the most quoted theologian in all of Christian history, revered by both Roman Catholics and Protestants. With ponderous research on his side, Gregory Boyd states boldly that Augustine has brought confusion to all Christians since his time (4th century) by implying that behind all evil, all suffering, all destruction, all pain, all perversion there is “a mysterious good” which is controlled by God!

Instead of saying, like the Bible does, that God often turns Satan's evil against him, Augustine allows us to think that God created evil and essentially guides Satan!

“Never!” says Boyd. He says modern evangelicals are not really fighting Satan as they should. (I add, especially at the microbial level.) But are assuming rather that God is behind Satan’s every move.

I am curious. I have often wondered why we evangelicals feel we should “fight” against organized crime, against drug pushers, against genocidal powers like the Nazis, the merciless aggressors in ethnic cleansing, evil political forces, etc. Yet we don’t feel it is up to us as a mission force—we leave it to the World Health Organization—to fight against other gross evils like the killer viruses and microbes which are gaining on us, and, I believe, are just as much the initiative of Satan.

Perhaps there are two reasons:

We don’t think we know exactly what to do if we were to try to launch “a massive onslaught on malaria at its root.” We don’t know if we have the ability to outwit the latest deadly versions of tuberculosis or staphylococcus or sepsis. It’s all too much to think about. So we don’t plan to do more than comfort the victims?

Or, perhaps, we are not aware of the entire range of Satan's insidious perversions, and are unaware that God has commanded us to counterattack in His Name in even these “small” areas.

God says “My Name shall be great among the nations.” That should challenge us to open people’s eyes to mass blindness so we and they can fight our way out of the power of Satan and his darkness into the light of the glory of God. This includes comforting victims of evil and praying for the sick but also warring against every kind of evil, every source of suffering, and thus making His Name great. How else can peoples around the world held in bondage in countless ways come to believe in a God who is "great?"



## Science and Global Civilization Today

(1998?) WCF Module 4 (Finalization), Lesson 63 Overview

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5be3536f40ec9a98e9ec7139/1541624688207/Science+and+Global+Civ+WCF+LOV63.pdf>

### Introduction

Certainly as we come to the end of this curriculum, more and more it's obvious that we are in the process of delivering into students' hands some valuable literature, introducing them to it, far and wide, not just so they can read it, digest it completely, and throw it away at the termination of the course, but utilize it for a number of years to come. And that's true of this lesson as well as many others. We are introducing subjects, issues, ideas, causes, problems, mysteries, enigmas. We want people to know what they are. We are not in the position—and probably never will be—to give the answers to all these things, or we wouldn't even have a course to offer. We are trying to deal with unresolved questions, as well as take comfort in new insights and new facts and knowledge.

One of the significant words in global civilization, one of the significant features is what that word refers to, namely science. It has drifted from its origins. Nowadays, if they are digging up tombs under Mexico City, stopping the underground railroads, they do it with great care, with great system, and they call it a science. They are discovering something. They have certain processes they go through. And the other anthropologists of the magnificent University of Mexico are there to make sure the process is followed. And they call this a science. Now and then the popular phrase is brought up, "it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure this out!" or something, as if rocket science—well, rocket science is a pretty elaborate science, but more precisely, I would call it a field of engineering. Rocket science is not the *discovery* of principles or realities, so much as it is the utilization of them. So the word is used in a popular sense and in a much broader sense than the basic idea.

As you do your readings, this is one of the things to think about. What in the world is science, and what are the major ways in which it is determined? We will talk about this at the end. Another thing that comes up when you talk about science is the scary side of science. There are a lot of people who are just in love with what science will do, but at the same time they are scared to death that science will come up with something very dangerous to humanity. And for good reason, because we have both the cures that science brings to us through medical science, let's say, and we also have the problems that technology has created, which is another arena of what we call popular science. And so science is both the cause and the effect. It is a kind of uneasy term for many people.

On the other hand, it is probably one of the most enduring global studies—maybe in addition to English as a second language, that being more of a skill than it is insight into realities. Science is probably the major common concern of all of what we are calling

loosely the emerging global civilization. This is the arena in which people of different backgrounds and colors and cultures can most readily agree.

Years ago, my younger brother was involved in an overseas program of the college where he was working, and he would take me to the airport in Detroit, and he was saying that we have 21 students in Leningrad studying chemistry in Russian. Now that's the easiest way to learn a foreign language: to study one of the sciences. Why? Because all of science—at least in its origin, its basic concept, as it developed—is the study of something that is there already. Scientists, for example, assume symmetry. They are looking at creation. They look for regular structures, like crystals that are somehow symmetrical or balanced in some way, that are predictable. All of science would fall to the ground if there was not this unexpressed belief that there is order there to be discovered.

Latourette, in his two-volume *History of Christianity*, makes very clear reference to the fact that cultures of Northern Europe would have been unable to become scientific, had there not been brought into their midst a concept of an orderly universe that could actually and reliably be studied.

On the other hand, studying what is there, and finding out all about how it works and so forth, isn't quite the same as understanding what that reality is. One of the simplest little lab experiments is taking a wire and wrapping it around and around a pencil, maybe 100 times, and then attaching the two ends to a nine-volt battery. If they put a needle in there, and they just touch the other end of the wire to the other side of the battery, the needle will shoot one way or the other. If they change the poles, it will shoot in the opposite direction.

This is the basis—it's called electro-motor force—for motors. A very godly pastor, Michael Faraday, was the one who really figured out how this worked. If you want to know in advance which way the needle will go, use your fingers. If you wind the coil with the fingers of your right hand around the thumb of your left hand, the needle will move in one direction; if you reverse your hands, the needle will move in the opposite direction. It's called the rule of thumb.

So we know all about this. We've made motors, we've made dynamos. In a dynamo, we've reversed the motor to generate electricity, by having another power source turn the shaft instead of the electricity turning the shaft. When electricity turns the shaft, this is a motor; when turning the shaft produces electricity, this is a dynamo. But there isn't anybody who knows why it does it! We know what it does, but we don't know why.

Magnetism is another thing I love to talk about, because it is so totally uncanny! How with something here and something there, one affects the other. Or you put a piece of paper, with iron filings, and the magnet—which does not touch anything—moves the filings around! We know how it does it; magnetism is exploited by engineers, and it is defined very precisely in how it works. If you wrap the wires around a large enough piece of metal, you can create a magnet that will pick up an automobile! It will pick it up and carry it; but when you stop the electricity, the automobile falls down, because the magnet loses its power. So we know how this works, but nobody knows why.

We know something about the different kinds of substances that are magnetic or suitable to be magnetized. We know our way around in terms of its force. It's like knowing a dog: you know what kind of a dog it is, you know the personality, you know

what it will do and won't do, what it will eat and won't eat, what kind of commands it will respond to—but you don't know how that dog came into being. You just know this is the way it works.

So science has very often been greatly overrated, as if knowledge of science not only gives us power, but understanding, in a basic sense. Now, we can say, oh yes, we understand how it works. But that's not what I am talking about. The nature of magnetism or of gravity or of electro-motor force—nobody knows what this is.

In terms of global civilization, this does unify the whole world. This is a marvelous thing! You can get scientists together from all over the world and they can talk about certain things. And they have less trouble getting together than a bunch of religious leaders from different cultures. And you say, why is this? It's because what they are studying is out there, and it is the same no matter who studies it.

Now there are philosophical theories that would erase that idea, claiming that what's out there is just in the eye of the beholder, there's nothing really out there unless you conceive it to be; and you can talk and talk and talk about that. But the thing that does make it relatively simple, for example, to translate scientific journal articles is the reality out there that science deals with. Language translation was born in the area of cardiac surgery, where what you are looking at—whether it's a Korean or an African or whatever—it is a heart about which people are comparing notes, and they have no difficulty using this word to mean this, and that word to mean the same thing, and then the two words can be translated.

But if the two words refer to something less tangible than a heart, then it's more and more difficult to translate. And there are just a whole lot of things, like grace, mercy, love, friendship, which are not tangible and therefore give rise to extraordinary problems in terms of global civilization and global communication.

We really wouldn't need a global language, like English, which is a very helpful thing, especially if the European community adopts it. I'm happy about that, of course! It lets me into a few more places. We wouldn't need a common language, if it weren't for the fact that there a lot of things that aren't common, or if all words were referring to heart surgery or chemistry. That's why learning Russian enough to understand chemistry is a relatively simple thing, compared to learning Russian well enough to know what to say in a social situation and what the implications of what you say are. That is much, much more complicated.

In any case, science is a bright and marvelous thing, as well as a dangerous thing in some ways. It is one of those things: if you don't conquer it, it may conquer you. This is the kind of thing we are up against today

## **Review**

### *1. What is science? What are the major ways in which the word is defined?*

In our introductory period, I hinted to the effect that science is one avenue of conversation and of understanding around the world that is more likely to succeed than, let's say, comparing works of art or literature, because there is nothing that's common that people are studying. Therefore, it is pretty important to tie the idea of the word "science" to what it is that is being studied. In that sense, something that is a science is such because the thing it's studying is orderly, and if it is orderly, then the study of it must become orderly to discern that order, and everything flows from there. But if you

focus on the activity of science, the methodology—step this, step that—as being what science is, namely a disciplined method of study, then anything can be a science. The word is used in both ways.

It seems to me very sensible to conclude that art is when human beings are starting out with their own ideas, without reference to the order that is in nature, and they create something which they call art. Thus, the study of art isn't a science, in the usual sense, nor is the activity of art itself. So you have science, which is beholden to what is already there. In the world of science, you discover; you don't create. In the world of art, you create, and it gives rise to incredible variations, which are hard to evaluate and to compare.

*2. In what ways do the so-called "life sciences" stand apart? At the same time, how are they ultimately derivative in relation to the sciences focused on the inorganic universe, that is, the other "natural sciences"?*

What is the difference between life sciences, let's say, and geology? Why is geology not a life science? Or what are the life sciences? This has to do with the distinction in the world of chemistry between all those things that are made out of carbon atoms and are living, and those things that aren't necessarily made out of carbon and are seemingly not reproducible: they don't grow, they don't change on their own.

It's interesting that the so-called organic world of the life sciences, where you have organisms—you have DNA, in other words—that world is so strange and so complex and so beautiful and so terrifying and so over-aweing, that the world which supports it, in which it is found—the so-called inorganic world— gets a word like inorganic. Why doesn't the inorganic world have a word for itself before life arrived? What was it? It just shows you how, from our point of view as part of the living part of the world, we think of that as the primary world, even though it could not possibly sustain itself without the inorganic world there. Meanwhile, the inorganic world could get along very nicely without the organic world.

These, you might say, are basic concepts, but ultimately there is a relationship in part. For example, the ozone layer which is part of the inorganic world, diminishes, and a lot more powerful electromagnetic radiation comes through, then those forms of life which cannot stand that kind of radiation are going to die. So, you see conditions that are related to each other. Meanwhile, the ozone layer itself is partly there because of the life on earth. The carbon monoxide that is in the air is there because of life on earth, even though carbon dioxide itself is not something that is living. So there is an interplay between the two. However, it is perfectly obvious that the inorganic world could get along very nicely alone. You would still have volcanoes and earthquakes and plate tectonics and hurricanes and stuff like that, whether or not there was not any life on earth at all. Yet without all that background, you wouldn't be able to have life.

Now, I might then go on to point out how strange it is that the word evolution is very rarely even discussed in the world of inorganic reality. You have books and books and books, and even in the area of molecular evolution there is a whole journal, with ten articles per issue, 100 new articles per year, on the question of how living molecules could have evolved by themselves.

The thing that nobody talks about is where the pieces came from that are supposed to fall together to produce life. The DNA molecule—with a couple of billion

atoms within it—those atoms, I have never heard of anybody talking about the evolution of the atoms. Where did they come from? As a matter of fact, the atomic reality—the Table of Elements which was discovered by a Jesuit in Russia, Mendeleev—that atomic chart of elements is such an amazing thing, it's almost like a Galileo breakthrough or a Copernican breakthrough!

When my father went to school, atoms were little marbles. That's about all they knew. My father read about atoms. He knew there were different kinds of atoms that went into the table of elements, because that table had been discovered earlier. When I went to school, these little marbles were actually kind of little solar systems, with electrons whizzing around a nucleus. When my kids go to school, the nucleus has been taken apart, and now inside the nucleus you have what they call the subatomic particles: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 32, in perfect symmetry. In fact, the symmetry is so significant that if there is one they don't know about, they say they are going to look for one that would fit the symmetry.

So here you have the order of reality defining the strategy of the scientific study itself. So that science itself is a method, derivative from the reality that is already there. I'm only pointing out the fact that the so-called inorganic reality, the reality prior to life, is itself so amazingly complex that no one could possibly even have thought about it a hundred years ago, and nobody seems to be suggesting that it came into being by itself. Oh yes, they've got the Big Bang theory: the whole thing flashed into being at once! That, of course, is a very intelligible explanation, I must say.

So here we have one incredibly complex set of building blocks, which on this planet have been built into what we call life, which is itself even more complex. I mean, you have 20,000 different kinds of butterflies. Every single butterfly, every little cell in that butterfly's wings—and there are millions and millions of them—is an incredibly complex thing when you get down to the genes and the chromosomes and clear down to the DNA molecules. It's just an incredibly complex reality!

As far as we know, not in any place else in the universe is there any of the kind of life we know, not even on Mars (although maybe it's there). I don't know any reason why there couldn't be, but as far as we know, none of the planets in the solar system is very friendly to the kind of life that we know of on the earth. Hugh Ross has a whole chapter on something like 32 different characteristics of the environment on our planet, any one of which missing would mean all life would die. So we are in a very, very uneasy balance with the environment. And it is amazing how anyone could easily conclude that in radically different kinds of planets in our solar system the same kind of life, or even something comparable, could exist.

*3. How do you evaluate the mission mankind might consider for itself in the area of the persistent and perhaps growing threat that exists in the world of microbiology?*

What do you think we ought to do about all this, when we read about the encroaching number of microbes and so forth? We can look at this life, and we can say it isn't obvious that this life fell together.

The astounding and horrifying thing is that, when you look at this, in the inorganic universe you don't see antagonisms. You don't see one kind of rock killing another kind of rock. But in the world of life, everything is out of whack! Everything is in turmoil. Everything is in tension and opposition. It isn't very easy to imagine that God,

for example, thought up the Machupo virus. Why would he do that? Why would he want people to suffer and suffer and die? It would seem likely, if nature is not benign, if there is intelligent design there, we should just as easily suppose that there is intelligent anger, intelligent opposition to what is beautiful and good, as there is intelligent design behind what we think is beautiful and good. Of course, this comes around to the Bible and the works of darkness.

However, notice that we don't normally, in our Christian theological tradition, extend the world of opposition between God and Satan into the realm of microbiology. I've been doing a lot of thinking about that since my wife contracted cancer. Those cancer cells—are they just defective cells that multiply and make trouble? Or are they, as scientists say, intelligently designed to destroy? Now, they don't say intelligently, they say designed to destroy.

These are cells that are up to no good. In fact, they are very strategically warring against the life that's there. They are out to destroy, like terrorists in a city that would knock out the banks and the television stations, and kill off the mayor and the chief of police. They would be strategically working to take control.

Well, theologically, is that an arena of God and Satan? Do we, as upstanding citizens, need to enter into the world of microbiology as a religious concern? Is this an area where the honor of God is at stake? Is this something we should be praying about and working with? Is this something the word mission applies to?

See, these are questions that arise when you begin to realize what it is that we are really dealing with. I think that the very word science, understood properly, has got to be one of the most exciting arenas in which the purposes and the person, even, of God himself can be discerned.

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## A Larger Worldview?

Missiology Hour USCWM, Tuesday, October 20, 2001

(*Frontiers in Mission*, 197-99)

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

The concept of a *worldview* ranges from the very comprehensive to the fairly narrow, from ideas about the origin of the entire universe to merely the complex of cultural norms which seem to urge children to do things differently from mainstream society.

There are limits also to what I will fly here as a trial balloon. I don't have any interest at the moment in the idea that the universe once sprang from a tiny speck of concentrated matter. I would rather concentrate merely on a worldview which would explain at least hypothetically the origin and development of life on this planet from the simplest and earliest forms of life to the most complex, whether large or small. (Complexity and size do not seem to be related. For example, the eyes of a housefly are said to be much more complex than the eyes of human beings.)

Furthermore, I would like for the moment to try to avoid "accepted" religious terminology about a supreme being. The current English word God derives from the forests of northern Europe not from the Bible. It might be possible to proceed here with this exercise without using any traditional religious terms. Concepts yes. Terms no.

I will not limit myself by the need to talk only of the proven existence of this or that. Although I am unaware of anything which could be called an infallible proof of the Big Bang origin of the universe the concept is talked about freely. So it is with the so-called "Record of the Rocks." I am aware of various ways of interpreting that evidence. However, for this experiment in worldview I will address those who accept it at face-value. I will not try to validate it. At the same time, I don't feel it necessary or helpful to yield to a blanket assumption that there are not or cannot be intelligent beings other than the forms of life seen on earth, nor that such beings cannot be more than spectators of what goes on.

Also, I do not feel obligated to assign any special meaning to the two words *evolution* and *creation*, both of which are widely used quite casually with a vast range of differing definitions. I, thus, have no trouble calling the 20th Century development of the automobile either the "*evolution* of the automobile or the *creation* of the automobile," since neither phrase in itself requires or excludes a Darwinian mechanism of selection—even though it would be preposterous to propose that the development of the automobile came about without intelligent guidance at every point.

*Evolution* can imply, for at least some people, many different things. *Creation* can imply instant original creation, sporadic intervention, or continuous or "progressive" creation. However, since both terms are often heavily loaded, I would prefer simply to speak of *development*.

Finally, I don't wish to be bothered by a distinction between a *natural* explanation and a *theological* explanation. Even Darwin was thinking theologically, apparently, when

he felt moved to protect the idea of a good God by postulating a purely automatic hands-off process of evolution to account for the evil in nature:

There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the [parasitic wasp] with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that the cat should play with mice (Darwin, 1860).

I would prefer to be as free (as Darwin seemed to be) to live with the idea of an intelligent supreme being existing outside of the sphere of life on earth. That seems to me to be as intelligent an assumption as, for example, the seemingly arbitrary insistence on there being no such a thing.

With these terminological qualifications behind us, then let us speculate with as much evidence as possible and be willing to go beyond present evidence where it seems necessary.

Thus, we begin with a roughly five-billion-year-old planet and a roughly four-billion-year record of life. Two things are curious about this record (in case it happened that way!).

### **1. The “Delay” in the Development of Life**

First, there is the apparent evidence that multi-celled or even single-celled life appeared quite late in the story. Perhaps, however, that seems strange to us only because our common knowledge understands so very little of the unimaginable complexity of the so-called “simpler forms of life.” If we draw a parallel here between the development of life and the development of the automobile several things pop out.

Practically every component of the early automobiles was originally developed with something else in mind. Indeed, the history of the automobile is relatively short compared to the previous long period in the development of understanding of things like the electromotive force essential for spark plugs to work. In current evolutionary terminology the Model T evolved by “co-opting” things made for something else. Nevertheless, such previous creations and the novel arrangement and adaptation of them in the Model T demanded a great many intelligent workers for many years.

It might also be postulated that just as thousands of intelligent engineers and workers were necessary in the development of the automobile, so thousands of non-human beings have been involved in the development of life, and that these intelligent beings could learn as they went, and that a superior being was pleased with their learning progress.

### **2. The Sudden Emergence of Violence**

Second, and even more fascinating, we are told that for almost three and a half billion years the development of increasingly complex forms of life went on in the absence of predatory or life-destroying forms of life (Fortey 1997, xx). The earlier *absence* of predatory forms of life is not the surprising thing--if we postulate a good superior being with loyal workers doing his bidding. But the fact that suddenly in this conjectured record there appeared incredible predation and violence is a huge puzzle unless we recognize that rebellion and opposition to original intent must have come into the process at that precise point (3.5 billion years along in the process, and at about 500 million years ago).



That is, it would seem to be reasonable to postulate that after the Cambrian extinction event, and after lengthy familiarity with the entire DNA process, a new, profoundly antagonistic non-human being (along with many knowledgeable and skilled workers) apparently set to work to undo, to distort, and to destroy all that they had earlier assisted into being.

Overnight, so to speak, every form of life at every level of complexity was either transformed into viciousness or left as prey or both, all the way from the size of bacteria to that of large animals. New species in vast profusion (“the Cambrian explosion”) also appeared. Those workers that did not rebel had now evidently to develop forms of life with defenses. Crustaceans now first appear, and animals with defensive spines, like porcupines, etc. Immune systems were apparently developed since they would not have been necessary had not attacking pathogens appeared.

But life went on, and a variety of new species were being constantly developed, some workers employing their intelligence for good, others for distortion and destruction. The inherent beauty and complexity of much of life would continue to be evident, but the novel new element would be the additional presence of absolutely pervasive and destructive evil. It is said that two-thirds of all life forms now in existence are parasitic. The destructive forces could even tinker with DNA to transform a lion that would lie down with a lamb into a highly destructive, but still beautiful beast.

Major asteroidal collisions continued, each time much of life was extinguished, with enormous coal deposits resulting from huge amounts of vegetation being suddenly killed off, and parallel oil deposits resulting from massive amounts of animal life suddenly being engulfed. It would appear that only one out of a thousand different species appearing in earlier times exists today.

The most recent major collision of an asteroid is reported to be 60 million years ago and is widely believed now to be the cause of the demise of the dinosaur era. If you can imagine a Super Being having control over asteroids, you can well imagine that the grim and savage violence that characterized the dinosaur era was cut short for that very reason.

Coming closer to the present, hominids appear in the record as long as several million years ago, and manlike creatures such as the Neanderthals very much more recently like 60 thousand years ago, but DNA studies now indicate that the Neanderthals were neither human nor an antecedent of *homo sapiens*.

What seems quite possible is that a smaller asteroid collided with the earth about 10 thousand years ago, and that the events of Genesis record the immediate results as well as what followed as various forms of life appeared and, specifically, *homo sapiens*.

The immediate result of such a collision would have been formlessness and darkness (due to the immense dust clouds hurled into the air from the impact). Gradually the dust would settle and it would eventually be possible to tell the day from the night but not to see the sun itself. Finally the dust canopy would thin to the point that the sun and the moon would appear as visible bodies (and actual rays of light would enable rainbows). Meanwhile various kinds of animals would be redeveloped.

This could have been when a brand new and radically different form of life appeared, *homo sapiens*, but only in a unique garden spot intended to enable a new counterthrust to the previous 500 million years of rampant evil and destruction. Genesis 1:1-2 actually permits this interpretation, namely “When God began His work of

rehabilitation He had to deal with a battered, formless and darkened earth ...” Note the text in the NRSV for Genesis 1:1, which is in the margins of other translations. As C. S. Lewis puts it:

It seems to me ... a reasonable supposition, that some mighty created power had already been at work for ill on ...planet Earth, before ever man came on the scene ... If there is such a power, as I myself believe, it may well have corrupted the animal creation before man appeared (Lewis 1940, 87).

But no sooner did this Eden experiment begin than the non-human Evil Being appeared—“some mighty created power”—and, having a 500 million year “crime record” behind him, ever since his own rebellion, seduced this new human couple, thus reintroducing violence into the picture, such as fratricide between their own children. Things became so bad that it would not have been unreasonable for the good Supreme Being to arrange a flood that would destroy perverted humanity, and that following this flood, the dust canopy would be completely gone, actual rays of light finally appearing, permitting a rainbow for the first time since that particular asteroidal collision.

Here is where in Genesis the Bible may begin its story: the redevelopment and “replenishing” of things after the most recent asteroidal impact, after the early failure of the Edenic experiment. Thus, the compromised result immersed the unique, new form of life, humans, now already in significant rebellion, into the rest of the planet which had been undergoing plundering and distortion for 500 million years.

Out of all this coldness and chaos, this darkness and hopeless evil, one man is now selected and commissioned in a fight-back plan which was intended to expand the beachhead of those who are a special part of the family of the good Supreme Being. In Genesis 12 a “covenant” is introduced which becomes the theme of the entire remainder of the Bible.

Empire after empire appeared and collapsed. The Sumerian was in decline at the time Abraham departed. The Old Babylonian empire came next, then the Assyrian, the New Babylonian, the much more high-minded Persian next, with its Zoroastrian and Hebrew sub-populations, then finally the Roman Empire, harsh and cruel yet ruled by law and considerably more impartial in its justice (eventually even conceding special recognition to the Jewish nation within its boundaries). There was the astounding flash-in-the-pan of the Alexandrian extension of what was to be mainly inherited by the Roman sphere. In Alexander’s Greek language very wisely and carefully selected Hebrew scriptures found an unprecedented voice and acceptance. Here was the first major crosscultural impact of the Abrahamic plan. From this Greek document (called the Septuagint) translations were then made into many other languages. The Hebrew originals were not brought together for an additional 800 years). Eventually, after another 700 years, the Hebrew came into its own mainly due to the breakaway movement of the Germans, when Luther chose to work from the Hebrew in order to avoid both the Greek and the Latin scriptures, whose interpretations had already been set in concrete by the Orthodox and Catholic traditions, respectively.

However, all of this is simply a quick synopsis of the backdrop of the current ongoing and all-out conflict between warring powers as seen in every aspect of life on earth. Since Abraham the gradually increasing insight of humans into the nature of nature has enabled the incrementally accelerated reconquest of evil which the Abrahamic Covenant set in motion.

Curiously, the most basic evidence of the waning of the influence of the non-human, angelic Evil Being is the gradual net increase in population. For much of the earlier part of the human story the destructive perversions of “war and pestilence” held population growth virtually to a standstill. By 2002, however, it was estimated that victims of war on a global level were only one-fourth the number of people killed in traffic accidents.

It was not always so. It is estimated that world population was roughly 28 million in Abraham’s day. Had it increased at the present rate from that point on it would have reached six billion only 321 years later. However, the fact that world population only reached about 200 million (not six billion) in the next two thousand years (not 321 years), betrays the ghastly toll of war and pestilence in the unfolding drama of human history.

Or, for example, when the Roman legions withdrew from British soil early in the fifth century (in order to go and protect the city of Rome from Gothic invaders), the one million population of the British Isles failed to increase in the slightest for the next six centuries. Why? War and pestilence.

The Christian faith had brought a certain amount of order to Britain, but it was not until 1066 that local warfare and the unremitting Viking invasions markedly diminished and the overall population began to creep up. Creep, I say, because nearly constant pestilence was still a major factor. When Napoleon marched toward Russia with a huge army of 600,000 he had no idea that pestilence alone would be the major factor in his return with less than one out of twenty of his men.

In Luther’s day life expectancy averaged 25 years. But, in Germany today it is almost three times that.

Meanwhile, however, new and more virulent forms of age-old pathogens continue to be invented before our eyes. We tend to think that the times of great plagues are now history, yet if you stop and think about the number of Americans who are cut down prematurely by cancer and heart disease alone, you confront the very definition of a major plague, and the actual proportion of our population affected is clearly higher than in the case of a medieval plague.

At about the time my wife was in the City of Hope’s Intensive Care Unit with a minor infection (causing special difficulties due to her simultaneous cancer) and was rendered totally hopeless by contracting the dread “Hospital Sepsis,” another Lake Avenue couple, the husband perfectly healthy, going in for merely a prostate biopsy, also contracted the same disease and died in 17 hours. “Hospital sepsis” has increased ten-fold in ten years.

Now that we are nearing what is perhaps the end of time, we can more clearly discern the existence of a basic struggle between darkness and light. The war between the dominion of an evil power and the existence of a good Supreme Being is more evident than ever, even though in public forums such beings are less talked of than ever. This huge gap between the reality of this pervasive struggle and the awareness thereof by contemporary man provides us with the arena in which our mission must take place.

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**The Most Prominent and Yet Unresolved Issue  
in Western Civilization in the Last Two Centuries:  
Its Meaning for Mission**

(2001) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 217-19)

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

**Chadwick Hanson** makes the truly upsetting case that in 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts, unlike three centuries of ensuing conventional interpretations, it was not the preachers but the town's businessmen who instigated the hysteria about witches leading to the death of 19 people. The preachers, he points out, trained in science at Yale, insisted on an evaluation of objective evidence in a court trial which put an end to the killings. Furthermore—and even more significant—the example of what was done in Salem then so impressed Europeans that a century-long orgy of witch burning on the Continent that put 250,000 women to death considerably came to a halt.

Ominously, then, this often-referred-to event (long referred to in our public and private school texts as “what happens when religious people get control of a community”) was actually an example of what happens *when Biblically informed people lose control of a community*. However, ironically and tragically, it marked a major milestone in the decline of belief in America in the existence and activity of Satan. In fact, only a few years later when Jonathan Edwards attempted to protect the Indians at his mission outpost from almost annual plagues of smallpox he was warned by the pastors of Massachusetts against “interfering with Divine Providence.” Why did they conclude that smallpox was of God not of Satan? Was it their non-Biblical theological training?

**Alexander Kalomiros**, a scholar within Eastern Orthodox Christianity, would answer ‘yes’ to that question. He bluntly states that the Devil himself has made men believe that God does not really love us but punishes us with disease, and that these switched roles for Satan and God represent a view which has gained ground mainly within Catholic and Protestant Christianity. He says,

What was the instrument of the devil's slandering of God? What means did he use to convince humanity (of this slander) ... He used “theology.” He first introduced a slight alteration in theology which, once it was accepted, he managed to increase more and more ... This is what we call “Western Theology” ... its principal characteristic is that it considers God as the real cause of all evil.

**Ronald Numbers** is the William Coleman Professor of the History of Science and Medicine at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He grew up in the family of a Seventh-Day Adventist preacher who firmly believed and often preached that paleontologists have it all wrong because, according to the well-established view within Seventh-Day Adventism, the world is no more than ten thousand years old, and all of the fossil evidence can be explained by a universal flood. Implicit in this view is the idea that

all evil, all suffering, all violence in nature (reflected by the gigantic teeth in the fossils) is the result of Adam's sin and "Fall" (not an earlier "Fall" of Satan).

Alarmingly, this view, the "evolution" of which Numbers handles with great fairness and respect, now mainly resides in the Homeschooling movement. The view understands that creation was good, was created in six days, very recently, and was at that point, and due to Adam's sin, corrupted in various unspecified ways. That is, in this view, we need to explain all violence in nature in all of earth's history including what is perhaps the pervasive and systematic distortion of the DNA of all peculiarly life-destroying forms of life, whether present or now-extinct, and explain all of this as resulting from Adam's sin. This view has the main function of allowing people to believe that the fossil record does not conflict with a literal interpretation of Genesis One (even though the animals in Genesis One are not carnivorous, as would seem to be the animals represented by the "old" bones we are digging up). And it attributes all of the evil in nature to the result of Adam's "fall," not Satan's fall (rebellion). Indeed it confuses the two events. It is more concerned with preserving belief in what some understand the Bible to say than it was concerned to explain the problem of evil, that is, the evidence of violence in nature. See also Brown, 2001.

A book which truly takes the bull by the horns is **Andrew Delbanco's** *Death of Satan, How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil*. This man is the Julian Clarence Levi Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University in New York "writing intellectual history with the scholarly erudition of a Perry Miller," according to a technical reviewer. His book gives a detailed, blow by blow account of the gradual loss and trivialization in American life and literature of the concept of Satan. It describes the increasing concern about violence and evil in American life and yet the decreasing connection in our minds of this evil with any kind of an overarching evil person or power.

**Michael Behe**, Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University in Eastern Pennsylvania, dramatically proves in the opinion of many, including myself, the impossibility of explaining incredible microbiological complexity as the result of an unguided, chance process. His book is, almost singlehandedly, the principle stake in the growing movement insisting on intelligent design in nature in place of Darwin's mechanism of the survival of the fittest. But Behe, Johnson, and Demsky make no attempt to explain how the gruesome violence got into the picture. Thus, in a TV debate sponsored by William F. Buckley, called Crossfire, neither Behe nor any member of his team debating against the other team which was upholding unguided evolution was able to answer the question posed by a Canadian philosopher, "Does your God create parasites? Ironically, parasites represent perhaps the most ingenious, intelligent (evil) design to be found in nature.

Curiously and puzzlingly, **Deborah Ajulu's** book, published by World Vision MARC, which is focused exclusively on combatting poverty in the Third World, says absolutely nothing about combatting parasites and disease as one of the truly major factors in poverty. Instead, and certainly very effectively, she points out that social and political factors not just material aid are important. Yet an enormous amount of poverty, perhaps in Africa the majority, is the direct result of rampant disease which often pulls down into sickness, suffering and death as many as four fifths of the members of a family.

But then, **Cornelius Hunter**'s book startlingly points out that Darwin himself was highly concerned about the presence of disease and violence in a world created by a good God. *Publishers Weekly* describes it as

Rather than an assault on God's existence, evolution was for Darwin and many of his contemporaries a defense of God's goodness, a strategy for disassociating God from the often unsavory details of nature by introducing a blind process of natural selection.

What a switch! I have always understood evolutionists to be totally unconcerned about violence in nature, not at all concerned to protect God's reputation by dreaming up an automatic process the results of which cannot be blamed on God. Well, evolutionists in general today are in fact the last to worry about any kind of a creator God. But apparently Darwin did.

The irony here is that when spiritually minded creationists insist that God created all things, then the problem Darwin was apparently worried about is back in the fire. What could possibly be the explanation for evidence that seems to shout out at us of a nature shot through and through with a huge and horrifying amount of carnage and evil long before the appearance of man in the picture, evil which has existed at least since the Cambrian period (before that we know of no predatory forms of life).

**Mitchell Stevens**, a professor of sociology at Hamilton College, ups the ante by giving us an up-to-date view of the burgeoning homeschooling movement, the very movement forming a significant number of future Evangelical leaders. This Princeton University Press book takes this homeschooling movement very seriously, delivering in minute detail its struggle for legality, and the various state and national associations which promote, serve, and defend home schooling parents.

The book apparently deserved four full pages of a review by **Margaret Talbot** in the November 2001 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. This movement is so significant in her eyes that she labels her review "A New Counterculture." Once again, this is the powerful movement which is rearing millions of serious Evangelical young people in a worldview of creation which does not effectively confront the enormously threatening and ugly facts of disease and violence in nature.

In total contrast is the glossy, oversized and truly impressive work of **Carl Zimmer**, who with incredible erudition produced an oversized book which brilliantly accompanies the recent eight-hour PBS series on evolution. If anyone can convince you of a chance, random process creating complexity he can. And for most people he no doubt succeeds. In the final chapter of the book he turns confidently to the question, "What about God?" and boldly visits Wheaton College finding even Evangelicals willing to believe in his kind of Evolution. He then adds Southern Baptists and even the Pope to his cause. In sweeping terms he dismisses the Creation Science movement.

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## Theologizing the Microbiological World: Implications for Mission

(2001) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 202ff)

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“For half a millennium the engine driving our society has been science. Sure, politics and philosophy, religious insight and artistic expression have helped out in their way, but even the efficacy of those things has had its pace measured and set by hard knowledge, *our burgeoning comprehension of our material universe*; it’s no accident that the dethroning of kings and cardinals followed the dethroning of the Earth from the center of the sky” (Italics added). So says a science writer in the *LA Times* last Sunday, and so much for the post-modern inclination to pooh pooh the accumulation of concrete scientific insights.

However, whether well understood or not, it is difficult to deny the fact that at no time in the history of science, or in the history of the world for that matter, has there ever been anything remotely comparable to the incredible explosion of scientific knowledge in the past twenty years. The massive, global involvement in the study of *what God made, called science*, is an activity far more elaborate and inherently awe-inspiring than the study of the works of man, which is called art.

In the process of this enormous pursuit of the work of what obviously must be an intelligent Creator, one might expect breakdowns of relationship between researchers representing the various global cultural traditions. To some extent that has been true, but even this has not been able to throttle the immense, now global, “gold rush” in many scientific fields ranging from 1) the zealous examination of outer space to 2) the exploration of the enormous land mass under Antarctica (which happens to be twice the size of the 48 States)—explorations performed by magnetic resonance through an ice layer three miles deep.

In any case, nothing, absolutely no probe of scientific inquiry, has suddenly opened a door into so vast, and totally undreamed-of a new world as the historically recent penetration of the cell. There, in this newly revealed microscopic universe, are mysteries that have infinitely more to do with our future, our mission and our theology than any new insight into the cosmos—the panoply of stars—where we are mere observers, not intimate participants who are crucially affected by the conclusions of the astronomers and cosmologists.

On the other hand, our theologies, that is, *our formalized ways of attempting to think Biblically*, were hammered out during centuries that were totally blind to the microscopic world. As a result, to this day our religious impulses and purposes, neither our hymns nor our theologies, yet throb with any of the new insights in this huge new sphere, even though the everyday existence of all life is intimately tuned and doomed by these tiny forces. Rather, in place of that new knowledge we have until recently been ignorantly offering a vast range of pseudo explanations which still rule our thinking in many ways.

### Six Enigmas

In fact, the whole of this new reality is laced by several enigmas which are puzzling, debilitating, and ominous. I will take them up one by one.

1. *Anthropomorphisms in science writings.* Curiously, scientific writers, in contrast to their formal and official anti-supernatural bias, often unconsciously describe viruses, bacteria, or parasites with words such as *ingenious*, *clever*, or *malicious*. I have not seen the word *intelligent*, but you frequently encounter these anthropomorphisms in scientific writings dealing with the extravagant wilderness of the destructive forms of life. This fact would seem to give unintended insight into the intuitive appreciation these specialists have, even if not admitted, for the apparent intelligence and ingenuity underlying the vast array of disease pathogens.

Evangelicals have recently stressed the inevitable *intelligence* and *design* in nature, but they have not, to my knowledge, attempted to suggest that there is evidence of any evil intelligence and design. This is perhaps due to a theological tradition which does not understand demonic powers to have the ability to distort DNA. Our Evangelical theological tradition is so old that it also would not conceive of good angels working at the DNA level. In other words, we have no explicit theology for intentional modification of either good or bad bacteria. However, the evidence of anthropomorphisms in science writings clearly implies the presence of intelligence at that level.

2. *The concept of inappropriate prayer.* This is seldom discussed in Evangelical circles. As a result, we fail frequently to distinguish between what part God wants us to play and what part only He can play. Confusion in this area is clearly in Satan's favor. He is glad when he can get us to ask God to do something God expects us to do.

This has come about since it is only natural for man to pray when there would seem to be nothing more he can do. But massive changes have occurred since the time little or nothing was known about the causes of disease. Now, amidst the wealth of new knowledge we cannot logically go on merely praying when a whole array of options to act are before us.

3. *Erroneous perspectives about disease origins.* Let us ponder the settled and accepted, but incorrect, explanations for the causes of disease which mysteriously live on quite durably. This is a major factor in retarding the progress of overcoming the march of disease pathogens. For example, how easily can a half century of increasingly successful heart by-pass, heart-replacement surgery and mechanical replacement pumps yield to the new awareness of the basic role of infection in heart disease? That is, the assumption that many of the related characteristics or *symptoms* of heart disease are also *causes* of heart disease postpones the effort to isolate the prime causal infection that destroys the heart muscle even where there are no conventional symptoms. This is like the finally outmoded theories that dampness causes tuberculosis, that a chill creates a cold infection, or that stress causes ulcers. And especially when an opposing *intelligence* may be involved it is like carefully washing the decks of a ship thinking this will prevent a submarine attack.

4. *Unusual accidents of insight.* There is a very surprising and extensive factor of serendipity in the conquest of disease. This can be seen again and again. Four times in the 35-year saga of Judah Folkman's so-called "War Against Cancer" beneficial things occurred that were apparently total accidents. This may be a fascinating clue to the way and the wind of the Holy Spirit. Pasteur's famous statement that discoveries in the lab favor the prepared mind do not by any means fully explain the prominent role of

serendipity in medical research. God would seem to be on the side of those who pursue the origins of disease.

5. *Unseemly opposition.* Equally surprising and harmful are the many factors of opposition to such discovery. The whole process of research is constantly enshrouded with the fog of political factors, commercial factors, personal factors, and technical factors, in addition to the major setbacks caused by the vast social turmoil of wars large and small and the role of pestilence itself. It has been said that the Second World War was the first war in history during which there was not far greater loss of life due to disease than the brutality of the war itself. That is, many are killed, but many more are injured, and the injured in the past have usually then died of disease complications. These various obstacles to foundational research are so great that often fundamental improvements in insight would logically seem to be the very last thing that could happen.

Consider one of these dimensions alone: the commercial factors. Commerce is extensively driven by what makes money. Billions of dollars are harvested annually by companies which sell products that don't really work, while billions are not spent to prove the value of things that may be commonly reported to work. Take heart disease alone, and only in the USA. It costs our people \$300 billion per year. That's \$34 million per hour, or \$570,000 per minute.

6. *Massive imbalance in funding.* Unfortunately most nutritional supplements fall into the category of what does not really work, or that which does not work as well as a judicious choice of foods. One report is that 75% of the food supplements you buy don't even contain the assumed active ingredients, and for that matter, the same unreliability factor is true for pharmaceuticals in many other parts of the world.

But more stubborn still is the simple fact that funds are not readily generated in a commercial situation, whenever substantial sales income is not available for something that is either too inexpensive to sell or cannot be patented. Thus, anything too inexpensive to produce, with a low potential sales income, can never expect to be the subject of serious testing to prove if it works. Commercial dynamics are in our favor only when the service being purchased can cover the cost of that service.

For example, no commercial firm will ever run an FDA test on selenium as a cancer suppressant. Why? Because it would be too inexpensive to sell later for a compensatory profit. FDA approval once cost about \$1 million. Now it is well over \$300 million. This bars all inexpensive substances from substantiation!

Nevertheless forces other than a promise of commercial gain either are or ought to be available. Smallpox would have never been defeated had it been up to commercial processes. The early efforts of a small but highly opposed group of clergymen in New England were not carried forward until 200 years later by the UN. Thus, much of the world's ills cannot be resolved by commercial dynamics. Jimmy Carter's Carter Center led the way in confronting the growing list of diseases which *we know how to eradicate but haven't taken the trouble to eradicate*. The William Gates foundation has picked up on that lead, and is funding some work. But the entire global summation of all non-commercial efforts is only a teaspoon compared to the amount of cash paid out by people in the Western world after they get sick.

Thus, it is not as though everyone is working together to understand the nature of disease. Either 99-to-one, or more likely (as with cancer) 999-to-one, is the ratio of the financial outlay for curative services—where people who are already by disease pay for

help—compared to the relatively tiny resources focused on the roots of the problem, the very nature of disease.

Again, this is like spending so much energy repairing ships damaged by torpedoes that we do not take time to perfect the sonar equipment necessary to detect and destroy the submarines that are sending the torpedoes.

### **Is There a Conclusion?**

At this point it is time to ask the question why it is that the mounting muscle of the very considerable movement of all those globally who are moved by Jesus Christ has not weighed in either theologically or practically in the area of working to correct distortions of nature and of God's will *by going to the roots of the problem*. In a way this is the most ominous fact of all.

I know of no theological tradition, no denomination, no Christian school—or hospital for that matter—that has seriously accepted the roots of the challenge of the enormous and continuing and growing factor of disease in this world of ours.

Meanwhile constantly both believers and nonbelievers are stumbling about wondering over the amount, the harshness, and the unpredictability of evil in our world. Indeed, the credibility of an all-powerful and loving God is constantly being called into question by people who are no longer content to suppose “that God has His reasons.” We may indeed not know all His reasons. But do we have *reasons* for our inaction? Really, has He asked us not to eradicate disease pathogens but to let them alone? Do we, like Orthodox Jews expect Gentiles to turn the lights on for us? To expect secular powers to be concerned but not our own college young people? Do those college students have to leave the Christian community in order to work against disease? Does God intend for us to protect these “ingenious” disease pathogens along with all the rest of “the good earth”? Fundamentalist Sikhs would say yes. Evangelical Christians are saying yes by their apparent deafness to this simple question.

The patterns of our actual, functional theology are thus observable in our common language when we hear people say, “*God took* my wife, my granddaughter, etc.” Or when we wonder “Why did God allow THAT to happen?” when in fact the only really logical question is, Why did God allow Satan to exist? Once Satan is in the picture (if we believe he is) no amount or kind of harsh or heartless evil should be unexpected in any quarter. But apparently *Satan really isn't any kind of a major factor in our normal perspective*. This absence of awareness of Satan happens to be exactly what would be the case if pastor Gordon Kirk's statement were true that “Satan's greatest achievement is to cover his tracks.”

We may not be seriously disturbed by such theological talk. Yet certain obvious conclusions at least logically push their way forward should such a statement be true—namely, that Satan is doing far more than we are aware of.

One conclusion might be to recognize that our understanding of our mission under God has been truncated down to a certain limited sphere, in spite of God's earnest desire to enlist our efforts on a wider front.

Another conclusion is the reverse, that we need to recognize and ponder more seriously the kind and degree of harm Satan is able to cause. We need to unmask the works of Satan and not go on thinking that he, as a spirit being, cannot be held responsible for causing any intelligent damage to our DNA codes, our genetic distortions

being labeled “defects” instead of “intelligent distortions.” Granted that our forefathers who were the caretakers and creators of our theology were unaware of the microscopic world and its myriad evidences of Satanic distortion, cannot we now in the much clearer light of dawn come to more extensive theological thinking that allows us to notice, to applaud, and even to join in with those limited and scattered efforts across the world to fight back (along with the good angels constantly enhancing our bodily immune systems) to counteract the truly monstrous head start Satan already has in this troubled world of ours?

To destroy the works of the devil is one major way in which our testimony of word and deed can glorify the true nature of our living God, our heavenly father. It is not an alternative to evangelism, it will make our evangelism more credible. It is to rectify our God’s damaged reputation. It is to avoid extending the implicit and embarrassing policy of almost constantly misrepresenting Him in our mission work around the world. Attacking the roots of disease is part and parcel of our basic mandate to glorify God in all the earth.

To that end I raise, once more, the proposal for the establishment of an Institute for the Study of the Origins of Disease. If the cold reception of earlier efforts to move in this direction are any prediction of the future we cannot expect wide acclaim, at least not from the formal Evangelical tradition. Like Paul, like Jimmy Carter, we may be forced “to go to the Gentiles” for a warm reception. Some will scoff. Some will believe.

## Theologizing Prehistory: Implications for Mission

(2001) (Foundations Reader, 323-28)

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We talk casually about the Copernican Revolution, which was basically a massive and arresting readjustment of understanding about the nature of the universe. Somewhere in Europe Copernicus proposed a major new understanding which rearranged the position of known celestial objects, as though rearranging the furniture in one corner of a vast room such that we who were in that corner could see the larger room.

A second Copernican Revolution, if you will, took place when Hubble employed the latest telescope to explode the size of that already larger Copernican room by proposing that all those little lights out there in the sky were actually enormous universes of their own.

More recently, still more Copernican Revolutions have continued to take place as our cosmologists puzzle their way more deeply almost daily into increased complexities and unfathomed mysteries of an ever-larger phenomenon.

We are less likely to speak of the Keplerian Revolution, which, in developing the *mathematical* description of planetary motion, was basically an astounding leap forward in awareness of the orderliness of nature. No one had ever captured nature's laws in mathematical equations. Soon after, the revolutionary thinking embodied in the Newtonian breakthrough added details to Kepler's already orderly nature.

Standing upon Newton's additional insights godly men such as Faraday dramatically furthered our awareness not only of the very existence of "laws" of nature but of the astonishing ways in which a knowledge of those laws could be harnessed for human use. He was in one sense not only a scientist but an engineer, not only penetrating some of the mysterious phenomena we call magnetism and electricity but coming up with—among many other things—the electric motor and its reverse, the electric generator.

On the heels of these excitements and rearrangements of our thinking about nature a doorway then opened into a new dimension of complexity, a tiny world totally invisible to the naked eye. In many respects all of the earlier breakthroughs of additional human apprehension of nature have been almost totally eclipsed by the historically recent further awareness of the seemingly unending complexities at the small end of the scale.

This new dimension of reality includes not only the imponderables of the molecular and yet inert realities, but the infinitely more complex phenomenon of life itself, DNA, viruses, bacteria, cells, and parasites.

This new dimension of reality has been every bit as Copernican in its demands for intellectual rearrangement. The somewhat simplistic Darwinian scheme of ever more complex forms of life has been forced to give way to the awareness that neither largeness nor lateness in history necessarily coordinate with complexity. The housefly has eyes that are incredibly more elaborate than humans. Certain very small forms of life navigate by use of celestial data. Other tiny insects have a sense of smell that allows them to detect

floating molecules a mile away. Even honey bees have navigation systems that have long been puzzling. Human sensory apparatus is clumsy by comparison to such examples. Yet humans do things that even the most advanced primates could not possibly do. Managing the words on this page, let alone the thinking behind these words or even the computer-generated forms on my screen, is totally beyond any other form of life.

Amidst all this recent explosion of both complexity and attendant confusion, we are in some ways much closer to an overall understanding of things. Indeed I do not believe it is too early to launch theories about the development of life forms which are undergirded with theology, if you understand theology to mean thinking that makes room for an awareness of intention and intelligence behind natural realities.

One of the most fully explored realities in the past 50 years has been what is commonly referred to as the Record of the Rocks. Here we see life forms in a somewhat regular progression of size. Yet the size of dinosaurs does not correlate with intelligence, and neither does smallness coordinate with simplicity. Nevertheless the earliest evidences of life are in fact both smaller and simpler than later forms. For this apparent progression Darwin has his theory, around which much of the secular world has rallied. Christians do not have a similarly concrete consensus about how it all happened. Some continue to insist that it all happened in an instant. I do not question that it is a perfectly reasonable idea—that God could have created our planet in an instant replete with rock layers that would give the impression of gradual formation over immense lengths of time. That God could have done this, however, is not the same as believing that this is the way God did it. Other Evangelicals back away entirely from conjecturing any details at all about how it happened, they simply insist that God, not Darwin, did it.

At least we can recognize that among Evangelicals great strides have been seen lately along the lines of the evidence of intelligent design in nature. Yet, neither Michael Behe nor Philip Johnson were able to answer the question posed by a Canadian philosopher in a TV debate, “Does your God make parasites?” That is, evidences for evil design are not heard among Christians as yet, despite the very evident violence-drenched nature that is perfectly visible to a small child.

Let us ask, for the sake of discussion, what might it mean theologically if the so-called Record of the Rocks were taken at face value, and the fourteen current different methods of estimating age were regarded as true.

For one thing, the now enormous mass of information that has been gathered does at least indicate that forms of life that are destructive to other forms of life appeared late in the record. And, when that kind of evil appeared, it appeared pervasively. At every level of life, from small forms to large, predatory forms suddenly appeared. Current thinking puts this curious event, an aspect of which is often referred to as the Cambrian Explosion, at about 550 million years ago. From that point until this moment, there has been such constant and pervasive violence in nature that it is common to assume that this is the way it was intended to be, that this is simply “the way it is,” not going into any detail as to the when or the why of how it happened.

Yet, all of this cries out for an explanation. Perhaps multiple trial explanations are possible. One that comes to my mind takes seriously the idea that there is a supreme, personal intelligence (whom we have called God), and that this person has created beings often called heavenly messengers (angels), but actually much more than messengers—workers, if you will. It is possible to think of such heavenly assistants as intelligent, able

to learn and to please God, but apparently also being given true free will that has allowed a considerable number of them to be in revolt while at the same time not being confronted with old age.

This is all you really need, then, to conceive of such beings as working for God at the DNA level, many of them being able to tamper with the DNA molecule at least as skillfully as our contemporary scientists, whose enormous disadvantage, for one thing, is the size of human beings in comparison to the size of the nucleotides which make up the binary helix molecule which is the basic code for all of life forms.

The astonishing discovery that a mouse, an elephant, and a man have DNA that is roughly 95% the same gives us insight into the vast complexity of the constituent elements of cells and their amazing contents, and at the same time an understanding of why it took so long for these workers for God to learn to do more than arrive at the cellular level, apparently laboring four billion years or so before anything very much larger than single-cell life appeared possible. It is likely a measure of our limited and recent education about tiny things that allows us to wonder why it took so long for bigger forms of life to appear.

We can readily imagine a sequence something like this:

1. We don't really know much about the appearance of the universe itself. To believe that the whole universe suddenly exploded from a very tiny object requires more faith by far than any of the Christian claims about the miracles of Jesus. We do know that the phenomena to which we refer as "material" is consistent with that found on our planet and also outer space, and that somehow the laws of gravitation, light, magnetism, etc. are also continuous with what we know of outer space. This knowledge lasts us long enough to understand at least partially the reality and orderliness of the periodic table of elements—the fantastic array of larger and larger atoms that underlie all that we call material.
2. But apparently atoms and molecules of the kind which compose what is technically called "the inorganic universe" are the basis not only of all such forms of matter but are specifically the building blocks from which has been derived, somehow, that other far more unimaginable "organic universe." Curiously all life utilizes the ubiquitous carbon atom. Not all molecules built of carbon are "organic," but all organic chemicals are built around carbon.
3. Only fairly recently in history have human beings discovered that all forms of life are apparently built up from and defined by an amazing coded molecule called DNA, a "double helix" involving millions and millions of atoms. Note that an additional intelligence is apparently required for a phenomenon which thus far seems to be unique to our planet, namely life forms. The DNA itself does not create life unless it is coded intelligently. It is like having on our hands a computer "language" like the widely familiar BASIC. All computer programs are built from what are called languages, but the language itself, like the English language, does not automatically create literature. It is a useful code to employ for that purpose but a grammar book does not create literature. Intelligence does. The very tiniest life forms are enormously larger than the underlying DNA code which defines their nature and function.
4. Thus, not only is the DNA molecule itself an incredibly complex reality, its endless potential for defining life is unimaginably more complex, and would seem to require even very intelligent angels a long time to master.



5. In fact, a major milestone was achieved when the angels, no doubt following God's blueprints, created the first cell, each one containing in its nucleus an essential coded DNA molecule, but also an enormous assortment of other highly integrated activity which, if enlarged, would resemble a large city in complexity.
6. Once the cell was achieved, then building larger life out of cells became a new challenge, one which could and did accelerate far more rapidly. After four and a half billion years, at roughly 550 million years ago, in the so-called Ediacaran era, we see both radially symmetrical (like a starfish) and bipolar symmetry, where you have a front and a back. What you do not see is any predatory forms of life. Nowhere are defensive measures like shells, spines, or offensive devices like destructive teeth. Up to this point the angels were laboring to create new forms of life. They were learning from their task and from each other, and in different parts of the planet were producing different results.
7. But then, a major asteroidal collision wiped out a great deal of the life at that point—not the angels, not their knowledge and skills but their handiwork. Apparently, the angels immediately went back to work, and a lavish new array of life forms now appeared in what is called the Cambrian Explosion. Something totally new also appeared.
8. At precisely that moment a revolt must have occurred, which immediately pitted the loyal workers against rebels, launching a see-saw contest which would generate not only new forms of life, but new forms of destructive life at every level. Rebel workers who had long known how to make DNA and proteins and so on could now both twist and distort existing forms of life so as to make them carnivorous. They could also devise destructive retroviruses that carry in a backpack, so to speak, replacement spans of DNA precisely designed to invade cells and distort the original DNA code in life forms large and small. Thus, from the Cambrian period until now nature is a mad, wild, violent cauldron of killing and being killed, at every level.

Was this revolt due to discouragement on the part of some of the angels? We have no idea whatsoever how and why a leading supervisor and one-third of the angels defected. It is enough to deal with the what this time and not puzzle about the why.

The story after the Cambrian Explosion, estimated at 550 million years ago, followed both the routine continuation of the school of workers ever building larger and larger forms of life of all kinds, sea dwellers, land dwellers and air borne forms of life. More and more defense mechanisms were born. Thus, unique in the post-Ediacaran era (that is, the Cambrian and following) has been the appearance of defensive shells, spines, poisons, protective scales, and fight-back capabilities. It seems that every form of life had its particular predators. Many forms of life were driven to extinction. Today only one tenth of one percent of the various forms of life seen in the Record of the Rocks still exist. And, yes, the loyal workers have not only put together new forms of life on schedule, but have been forced simultaneously to adapt them skillfully to defend themselves against opposing forms of life. *These adaptations can most easily be understood as intelligent modifications, not just accidental or fortuitous mutations.*

In fact, if you reflect on the 100-year story of the development of the automobile in the twentieth century, you must take into account the millions of large and small, but intelligent modifications during that period performed by thousands of keen designers

and engineers, and by hundreds of thousands of workers. This amazing process, moving from the Model T Ford to the contemporary Lincoln Continental, produced today in the same place by the same company of workers, could be described as the “Evolution of the American Automobile,” to employ that disputed term evolution in this case as a *guided, intelligent* process.

In a parallel way, loyal angel workers may well have been busy across the years developing not only new forms of life but newly defense-capable forms in view of the relentless onslaught of life-destroying varieties which have been the labor and intelligence of the rebel workers.

More than once this gruesome contest got so bad that, perhaps it was helpful for another asteroid from outer space to collide with the earth and destroy a great deal of both good and destructive forms of life. It is now widely believed that dinosaurs disappeared as the result of a very large asteroid colliding with what we know today as the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico. Note well that our contemporary insanely increasing exhaustion of fossil fuels is both allowed and limited distinctly by the creation of fossil fuels through sudden mass extinction: oil results from fossilize animal life, coal results from fossilized plant life.

Many studies of impact phenomena have been done since the Moon landing and its upsetting revelation about asteroidal activity. By now it is pretty well settled in scientific circles that the explosive impact of a large asteroid generates a global canopy of dust lasting for years, obscuring the sun and moon, and only gradually thinning so as to allow an awareness of dark and light periods caused by Earth’s rotation with respect to the Sun. Finally, it can be understood that a collapse of the remaining canopy would allow suddenly the direct rays of Sun and Moon, and, of course, the possibility of a rainbow, which requires unobstructed rays of light to appear. This is a sequence, by the way, that is eerily reminiscent of the events early in the biblical book of Genesis.

At the same time, following a collision, the loyal workers would set about replacing forms of life extinguished in a collision. Indeed new and different designs would be possible. The sudden flourishing of new forms of life following major asteroidal collisions has always puzzled Darwinian thinkers, and clearly favors a theory of design over chance.

At some point, the Supreme Being may have decided to launch a new and more effective counterattack. This seems to have occurred immediately following a major collision. Now we are approaching what could be called the Edenic experiment, which in geologic time is very recent. For the first time an enormously significantly different kind of life was now formed. In many respects similar to earlier models, the *homo sapiens* would be much more capable of assisting the loyal workers in the necessary defense and counterattack against the destructive forces. But even in this Edenic beachhead things went wrong, the arch rival succeeding in corrupting the divine design. The arch rival had “fallen” long before, at the onset of the Cambrian period. And during the next half billion years the existence of warring, antagonistic forms of life become the norm, all of that preceding Eden or the events of Genesis One. Genesis 1:1 in the Hebrew implies not creation out of nothing—the word *bara* being the same word a potter uses in creating a pot—but rather the rehabilitation of a planet extensively damaged by an asteroid (“without form and void, darkness upon the deep”).

An asteroidal collision does not usually kill all forms of life. When Eden was created there were no doubt many forms of life in existence outside of the garden, among which the characteristic constant, all-out war was taking place.

The new experiment was the hope, but now homo sapiens also “fell” and slowed the reconquest of a plundered planet. Inside Eden as well as outside, counterforces to Creative Design existed and took their toll. For many years, not only destructive external forces against *homo sapiens* existed, but rampant aggression of man against man prevailed. The replenishing of the earth was drastically slowed by homicidal violence and pervasive disease pathogens. The most ancient evidences of *homo sapiens* display, characteristically, skulls crushed by human instrumentality, widespread cannibalism, as well as corruption by disease. Only recently and reluctantly has this morbid evidence been recognized widely in scholarly circles.

For many centuries human population grew only very slightly. For example, had our modern degree of conquest over disease and war been in force in Abraham’s day, human population of an estimated 28 million could have grown to 6 billion in only 123 years. Such explosive growth of population has been impossible until recently, most of the story being one of nearly total ignorance of the nature and mechanisms of disease.

Incidentally, the advent of homo sapiens brought literacy into the picture, and with literacy came documents which in turn have given rise to the study of history (often defined as the period during which writing was in existence), thus ending the Prehistory period. However, it is perfectly obvious that much of the story of life is in the prehistory period. (If the five-billion- year history of this planet were to be represented by a five-foot-long bar on a blackboard, the history period would only be the last 1/100,000 of an inch.) Thus, by the time homo sapiens appears, and writing appears, most of the story, in one sense, is over, or at least well-established. Furthermore it is questionable whether the official “history” period can be well understood without the backdrop of prehistory.

For one thing, only prehistory records a period prior to the existence of warring life forms. Therefore, if all we do is to trace history we do not encounter the sudden appearance of violence, and thus we may very typically be blind to the existence of rampant evil and antagonism on a large scale. We may further be blind to the existence of an arch rival and, worst of all, we may thus impute to the Supreme Being blame for evil and suffering, which is exactly what the Old Testament seems to do.

Rather, however, than to blame God for the origin of evil or to blame the Bible for portraying Him in that light, it seems to me better to understand the Old Testament perspective as being an overall perspective, while the New Testament’s constant references to Satan are simply a more specific perspective. The best example is the dual reference to David’s numbering the people as found both in 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 24:1.

Thus the story of prehistory continues essentially into the final moments of the story of life on earth. The main new factor is the existence of an incredibly more intelligent species, its “fall” and the unique corrective of the “Second Adam” further pressing the claims of God’s rule, His Kingdom right down to the present moment.

For us today the challenge is to understand the gigantic conflict which continues unabated, but which is rapidly being modified as both disease and war are relatively diminished, and as human awareness of Satanic opposition to and distortion of creation increases. Much of the history of medicine is the relatively blind but helpful opposition to

Satanic corruption, which has enormously accelerated in the last few years. Modern gene-splicing illuminates the way the very nature of otherwise violent forms of life can be restored to peaceful coexistence. That is, against the backdrop of progressive insight into nature is the rather sudden and totally unexpected appearance of the complexity of the world of microbiology. I have already spoken of the need to theologize this new and enormous world of microbiology. The further task is to theologize the entire story of prehistory.

### **Missiological Implications**

I have stipulated before that the ideas presented in this article are highly speculative. However, when we try to evangelize the 160,000 highly educated scientists in Hyderabad, India, for example, we must have at least a theologically sound “speculation” about *what they think they know* about the main events of earth history. India is highly industrialized, and the millions of Western-educated Hindus have something like an intellectual dual personality. If we can’t win this cutting-edge sphere, we falter desperately in our sharing of the Gospel with the 600 million Hindus. But Evangelicals also have a tough time dealing with and digesting the world of science.

Scientists in Hyderabad will likely have a Hindu predisposition to believe that all evil is of God (ominously similar to Augustine’s neo-Platonism bequeathed to Aquinas, Calvin, and contemporary pastors), and thus, will have no initial interest in the Christian understanding of Satan. However, I don’t feel Evangelical theology defines very much in detail for Satan to be doing either. The hardest thing for the theistic position that we hold (in contrast to Hindu thought) is our ambiguous theological inheritance in regard to the origin of what I would call “deformed” life. To rehabilitate Satan, so to speak, and begin to put the blame on him for widespread distortion of God-created life forms, is to me the most satisfying (speculative) way to confront the pervasive violence and evil in nature, the existence of deadly bacteria, incredibly intelligent parasites, etc. I think this perspective (albeit speculation) can be electrifying to keen intellects with a Hindu background, because in that background lies at least dormant and unresolved the sweeping conviction that all life is sacred, and, of course, the resulting paradox that so much of it is deadly, violent and life-destroying.

Furthermore, our evangelism of Hindus is blunted and weakened seriously, it would seem, by our own unresolved inheritance in regard to evil. We find it difficult, yet logical, given Augustine’s input, that the pastors of Massachusetts ganged up on Jonathan Edwards to condemn him for “interfering with Divine Providence” when he set out to protect his mission-field Indians from that very deadly pathogen (by now eliminated) smallpox. We cannot and do not normally in our evangelism claim that God is not the author of smallpox, malaria, etc. We leave it to our hearers to suppose that our God either does not know of the ravages of malaria, does not care, or does not have the ability to do anything to eliminate this kind of suffering and death. My speculation is that our Gospel would carry far greater conviction if we allied our God on the side of planned opposition to these deadly pathogens, rather than letting this be the exclusive domain of the new gods, “the scientists.” I have speculated, as you can see, that these deadly pathogens are Satan’s work, specifically the result of his dark angels’ tinkering with DNA. Would our usual evangelism do well to contain that thought, clearly absolving our God from such blatant evil?

## Basic (Recent) Insights

### Autobiographically

(2002) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 237-38)

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

*The following are some tentative observations and thoughts which we may do well to take into account at least hypothetically in the attempt to form an overall understanding of the story of life on this planet and the stridently apparent contradictions to that development, thus finding an answer to the common perspective that God, not Satan, is the author of disease and suffering. Some of these thoughts are secular hypotheses. Others are distinctly Biblical and/or theological convictions. They are by no means all equally credible or substantial. Yet they are here because they all seem to contribute in some way to a single integrated understanding of earth history, divine initiative, the diabolical factors, and the meaning of all this for our mission in this life.*

√ The sheer physical extent of the marvels and glory of God's Creation has fairly recently at least doubled with the discovery of the incredible complexity of the microbiological world. While the Hubble telescope has also "doubled" our awareness of the vastness of outer space, in that area we do not see the same sort of creative ingenuity as in our own planet's record of the development of life and the intricacies of the microbiological world.

One function of this supposition is that it buttresses the idea of "intelligent design" and thus the existence of a Creator God.

√ One can imagine the existence of angelic workers for God, created by Him, possessing free will (thus enabling revolt), learning over the eons of time and working under God as His primary means of developing life forms on earth.

One function of this supposition is to offer an explanation for the very lengthy period of the development of life: it has taken as long as it has not because God is slow to work but because He has been eagerly following the progressive accumulation of the knowledge and skills of His finite angelic creatures.

√ Then, there is now the widely held scientific conclusion that predatory life forms first appeared at a certain, specific historical moment (the Cambrian Period, about 550 million years ago).

One function of this supposition is to suggest that this is the point at which a highly placed angelic worker and many angels turned against God and began the systematic despoiling of His creation.

- That is, this is when "the Evil One" rebelled and "fell" and he and his angelic followers (now called demons not angels) set about to tear down and destroy the work of God.

- Meanwhile, the remaining faithful angels immediately were pressed to develop defensive forms of life—crustaceans, porcupines with bristling quills. An immune system was developed to fight off the newly devised invading forms of life developed by demonic forces for the purpose of distorting and destroying every form of life and defaming the God of creation. These destructive forms of life include not only large predatory animals visible to the unaided eye, but also destructive viruses, bacteria, and tiny parasites which can only be seen with the use of special instruments.

√ May we then understand the creation of *homo sapiens* as soldiers to be allied with the good angels in the battle against the Adversary and his demonic angels?

One function of this supposition is the idea that, (coming after eons of distortion and destruction of a good creation), the Garden of Eden scenario might thus be seen as one in which this “human” new life form was seduced by that same Adversary through diabolic delusion. The result has been a human being that is seriously hampered in, and diverted from, its potential role as an ally against that Adversary.

Another corollary is that the result has then become that of our theological focus tending to block out all other concerns of God beyond the salvation of man, the restoration of human original vitality. It is as though man’s restoration is now God’s central concern rather than *homo sapiens* being a significant ally against the works of the devil.

√ What if Genesis 1:1 does not refer to the origin of the universe but can just as correctly refer to the beginning of God’s restoration of the earth following a major asteroidal collision?

Genesis events may thus describe a new “young earth” period following an immensely long “old earth” period, thus underscoring the existence of two different “falls,” Satan’s original rebellion and Adam’s tempted disobedience.

√ But, are we too calloused to be adequately aware of the apparently intentional destruction saturating all nature, the truly major violence, evil, such that practically all deaths are *premature*, even of humans (e.g., mainly through war and pestilence—see Chapter 38, Causes of Death in America)?

√ Is the development of resistant strains of dangerous pathogens an unguided evolutionary process or the result of intelligent evil design, and are genetic “defects” often actually intelligent *distortions* not *defects*?

√ Is it not also true that, in addition to the pervasive distortion of creation by the activity of diabolically violent and predatory forms of life, creation destruction has been accomplished perhaps even more by means of “diabolic delusions”? Take some examples.

- The delusion that widows can achieve a higher-level reincarnation through self-immolation on the funeral pyre of a deceased husband
- The delusion that one can achieve a virginal maiden-filled paradise by means of self-bombing in the midst of non-Muslims
- The delusion that a man can achieve a cure for AIDS by means of intercourse with a virgin

- The delusion that certain diseases can be avoided merely by altering conditions of environment, such as cold and dampness (tuberculosis), stress (duodenal ulcers), fatty foods (heart disease). The delusion that these are not the result of infections.

√ There is to be considered the theory that a serious syncretism became part of Western theology, through Augustine, to the effect that all evil is actually of God and, though we may not understand its meaning, is nevertheless part of His purpose.

Thus, if evil pathogens are of God, this tends to blind us to the need to work to destroy them.

Augustine was enveloped for a while in Manichaeism, a strong, Mormon-like form of Christianity. This group believed there were two equal Gods, one good, one evil. In his eventual reaction against this concept he virtually rendered Satan unemployed, while God, for often mysterious reasons, was thus the author of all evil.

Ironically, New Testament writers, over 300 years before Augustine had not wholly rejected the new insights they gained from their time in the land of Mani—where Zoroastrianism had afforded them a better insight into the prominence of Satan’s role in life. They now recognized the role of a powerful fallen angel as an Adversary to God’s good creation. Augustine’s delayed reaction, however, was to throw it all out in favor of the Old Testament’s consistent framing of all events as of God, with no room for an active NT Satan (except in I Chron 21:1 where, after returning from the Captivity, the writer acknowledges that 2 Sam 24:1 could more precisely have stated that Satan was the one tempting David to sin rather than God).

√ There would seem to be very little awareness among Christians today that the Christian life is that of a soldier in a war—a war to conquer evil and destroy the works of the evil one. Most Evangelicals believe somewhat anthropocentrically (humanistically) that the rescue of man—not the defeat of Satan—is God’s chief concern. Thus, to Evangelicals, saving souls is paramount rather than glorifying God, and therefore the Christian life is one of survival not really a battle against “the works of the Devil.”

Thus, it would appear that deliberate attempts to glorify God are actions of war, and will likely involve conflict, deception, struggle, injury, and premature death.

√ There is the explosive impact of the emergence of printed Bibles. This suddenly (in three centuries) drew the northern European civilization up to the level of, and finally way ahead of, the Islamic. It is also true that the Arabic language is not easily printed with moveable type, and that the Quran would not have the transforming effect of the Bible even if it had become widely translated and printed. In fact, its wide distribution might heighten appreciation for the Bible.

√ The unexpected discovery, with our moon landing, that the moon craters are not volcanic but impact craters and the subsequent rush to discover on earth similar impact craters and hence “extinction events.”

This is an insight which makes the Darwinian theory of gradual and unguided evolution much more difficult to hold.

√ To understand the comparison already mentioned as the “Rosetta Stone” of Biblical interpretation, namely the comparison between II Sam 24:1 and I Chron 21:1—the

evidence of two distinctly different ways of describing evil, a part of God's sovereignty but also the initiative of Satan. ■



## **The Condensed Story of This Planet**

(2002) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 235-36)

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

There is something very strange about our Bible. In its first appearance it was a phenomenally wise selection of earlier documents made a couple hundred years before Jesus was born, all translated into colloquial Greek, which happened to be a language which had become somewhat like English today, used more widely in ancient times than any other.

Who used this huge corpus of literature called “The Septuagint”? By the time Jesus was born “the children of Israel” were already scattered very widely, most of them in Greek-speaking territory. Two thirds of those taken into exile in Babylon had not yet returned. A million Jews lived in Greek-speaking Egypt. Jewish synagogues could be found all through the Roman empire, even up to the very border of Scotland, at Hadrian’s Wall. Their representatives appeared annually at the feast of the Passover in Jerusalem.

This first “book” was then eagerly translated into many other languages as well as becoming “The Bible of the Early Church.” This was probably the scripture which Jesus read in the Nazareth synagogue and quoted from in his ministry. Eighty percent of the quotations in the New Testament are from the Septuagint. It took a thousand years before Jews in later centuries amassed the same selection of documents in Hebrew. No other coherent selection of documents has even remotely had a similar impact on the story of the human race.

No other document has ever even remotely been studied so closely, in so great detail or generated even one hundredth the number of books commenting upon it. You might suppose that the Qur’an has had a similar impact, partly because it often quotes from the Bible. But it hasn’t. Even though it is commonly memorized as in the case of the American Taliban, John Lindh, who had already memorized one third of it, such efforts have little effect because that kind of memorization is of a language not understood. It would be like the average American memorizing the Latin Mass. Probably not more than several hundred people in the world can read and understand it in its original language and it is not supposed to be translated. Even then every fifth sentence is uninterpretable.

The Septuagint, however, is much larger, containing both what is often erroneously called the Old Testament (itself four times the size of the Qur’an) and also a substantial addition of helpful writings called The Apocrypha which continued to be included in the Bible until fairly recently in history. The well-known King James Version of the Bible contained the Apocrypha, and was not printed without it until the appearance of the Bible Societies which wanted to produce the Bible in large quantities at the most economical cost. Catholics continued to include the Apocrypha, and so do many modern translations.

As the Septuagint made its way into the Greek world it is not surprising that additional documents in Greek were added in the decades and centuries following the

death of Christ, being firmed up as the New Testament when the Roman Empire began to favor “Christianity,” (the political label of Greek movement treasuring the Septuagint).

In the next centuries this now larger corpus of material, including the Old Testament, so-called, the Apocrypha and the New Testament has wielded an influence without parallel in all human history. To this day it is still the primary ingredient in the missionary expansion of the church, and, in fact, its importance can in part be drawn from the fact that Biblical faith and human transformation continues to occur even without missionaries once a serviceable translation of a significant portion of the Bible exists. At this stage of history in the non-Western world there are, in fact, more zealous believers who are somewhat separate from the formal Christian movement than the number of zealous believers who are clearly a part of the movement called Christianity. As both Rick Leatherwood and Jim Kramer have testified, parts of the Septuagint in modern translation still have compelling power. Of course, the so-called New Testament displaying as it does the wonders of the ministry of Jesus as well as the mysterious process whereby a Semitic faith can be clothed in Greek garments, has also had a powerful role in extending and confirming the meaning of the Septuagint.

It is no wonder, then, that the human story cannot be told without reference to this book.

One of the constant emphases of the book goes beyond its own words. It speaks of the heavens and the earth declaring God’s glory day and night pouring forth a message which is heard in every speech and language. We read in Romans that “since the creation of the world God’s otherwise invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood (how?) through what has been made.”

What God has made, whether the inorganic world of the universe or the biological world of this planet, is thus a powerful factor in addition to this all-important book, the Bible. Indeed, it is incumbent upon us to make sure that our understanding of the Bible and our understanding of God’s creation are seen together.

When, for example, village people in England began to uncover huge bones buried deep in the earth, it was immediately important, reverberating as far as Oxford University, to try to understand how this new insight fit into God’s creation and what the Bible was telling us. Now, almost 200 years later, we have literally hundreds of thousands of addition insights into creation—not only evidence of a long story of development, but evidence of 1,000 times as many extinct creatures as are presently alive today, but the whole new world of microbiology. How does this book of creation and the Bible fit together? This is no small question for modern man. The “book” which pours forth a message day and night in all languages and tongues clearly speaks more loudly now than ever today.

## How Should We Deal with the Phenomenon of Disease?

(Dec. 8, 2002) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 173-74)

*[The following is an entry in the prayer log at the U.S. Center for World Mission during the 6 am to 10 am shift.]*

Sunday, 8 December 2002

0600–1000 Ralph Winter This is a great place to start out on a birthday, even though I will only be able to go to the 11 O’Clock service and not Sunday School. Today I’m 78 and feel like 60. It is hard to believe that the tests last week showed the telltale signs of bone marrow cancer (myeloma) continuing steadily to increase. It means that no matter how fine I feel now I may not be able to count on very many more months of that. It’s funny. We all know that life is uncertain and that in a bike accident like Dan Eddy’s we could actually break our necks, etc., but in my case a fairly likely date has been set, so to speak, not too far in the future. This allows and indeed encourages pinchpenny use of time almost like never before. Of course I have not for many years been regarding my time much differently simple because of the thrill and excitement of making every day and hour count for the work of Christ.

It really is thrilling to be my age and in my health. I feel I have learned the most important things of my life since I was 70! The more you know the easier it is to attach new information to what you already know. This is true in the realm of the spiritual, in regard to historical information, as well as science.

At the same time knowing things that the average citizen may not know is unhandy because it separates you off into some kind of isolation. Most of what I have “learned” since I was 70 has to do with the nature of God and His Word. I have been especially fascinated by praying and meditating about the glory of God. I have come to the place where I am doubtful that by singing over and over again “glory, glory” we are learning more about His glory. Suppose you were separated from your earthly father at birth and at the age of 30 met him for the first time. If you were to raise your hands and sing “wonderful father” over and over again it would not expand your knowledge of him at all.

I don’t mean people are trying to avoid God by their worship songs. I believe all of that is quite sincere. What I am thinking is that most people don’t know what to do to know God better. Or, take another example. Suppose you get engaged to a girl who lives in a distant city. Every letter you get enlightens you more about her. And going over older letters may even give a bit of additional knowledge about this person. But pure mediation would have distinct limitations in providing you with new and additional information about her.

I am the one who pushed for a TV set in here, and specifically because of the amazing video by R. C. Sproul on the holiness of God. I don’t see that video here anymore but I continue to believe that a weekly or biweekly four-hour time of prayer and meditation here can be best served if we have input not merely output. One of the last things prayer is, is talking to God. Listening to Him is more important and learning about Him is also important. If you called up someone to whom you are engaged and did all the talking you would not learn much about her or him.

So how do we find out more about God? Through His words and deeds, not by talking to Him or even singing about Him (unless the song or hymn reveals new things not just generalities). His words and deeds are seen preeminently in the Bible. His deeds are also and magnificently seen in His Creation. Thus we have two books to consult: the Book of Creation (nature) and the Book of Revelation (the Bible). Note that the Book of Creation came first and that “there is no speech or language where (its) voice is not heard (Ps 19:1-3). In Romans 1:20 we read “Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen.”

\Scientists peer into the one book often with sincerity and genuine awe. Religious people peer into the other book often with sincerity and awe. But the religious people have become alienated from the Book of Creation by some of the scientists who have misread and misinterpreted it. They tell all the scientists that their book is no good. And, of course, many scientists say the book of the religious is no good. But God meant us to read both books! It is our obligation to read, study, and worship Him as we learn of the true glory of God that can be seen in both books. Thus, not only prayer but worship is seen in a new light. Prayer and worship thus also consist of witnessing and digesting and learning about God. That is why prayerful and worshipful reading of the Bible is itself a form of prayer and worship (here in the prayer room). But if I brought in a text on microbiology I would guess a few of our good people here would be shocked.

I wonder if we cannot learn something from the way we treat the fabulous video we are widely promoting, “Unlocking the Mystery of Life.” We all enjoyed it in part because it tears down Darwinism and bolsters our faith in God as the Intelligent Designer. But note, it is combative in some ways. It pours scorn (courteously of course) on enemies of the Gospel. We do not use it as a worship tape, however. No one I know is putting some of the awesome glory of God in the small world of microbiological world into worship songs. There we simply go on and on praising God “generically.” Is it not obvious that there is something dreadfully wrong with our relationship to the Book of Creation?

OK, take me. Here I am a few months away from my own death by an apparently irreversible destruction of my bone marrow. My daughter Linda in this very log sincerely presents the idea “that many of our sinful responses to life (fear, anxiety, unforgiveness, bitterness etc.) have negative consequences in our physical bodies.” (Incidentally, wrongly understood this is a veritable recipe for morbid introspection.) Well, I certainly have no problem believing this.

I know that Linda also believes “devoutly” (yes that’s the right word!) in fighting cancer by proper nutrition. Oh yes, exercise, too. And all of this I devoutly believe. But I ask, Does nutrition, exercise, banishing anxiety, etc. protect you or cure you of Malaria? Are our immune systems normally capable of defeating Malaria, Tuberculosis, Smallpox, Anthrax, etc.? No, not normally. And, if the latest thinking is correct slow-acting viruses underlie heart disease as well as cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s, and Schizophrenia.. And perfectly healthy people like Jeff Brom are keeling over every day from heart disease, So, do we go on just praying in addition to making sure we heed these other things (nutrition, exercise, peace of soul and mind, etc.)?

Note that all of those things are mere defenses against disease. However, surprising recent insights are that all of the listed diseases are all basically caused by outside invaders which we need to fight in the same sense as we fight the crime of visible

terrorists. It is understandable, of course, that we would not automatically think about going beyond prayer and taking concrete measures to quell the source of these destructive diseases if we did not know that they are caused by attacking pathogens which our immune systems, no matter how healthy, cannot always overcome.

Here is where closer study is needed of the Book of Creation to discern the difference between the beauty God put there and the violence and gruesome cruelty Satan has put there. Here is where we cannot leave this to secular scientists. Do you realize that we have not even kept a list of our own staff and immediate relations that have died of heart attacks, cancer etc.!

Why? Because we continue to assume that there is nothing you can do but hope and pray it does not happen to you! OK, there WAS nothing we could do (beyond the many reasonable defensive measures mentioned earlier). There is not NOW nothing that can be done. And this massive change is the result of a relative handful of (mainly secular) people studying the Book of Creation and discerning therein that God is not the author of the twisting and distortions of that Creation, but that there is a whole array of intelligent pathogens to be fought and exterminated. Meanwhile Evangelicals often believe by default that it must be God that is destroying his own creation. (Sort of like the opposite where the Pharisees resorted to the position that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of Satan!). Jesus healed diseases. He did not blame God for them. Peter described Jesus' ministry as "healing all those oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). He recognized an outside enemy, not a lack of proper nutrition, exercise, etc. although it is obvious that an outside attack is more likely to succeed if we ignore those defensive measures.

So what does this all lead to? It seems likely to mean that now that we have new knowledge about the outside sources of several massive diseases problems that we cannot in good conscience fail to do what we can to mount new offensive warfare with those attacking sources.

My time is running out on this shift. A week ago I spent a couple of hours prayerfully perusing a book that patiently, detailedly, describes how over 200 years of missionary work went down the drain. The word, *Florida*, in the 16th century included not only our present state by that name but also the entire southeast of the USA, in the triangle from Virginia to Alabama to Miami. In that area lived literally hundreds of thousands of Indians (native Americans). Well, between about 1530 and 1800 primarily Spanish work was undertaken employing both soldiers and missionaries, the latter very faithfully. Lots of good things and unwise things happened, but eventually "missions" (outposts) of the kind we see still standing in California, 150 of them, were planted. Each one was a worship center, an educational center, and an industrial center.

However, today there is not a physical trace of a single one of those painstakingly established missions. Worse still the entire Indian population, as in Cuba, has totally vanished, dying primarily of European diseases. All of those hundreds of thousands of people! Their religion certainly did not save them, at least not in this life. Neither did ours. Are we to send missionaries around the world simultaneously to implant disease and offer eternal salvation? You will say no, not intentionally. But what about the diseases they already have? Are we to help them to eradicate those diseases (not just be kind to those who get sick)?

It is not obvious how we can help, if in fact virtually no one is trying to figure out how to eradicate pathogens, especially those pathogens whose existence we have not even thought about. But few realize how little attention is given to the ultimate causes of disease, or how confused we have been as to what the causes of, say, heart disease are. Last week's TIME and NEWSWEEK both reported that the percentage of people who die of heart disease but who do not have high cholesterol, etc. is now finally admitted to be 50%. We have a lot of learning to do and as a nation we don't seem well prepared to do that study. But that is another story.

## **The Instrumentalities of God**

(2002) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 239)

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

We all believe that the Holy Spirit guides and enables us to do things we would not on our own have done. We, in this sense are an instrumentality of God. There is nothing He cannot do without us, but He has apparently chosen us to do things for Him. It is not that He is in need. He apparently has chosen to create finite beings who can think, choose, learn, uphold or betray His goals.

The most spectacular single characteristic of this universe is that in even a single galaxy of a known 50 billion, in even a single solar system within that vast galaxy we call the Milky Way (because its enormous swath so dominates our skies), on a single planet orbiting that sun, we find all kinds of creatures which to all appearances have a will of their own, and whose behavior therefore is not completely predictable.

Is free will inherently contradictory to the purposes of God? May we assume safely that God may have had a good reason to create finite beings with freewill? I think we must.

In Iraq all kinds of bad things are going on. Most of them are attributed rightly to Saddam Hussein, even though he personally is not always involved. Oh, he can on occasion strangle an assistant in the sight of others in order to make a point, but it is likely that he usually employs others to do such things. Yet we say, "Hussein did this and did that", whenever it would appear to be his will in operation.

In the White House all kinds of good things are going on. But, again, Bush does not personally do everything. It would appear that Condoleezza Rice often does things and says things for him. But our newspapers say, "Bush did this and did that ..."

Does God work this way? When an Evangelical is elected to high office we may say "God put an Evangelical in the White House," or something like that, even though in fact the Holy Spirit may have moved the hearts of thousands of voters to elect that person.

In the same way we may rightly attribute to God many things which in fact are done by unseen beings which are rather vaguely called "messengers," when in fact such beings may do far more than deliver messages.

Popular views of God have Him doing everything that happens. One pastor told me that the power with which a gnat bats its wings is the power of God. That may be true in some sense, but we must resist the perspective which gives so much direct credit to God that even Satan is unemployed.

We seem to be content to think that the vast panoply of life forms on earth were created by God in some mysterious direct manner, without the help of intermediate created beings.

In many mysterious situations today, where perhaps someone is lingering on death, we assume that God can may choose to heal a diseased spleen, erase a tumor, etc. without any thought at all about the possible involvement of intermediate created beings.

The reason I am pursuing this, incidentally, is because I am concerned that we not expect God to do things which either angels or men are supposed to do. It would be tragic if we are confused about what He will get done through His unseen instrumentalities and what He expects human beings to do

Let's pause for a moment and take a close look at the Bible and its use of certain words for intermediate created beings that are neither divine nor human.

*[NOTE: Here introduce the distinction between words and terms, the latter being defined words. Use angels and adversaries as examples, and point out how the use of each changes throughout the Bible.]*



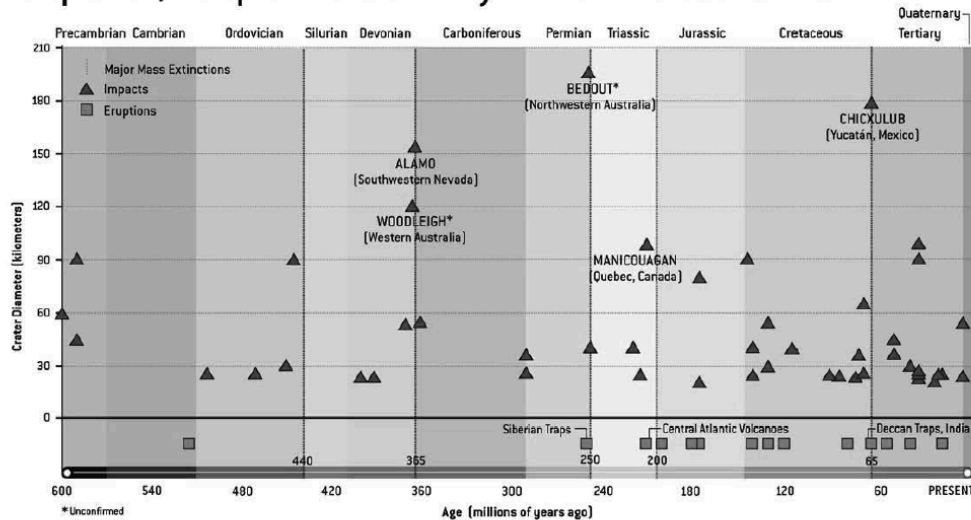
# The Significance of Pre-Adamic Evil

(2002) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 223-27)

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## The Significance of Pre-Adamic Evil

### Impacts, Eruptions and Major Mass Extinctions



In this diagram, taken from the March 2002 issue of *Scientific American*, the forty-five small dark triangles represent collisions that have been detected in various parts of the earth from huge rocks from outer space.

These shown only represent rocks large enough to be *three miles in diameter*, leaving remnant craters 15 or more miles across, mostly larger. Thousands of smaller impacts, unrecorded here, have taken place, which are much harder to trace. The Arizona meteor crater is plain to see, however, and it is only a mile wide.

The vertical height of the little triangles represents the size of the craters resulting, indirectly the size of the object from outer space.

The largest one, which eliminated 90% of all life forms, took place 250 million years ago, and is here shown just to the right of center. More recently, the collision extinction of the dinosaurs, only 65 million years ago, hit Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, leaving clear evidences of a crater 110 miles in diameter, estimated to have been caused

by an object *30 miles in diameter*.

*What is the meaning of all this? This is the period in which predatory forms of life first appeared. This is the evidence of the emergence of evil prior to Adam. Was it when Satan fell?*

(Incidentally, it would appear that life has again and again been wiped out or nearly wiped out. Is this parallel to the phenomenon of the biblical flood closer to our time?)

Many of the dinosaurs were really atrocious ferocious creatures—God designed? They were done in by the major collision 250 million years ago. Mammals came into their own since then.

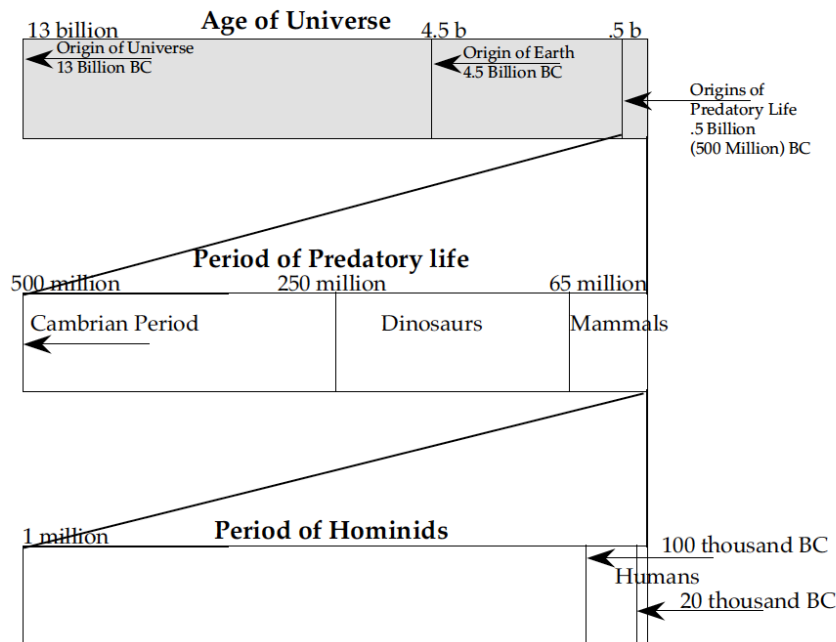
Homo Sapiens appeared so late in this picture that the length of the period would be represented at the far right by less than the thickness of a piece of paper (actually 3 ten-thousands of an inch).

It would appear that at the present time we are in the middle of a 22,000-year "interglacial" period. Also, that the enormous collision in the middle of the past 500 million years, was related to the breakup of the continents and the plate tectonic drift which allowed the location of

the continents today.

At 1.5 ten-thousands of an inch the asteroid that carved out the chaos described in Genesis 1:1 may have hit, providing the opportunity for an "Edenic" sphere in which a mew variety of human created "in God's image" first appeared along with many animals none of which were carnivorous (1:29,30) as was apparently the case before the Cambrian Period.

Ominously, the last-minute appearance and gradual domination of this planet by humans displays an unnerving violence of human against human which is not characteristic of any other form of life. War plus pestilence held down world population for a long time before Christ, and now relatively suddenly poses the opposite problem of *overpopulation* as both war and disease have been partially conquered.



In recent times enormous research energies in many nations have produced an unusual consensus about most of the picture above, to which our school children and college students are now routinely exposed.

Sunday schools generally confine themselves to the events of the Bible, ignoring the spectacular 2,000 years since Bible times and thus the Bible's own remarkable formative influence on all subsequent history. Sunday school materials also take little notice of the increasing evidences for an "old earth," and the vast reaches of time prior to the appearance of human beings on earth.

In the early 1800s the gradual discovery of ancient bones of ancient and violent creatures no longer in existence did not trouble Evangelicals. It was widely assumed that all this took place before Genesis and before the Garden of Eden. The Scofield study Bible incorporated this perspective. Darwin, however, had been profoundly perturbed by the evidences of the pervasive violence in nature and had proposed a (wacky) scheme of unaided, unguided evolution as a means of protecting a good God from the accusation of creating evil and violence. Secular thinkers grabbed his idea and went further to suggest the

drastic idea that no God was then needed to explain life at all.

Then, in the late 1800s the prophetess of the Seventh Day Adventists, Ellen White, came up with the "young earth" idea that the entire record of life on earth was created all at once, even if the record looked old. Her view gradually won its way in certain Evangelical circles to the point that now the growing Christian "home school" movement is dominated by this view which is commonly called *creationism* or Creation Science.

However, a new and different major force has also appeared in the form of an "intelligent design" movement, which persuasively suggests that no accidental process could possibly account for the design and ingenuity in life forms (the "irreducible complexity") especially in the newly discovered microbiological realities. But this movement (promoted by Behe, Johnson, Demski and others), while it accepts an old earth, makes no comment about the peculiar and horrifying violence, suffering and cruelty all through nature, thus leaving us again with Darwin's problem of a God of love being the perpetrator of all evil in nature.

The difficulty in all this, whether we

speak of Darwin, the Creationists and their young earth, or the Intelligent Design people, is the curious reluctance of all three to suggest the existence of an evil counterforce that has intelligently set out to corrupt, destroy, and pervert a good creation. Yet this is exactly the Biblical presentation of Satan rebelling against God and taking one-third of the angels with him.

Gordon Kirk's observation that "Satan's greatest achievement has been to cover his tracks" urges us to recognize that we are extensively unaware of diabolic activity in the world.

From the record above it seems impelling that the appearance of predatory forms of life would be a likely time for the fall of Satan and the ensuing efforts of his cohorts to twist, pervert, and defile creation.

In scripture we see the prominence of the emphasis on the coming of God's Kingdom, and note that "the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn 3:8)." What if all disease pathogens as well as all violent forms of life are the work of Satan? How would that amplify and refocus our global mission? We will take this question up next.

Once we reflect on these diagrams, and on the possibility of vast corruption of creation prior to the events of the Garden of Eden, we can more properly assess what is involved in praying "Our Father in Heaven, honored be your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Thus, we can conceive not only of Adam as "falling" but of an earlier "falling" which resulted in extensive distortion of all life for a very long time prior to the appearance of human beings on this planet. That is, when Satan appears in the Garden of Eden, he has already achieved a very long crime record.

This, then, throws into a new light just what the full scope may be of redemptive efforts. It highlights what may be inferred from the statement that “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of Satan” (1 John 3:8).

We do well to notice that our human reflections are so readily human centered and humanistic, that it may be a bit shocking to realize that Jesus did not just come to save sinners, to rescue human beings from evil, but that His death is somehow tied in with the task of restoring all creation. Yet that is the clear, blunt picture as we look back into the New Testament.

It may well be that when Paul before Agrippa declared that his purpose was to “*open people’s eyes, to deliver them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God,*” he included opening our eyes to this larger redemptive task. After all, Paul is the one who in writing to the Romans spoke of “the whole creation groaning and straining waiting for the redemption of the Sons of God” (Rom 8:22-23). Indeed the NT often speaks of the “eyes of our understanding being enlightened.” Mere insight into God’s intentions is of exceeding importance.

Almost every week Barbara Jones, in the Voyagers Class calls up as part of the prayer chain to relate some additional news about another soldier or two, or three, who have been wounded or have fallen on the battlefield of life. People even today are so very likely to be attacked and dragged down by disease that the very idea of natural rather than *premature death* has only recently been *under discussion*. In *Luther’s day* so many infants died the average life span was under 30. John Wesley was the 15th birth in his family and his brother Charles was number 17, and yet there were never more than five children in his family.

In this light it seems reasonable to give credit to good angels, working at God’s bidding through the centuries, to have made such great progress in the development of the human immune system, as it is called. Basically, all it is, is an incredible system of defenses in our blood stream against invading pathogens. It is estimated that our immune systems are capable of detecting 3 million million different attacking pathogens and destroying them before they get a fatal foothold within our bodies.

Only relatively recently has medicine increasingly recognized that the chief way in which disease can be fought is by doing whatever will allow our immune systems to cope with both old and new dangers. A vaccine, for example, is merely a tiny advance warning to our systems, allowing the development of antibodies in advance of a major attack. A smaller intake of food and a low sugar diet, for example, may unburden our system thus allowing it to cope more effectively with cold germs. By contrast, chemotherapy and radiation kills both good entities as well as bad, and is not by anyone considered an ideal treatment.

But we have been slow to recognize the *battlefield* in all of this. We don’t really feel there is much we can do to fight the sources of these attacks. If all heart disease and cancer could be attributed to street muggers we would be doubling and tripling our police force. But in the case of tiny pathogens we pretty much wait until we get sick and then go and see a doctor. We focus, thus, on treatment *after the damage appears*, or look for the best methods of avoiding damage, that is, prevention. But we focus mysteriously little on destroying the very source of a disease, as we have in the case of smallpox and polio. Companies cannot get paid for that activity.

And, only recently have we even conceived of correcting genetic defects which lower our defenses against certain pathogens. We call them, notice, “genetic defects,” when we would, in battlefield perspective, call them “genetic distortions” planted by an evil intelligence at war with the goodness and beauty of God’s creation.

Thus, the principal concern in all of this is the distortion we can see in many people’s ideas of God. Pause and consider Tozer’s statement that “*The most important thing about you is what comes to your mind when you think of God.*” Our theological inheritance was hammered out before germs were known of. A full awareness of the larger scope of the battle against God is not yet ours. In regard to horrifying violence in nature, people have become so used to it, so accustomed to it, so hardened to it, so calloused about it that they have drifted into suppositions that this must be the way God created things. (Only Satan is happy about that.) And, people get to thinking that a God who does not mind violence, cruelty and suffering, whether among animals or man, is not the most appealing kind of a God when we set out to win people to Christ, His Son.

Karl Marx jeered, “Christians only speak of pie in the sky after you die” because Christians did not seem to be arrayed effectively in any kind of an all-out war against evil in this world. And, of course, in his day the very thought of Satanic ingenuity behind disease pathogens was nowhere in sight.

It is commonplace as you think about pagan gods to find them capricious and cruel. That is understood as a scary warning to those who do not behave. But in those pagan gods there is little consistency, and there is no sympathy or love, much less forgiveness. Nothing like the tender love of a father for his children, or the compassion of a nursing mother for her infant, of which Paul speaks in his letter to the Thessalonians.

What often happens, then, is that instead of our winning people to Christ and through Him to His Father in Heaven by glorifying God, we turn instead to an activity we call “getting people saved.” True enough, to save people from punishment is easier to sell than to portray God as the Father who rushes out to welcome a wayward son. Why easier? Because people’s picture of our Father in Heaven continues to be mixed up in the paradoxes reflected by the pervasive presence in all nature of pain and suffering.

Our theologies, of course, have tortured explanations for why God allows suffering. We assume too easily that God is the immediate instigator of all that happens, forgetting the constant Biblical stress on the diabolical, destructive forces arrayed against the will and purposes of God.

Least of all are we and our resources to any really serious extent enlisted in fighting this evil. We pay our money to doctors to cure us but we don’t pay very much at all, or pay much attention to the basic task of eradicating the disease pathogens themselves in the Name of Christ.

I will repeat what I have said many times about my own discovery that the enormous efforts we invest in curing heart problems and cancer invasions amounts to about 100, or maybe even 1,000 to one the effort we are making to *understand the origins* of either.

Last Sunday’s *LA Times* Book Review section gives a two page review of a new book called, *Scientific Fictions*” which details the distressing amount of personal rivalry and pride that haunts much of scientific discovery. You would think that researchers would eagerly share their findings and work together for solutions. That is by no means the actual situation. It turns out that the very head of the National Cancer Institute, the

world's largest institution focusing on cancer, is the one this book portrays as grossly violating ethics in falsifying inputs from French scientists.

Isn't it time that Evangelicals rally to war against Satan and his works? Can we begin to bolster, praise and participate in an otherwise mixed picture in the war on disease which *National Geographic* speaks about in its lead article February 2002? It says in title-sized letters, "We concluded that microbes were no competition for our big human brains. We were wrong." Do we have to wait for *National Geographic* to interpret the Bible?

At this point it is quite possible that some will say, "What in the world could microbes have to do with the Kingdom of God or global evangelism?" The answer is simple. Distorted microbes war against the Kingdom of God. Distorted genes make animals violent and destructive. Destructive parasites kill off many varieties of plant and animal life, and as well as, by the malarial parasite, 1.2 million people a year, most of them children, four of whom die every minute from malaria alone. All this massive damage to the purposes of the Kingdom of God amounts to noise so loud that people can't hear what we are preaching to them.

We are acquainted with venomous snakes. We are not so well acquainted with venomous and ingenious *parasites* we can't see, or still smaller but equally venomous *bacteria*, or still smaller but equally venomous killer *viruses*. And, unfortunately, all too often "what is out of sight is out of mind" due to our all-too-present human limitations of consciousness.

But prayer is what can make the invisible visible, the unaware to become aware, the irresolute to be resolved, the fuzzy to be sharp, the darkened to be light, the confusing to be crystal clear, the marginal to be central, the undervalued to be highly prized.

### **First the Good News**

We commonly talk in positive terms about the story of man since the time of Abraham, and rightly so. During these amazing 4,000 years many marvelous gains have been made in knowledge, and also in conquests of disease and even war, to which rising world population is indirect testimony. This, if you will, is "the Good News."

There is also bad news. Satan tackled the new creation of human beings and new animal life with a virulence which induced the fall of Adam, the curse of Adam, and new and unprecedented evil to contend with. The new creation thus joined the already corrupted creation which had begun much earlier—at the time of the fall of Satan himself. And now, as Paul says, "the whole creation groans and suffers awaiting the redemption of the sons of God" (Rom 8). Note that the redemption of all creation somehow depends on the redemption of man.

### **The Good News Came to Abraham**

So, let's try to recapitulate the good news beginning with Abraham before focusing upon the evil still remaining 4,000 years later and still to be conquered.

If we look closely at the story of this planet in these last forty centuries we find that we know so much more than we know about any previous period that we can easily be drowned in detail, covered by an avalanche of fact so that it is hard to see the overall won in the name of God, in the name of Christ. But to see the overall picture we need to focus on truly explosive developments.

First of all, reflect for a second on our dichotomy between Pre-Adamic events and Post-Adamic events. Note that this essentially divides the whole of the story of this planet into pre-human events and human-period events.

The story since Abraham then becomes the unusually positive part of the Post-Adamic period, namely, the post Abrahamic period, occurring in just the past 40 centuries. In the Post-Adamic period before Abraham the new, brilliantly endowed form of life we call human had produced only a very checkered record. The earliest human skulls found anywhere are bashed in, clustered in ancient cooking holes. Even professors of early life in North America have reluctantly concluded that recently discovered evidence betrays the fact that the earliest known inhabitants were cannibals. Recent deciphering of Central American glyphs and other evidences has clarified that both Mayas and Aztecs were brilliant but violent civilizations, which in their later stages sacrificed thousands of human beings annually.

While much of this corruption is post-Abraham chronologically, it all represents human behavior prior to the influence of the new factor at work in the lineage of Abraham and his children by faith.

And, while Genesis indicates that one purpose of human beings was to care for and name the animals, the record of homo sapiens is precisely the opposite. Humans prior to Abraham already had destroyed virtually all larger mammals (such as one-ton flightless birds in Australia, or hairy mammoths in northern climes), and to this day continue in the process of destroying all life, as well as being dangerous to the survival of human beings themselves.

A significant counterforce, however, was announced to Abraham. Abraham in his genetic lineage and in his lineage of faith as well would be blessed (meaning inherited) of God, and would become active in the blessing or re-inheritance of all creation, human beings in particular.

### **Five Major “Explosions”**

In the forty centuries since Abraham, countless small “explosions” of God’s reign, God’s Kingdom, have taken place, in individuals’ lives, in the life of families, in nations and regions, and now globally. But five absolutely major “redemptive explosions” can be discerned, which, in particular extended the faith into new cultural clothing

Only some of these explosions coincide with the “Five Renaissances” which I have long pointed out as being roughly spaced by 400-year intervals in the last 2,000 years (where I was trying to establish the value of a grid). While all five of those “flourishings” of redemption actually took place, and serve to give structure to the 2,000-year period, they would not all classify with the magnitude or strategic significance of the five I would like now to identify.

### **Enter: The Greek Bible (the Septuagint) and the Classical Explosion**

The first took place before Christ was born. It was induced by a series of revivals in “the old testament,” but was definitively initiated (or “detonated”) by a unique selection-and-translation project which created the Bible of the early church, a body of literature which we improperly call “the old testament” (less deceptively the *Septuagint*) a document more influential in human history than any other. It is a document in Greek—

which became the most widely employed language of the ancient world, thanks to Alexander the Great, who died in 323 BC.

By Jesus' day this document was what was most likely read out loud in 10,000 synagogues within and beyond the Roman Empire. God had seen for his people to move or be moved to the ends of the earth, and this Greek document became the unique driving force that emblazoned the Spirit of God within these thousands of widely scattered fellowships. Not surprisingly these thousands of communities (synagogues) attracted onlookers and fringe participants, called *God-fearers or devout persons*. A much smaller number of those attracted went over all the way, circumcision and all, to become outright converts, which were called *proselytes*.

When Jesus and Paul appeared on the scene their combined influence was instrumental in engineering the extension of God's full-fledged blessing to these sincere, worshipping "onlookers" who had stopped short of outright cultural conversion. These million or so "God fearers" and "devout persons," that is, the serious "onlookers" who are so frequently referred to in the book of Acts no doubt became the vast bulk of Paul's followers, followers of God who were now vibrantly disabused of the notion that they would have to become Jews in order to be first-class citizens in God's Kingdom.

These people may not for the most part have needed to repent and turn to God. They had done that. They needed now to be saved from a misunderstanding. They needed a renewal and legitimization of the faith they already had. In Christ they discovered a once-for-all sacrifice that released them from the time-honored sacrificial system which had for many centuries led devout Jews in merely a symbolic sense. As Paul expounded truths of the Bible that dated back to Deuteronomy, such as the fact that "true circumcision" had always been a matter of heart not of the flesh, these God-fearing Gentiles were able to take confident steps of faith into a new and closer fellowship with the living God.

Correspondingly, in the case of the devout Jews in these 10,000 synagogues, they too had much to gain by believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If they had ever not fully understood the meaning of "true circumcision" (as mentioned in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah) they could hear it plain now, and could examine their hearts and find new depths of meaning to their faith.

Some no doubt were very disturbed by the of the God fearers, and the resulting new and separate fellowship of Gentiles together as first-class citizens in the Kingdom. Yet some of the Jews actually went with those Gentiles and ended up sensing now their own second-class status which we see reflected in Romans 14, where gentile believers, relishing their new cultural freedom in Christ looked down their nose at Jewish believers in Christ who continued with certain purely Jewish customs.

In any case, the result of all this was what I am calling the First Major Redemptive Explosion. In this event the true faith of Israel became seeded within all the cultures surrounding Israel, prominently the Greek and the Roman, but also the Armenian, the Aramaic, the Syriac, etc.. This Biblical faith took over like a spark in a tinder box virtually the entire constituency of the God-fearers, who may have numbered a million alongside the ten million Jews and their ten thousand synagogues.

However, this Biblical faith, this worship of the one true God eventually became entangled with the political and military machinery of Rome (for example when Christianity was pronounced Rome's official religion in the late fourth century) and it

*then became more and more inevitable that true worshipers within or near the empire's sphere, but disliking that influence, would not forever yield to the cultural hegemony of the Roman empire nor to a faith officially representing that power.*

### **Number Two: The Celtic Explosion**

Meanwhile, a quiet but exceedingly influential “explosion” was taking place among Celtic peoples, mainly beyond the extension of the Roman empire. These people constituted a “Celtic belt” that ranged from Ireland, Scotland, northern and western England, the peninsula of Brittany in France, Galicia in Spain, across the northern frontier of the Roman empire clear over into “Galatia” in modern-day Turkey, the Celtic sphere to which Paul wrote his letter the *Galatians*, a word in Greek which is *galatoi* and specifically referred to Celtic peoples (note the similarity in the first three consonants).

These peoples were won mainly by influences from the east end of the Mediterranean, and thus diverged from the Roman influences which eventually made their way into their territory.

They responded avidly in Patrick's day, in the fifth century, but were already aware of the faith possibly as early as Paul's work among the *galatoi*.

In any case their example of vigorous in-depth grasp of the Bible and scholarship as well as missionary work is absolutely unique in the first millennium since Christ. They sent at Charlemagne's request three thousand teachers over to the continent to staff his schools, and were in demand to teach Latin in Rome. They provided the alphabet which (except for capital letters) is theirs not “Roman” as we often think. Many other features of Western Christianity derived from the Celtic explosion.

Thomas Cahill is quite fairly entitled his book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. It would be very hard to overstate the contribution of the Celtic saints.

### **Number Three: The Semitic Explosion**

The next major additional “explosion,” or split-off began in the cultural basin southeast of the central Roman empire, namely the Semitic. An intelligent, mystical and somewhat unbalanced man named Mohammed was both attracted by the Biblical faith as it was manifested by Roman Christians and yet was also was puzzled and turned away by the cultic “tri-theism” of the particular form of Christianity with which he came in contact. He liked many things, including praying many times a day at set hours.

Nevertheless, *on valid grounds*, both ethnic and theological, he started a separate movement today called Islam, which in size is second only to “Christianity” (to use the political term adopted by the Roman empire) among the various manifestations of faith inspired by the canonical scriptures. However, Islam's chief handicap has been its limited access to the entire Bible for its roots and guidance. Only the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Gospels are quoted in the Quran. By his day no translations had been made into Arabic.

But, in any case, Islam expanded rapidly, taking over, like a spark in a tinder box, many former “Christians” who were glad now to embrace a form of the faith that was not politically tied to the cultural traditions of the Roman Empire. This rapid development was parallel, then, to the rapid growth of the early church which took over many former “God fearers” who were glad to embrace a form of the faith that was not culturally bound to the Jewish tradition.



The result was clearly a Third Major Redemptive Explosion in that it not only took over former believers, it eventually endeared itself to millions of people in many other cultures as well, today more than a billion souls, and encompassing mainly populations with a significant biological growth rate—significant in the sense that it is a faster rate than is seen among culturally advanced Christian nations, even though it is a rate that is much, much slower than the pace of the kind of evangelism for which the Christian movement is well known.

#### **Number Four: The Protestant Withdrawal**

The Fourth Major Redemptive Explosion was also a non-Roman and anti-Roman breakaway movement, this time not to the southeast, but to the northwest. To the extent that the Biblical faith won the hearts of people to the north and northwest whose lands had never been, or had only briefly been, conquered by the Romans, to that extent tinder box conditions existed that might easily have predicted another major breakaway movement.

In this fourth case, a well-known agent of change was Martin Luther. It is hardly necessary to explain in detail the events of the Protestant Reformation/Rebellion, which broke away from the Greek and Latin Mediterranean cultural vehicle for Biblical faith. But it is necessary to point out that it was once again the impact of the Bible, now greatly aided by the Gutenberg mass-copying technology that catapulted canonical scripture into greater and wider use than had ever before been the case. It is as if all of human history speeded up. Unlike Islam, which had limited access to the whole Bible, Protestantism and Catholicism in the 16th century now came into amazing new, even grass roots, access.

It is unfortunate that Islam failed at this key juncture to exploit either the printing press or the Bible. Was it because Arabic script did not as easily lend itself to moveable type? Was it because the Qur'an has irretrievably replace the Bible? (Somewhat like the Book of Mormon tends to replace the Bible in the Mormon tradition?)

In any case, at this time in history Islam was the larger and exceedingly better educated movement. Its geographical spread was not its only achievement. Having closer access to the eastern half of the Roman empire, which had itself taken over the entire Greek philosophical and scientific tradition, Islam's courts and palaces teamed with collaborating Jewish, Christian and Islamic scholars. Islamic libraries were immense by any comparison to the libraries carefully amassed by the western monastic movement in northern Europe—which were again and again destroyed by the extensive instability of seemingly unending tribal warfare.

Nevertheless, the Biblical faith in the West, once loosed in Luther's day from Latin cultural bondage fairly exploded in vitality, essentially jerking secular medieval society into modernity. The scientific revolution, the industrial revolution, the democratic revolution, the high-tech revolution and more recently the microbiological revolutions have all built upon the Biblical conviction that the one true God is a stable, orderly lawgiver whose creation also follows laws and is thus amenable to mathematical description and prediction and is thus harness-able for human purposes, as well as constituting a new and vibrant source of understanding of a creator God.

In fact, one of the enduring puzzles for all secular scholars is exactly why and how in the world backward forest dwellers of northern Europe so suddenly blossomed into global conquerors. True the West has by now recently relinquished its long held

political control over the rest of the world, but the cultural impact of the West outranks all other international forces, and is the durable basis today of the emerging and apparently irreversible phenomenon called globalization.

### **Number Five: Faith Beyond Christianity**

But, in order to bring the story up to today, we need to take into account a current, developing Fifth Major Redemptive Explosion. It is not well known. It consists, once more, of the breakaway of believing people from the cultural vehicle which brought them the Biblical faith in the first place. It is simply the seed of the word of God once more taking root in strange soil and generating a vital new crop of believers who cannot see themselves readily as part of either the Roman, Greek, Celtic, Semitic, Germanic or Anglo version of the faith. Curiously but not unexpectedly, even some elements within Christianity, such as the “Black Muslims,” have opted for a mildly Islamic vehicle of opposition to Christianity of any variety. Just as the tension between Roman and Protestant Christianity has over four centuries refined both, so Christianity in general and Islam will now more and more be refining each other as they are in more and more direct contact. Christian k-12 schools in America can no doubt find many parallels to the task set out for themselves by the increasing number of Islamic K-12 schools in this country.

Furthermore, at this very moment in Africa, India, and China, *it would appear that there are more devout believers in the God of the Bible—whose glory is seen in the face of Jesus Christ—than there are devout believers in those spheres which are identifiably “Christians.”* Remember, that as in the West, many Christians in the mission lands are by now nominal, cultural followers of an overtly Western religion not necessarily devout believers in the Biblical sense.

Note this fact in three major spheres.

### **Take Africa**

In Africa, 52 million people identify with 12,000 denominations owing nothing at all in their origin to any direct missionary work. This is in addition to 400 brands of Western Christianity which are identifiably “Christian” and which enfold an equally large number, but among which many are purely nominal, enabling the reasonable guess that there are more “devout” believers in Jesus Christ outside of the formally Christian sphere than among the standard Christian denominations

### **Take India**

In India, similarly, there are large numbers of formally identifiably Christian believers constituting a fairly substantial movement of, say, 30 million people, much of which is nominal. At the same time estimates range from 14 to more than 20 million individuals (and extended families) who remain culturally Hindu but who are nevertheless devout daily Bible-reading followers of Jesus Christ. It would seem, once more, that in India as in Africa, there are more “devout” believers in Jesus Christ outside of the formally Christian sphere than within it.

### **Take China**

In China, less than one-fourth of the estimated 90 million “Christians” would fall readily into a “standard” Protestant Christian category, and there much smaller numbers

in the Roman Catholic sphere. Slightly larger than the Protestant sphere (20 million) would be the Muslim sphere (25 million) who are mainly nominal compared to the Christians of China. However, the non-standard believers constitute roughly 60 million, which is far more than the recognizably Christians. Thus, our Fifth Redemptive

Explosion is a massive, growing reality, but yet is growing distinctly outside the bounds of what we recognize as the direct fruits of any of the first four Redemptive Explosions. And, as we have seen, this reality may well include *a larger number of devout believers* than *the total number of devout believers* within the 1) Catholic/ Eastern, 2) Muslim, or 3) standard Protestant Christian categories, which are the direct fruits of the first four Redemptive Explosions to which we have referred.

It is not as though new and better cultural versions of faith are appearing, nor that they invalidate, as they appear, the reality of any of the previous versions. All of them represent the conquest of evil in significant dimensions.

To the nature of that evil in the Post-Adamic era we will now turn.

### **Now the Bad News**

Inseparably linked to all evidence of explosive growth of the Kingdom which we have overviewed in the “Five Explosions,” is the enduring evidence of active, rampaging, intelligent warfare against the saints and indeed against all creation. Worse still, among the vast majority of believers there is the simultaneous and enervating unawareness of what we have called our *battlefield* situation—one in which the saints are not consciously at war, but are mainly oblivious thereof, not even alert spectators of that cosmic battle. The pattern is to be “resigned” to evil, even to presume that God is behind all things rather than that God is in front of all things, turning Satanic evil into good, but by no means initiating the evil, much less suggesting that we do nothing about it.

In the past two centuries God has enabled human beings to uncover gradually the evidences of giant bones from the past, reflecting a degree of violence almost more blatant than anything today. Darwin, a seminary drop out, zealously studied life forms more thoroughly and systematically than almost any other person in his day. Curiously his writings indicate his conviction that the degree of violence, suffering and egregious cruelty pervasively seen in nature could not possibly have been the work of a Benevolent Deity, and therefore had to be explained somehow as a natural, spontaneous evolutionary development of all life if we were to protect the character of the God of the Bible. He was not necessarily a deist except in the sense that he wanted to believe that God had nothing to do with pervasive natural evil.

Others came along and sprang on his hypothesis about the origin of species not as a defense of the benevolence of God but of the total absence of God. Thus Darwin was succeeded by a Darwinism which has been seen to emphasize a “godless” universe.

However, most Western Christians remained confused about the “problem of evil.” Meanwhile the long shadow of Augustine had all along proposed very influentially that God Himself is the perpetrator of all evil in order somehow to do good. This tragically erroneous perspective has affected much of the thinking of Christian leaders despite the prominence of intelligent evil more clearly seen today than ever due to the incredible revelations served up in the microbiological revolution.

The active agency of the Holy Spirit, along with the heavenly host of faithful angels, has nevertheless waged a major counterattack in the form of enlisting human

participation in astoundingly increased insight into the mysteries of microbiology, the very arena of distortion and disease in which Satan has wielded his most deadly weapons.

Huge setbacks have occurred in the midst of overly optimistic progress in this war on disease. New and resistant strains are rapidly being developed by what would appear to be diabolic intelligence. New and powerful defenses are being developed by what must be divine forces. But it is an uneven contest as long as the overall perspective of Christendom is that this is an area of mere random evolutionary innovation of evil and not an area of a keen but destructive intellectual development of evil.

God, we know, invites us to bind up the wounds we can see with our eyes and to ward off evil which is large enough to see without a microscope, but He also has seemed to want to await human collaboration in fighting the microbiological roots of evil for some reason we may not fully understand

Is there any valid reason to suppose that what we can see with more and more powerful microscopes is a battlefield we need not recognize and a war in which we do not need to show up? Or, is it that God expects only secular institutions to hit the line at this level of the contest?

It would seem that everyone from Bill Gates, the world's richest man, to the pages of *National Geographic* (Feb 02 issue) are now more than ever aware of "the war against disease."

Obviously every ordinary believer cannot be a research scientist any more than every ordinary citizen can be guiding a helicopter gun ship on the front line of a war between our large human forms of life. But Evangelicals and their theologians cannot continue to remain on the sidelines in the global contest in this micro world.

Millions of "retired" Americans, including millions of Evangelicals, are living lives of simply coping with mundane necessities and engaging in world tours. They whistle in the dark regarding their own fragile health. They hope that they are not "next" to get cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, although an increasing number of their friends are continually falling by the wayside.

It is not as though this vast multitude of "retired" saints is like a bunch of picnickers marching placidly off into the sunset. It is actually more like a bunch of elderly folks madly running down a road followed by sharp-toothed hyenas that are every few minutes dragging down another victim and tearing him to pieces.

Rather than crossing our fingers and hoping to be spared a bit longer, it seems to me logical that the substantial resources of this older group of believers might actually allow them to turn their intelligence and extensive experience to mount an offensive counterattack to eradicable disease.

The Roberta Winter Institute of the Frontier Mission Fellowship, and the associated WCIU university department, the Institute for the Study of the Origins of Disease, are quite open to any and all suggestions about how to go about alerting both distracted and confused Evangelicals and also non-Christians to a better recognition of the nature of the problem.

One can imagine authors like Frank Peretti or Tim LaHaye lending their considerable talents to weaving this new perspective into fiction novels which would portray decisive opposition to the vast array of disease pathogens against which we are only fighting with pathetically little resources and resolve.

But, rather than to try to duplicate the secular world's laboratory equipment and direct research it would seem reasonable in the early days at least to focus upon raising awareness and championing the kind of efforts which are already going on to a limited extent.

Vitally important is the recognition that it is a false hope to expect the vast industry of medical treatment of the already-diseased to lead the way to the eradication of disease pathogens themselves. Neither curing nor preventing disease necessarily has anything effective to offer the question of the original sources of disease, the pathogens themselves.

The recent film, *The Beautiful Mind*, graphically portrays in sympathetic light the struggles of those who are afflicted with schizophrenia, but it makes not the slightest mention and gives not the slightest hint about recent research which indicates that an infection is involved in this malady, much less highlights the thinking and efforts of those who are working at the root of the problem. No amount of sympathy and care for those inflicted with this brain disease will of itself illuminate the source of the problem. In Europe (but not in the United States) a great deal of attention is being paid to infection as a source of schizophrenia.

## Editorial Comment:

### **“How can we insist that other believers or secular scientists must all be stupid or dishonest?”**

(*Mission Frontiers*, November-December 2003).

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment33>

Dear Reader,

Few things have I followed more closely in the last 50 years than the attitude of the secular world toward the church and missions.

Talk about “Missions at the Edge,” which is the theme of this issue (and the theme of the recent conference of mission executives mentioned in this issue).

In my opinion, the biggest single “EDGE” is the edge of the Evangelical tradition as it meets the secular world. This EDGE is the boundary (or wall) between two very different worlds. It is a boundary we have to cross.

When a few hardy souls from the secular world venture into ours, they feel strange with our specialized vocabulary and our unanalyzed practices. Meanwhile it is common among Evangelicals to pooh-pooh science as well as the scientists.

One man who crossed over this edge I heard about just yesterday. I received an email from a missionary in Jordan. It contained an article from last Sunday’s *New York Times* (Sept 28). One of the *Times*’ most liberal writers saw first-hand Evangelicals at work in Mozambique. His title for what he wrote about them is “God is On Their Side”: very friendly, but very arms-length. Some good things have bled through the secular media lately.

But, for me, the colossus of bias today is a deeply ingrained negative attitude throughout the academic world, especially in history, sociology, and anthropology.

However, recently we saw a professor at Penn State, Philip Jenkins, come out with a worldwide survey of Christianity that is very appreciative—*The Next Christendom*. It speaks glowingly of the millions of Christians in the Third World.

Meanwhile, our millions of school children—whether in Christian schools or not—are exposed incessantly to a world barren of the work of God, or of honest, praying people. Why? Because the ruling texts in both kinds of schools have been prepared by publishers who hardly dare to raise the subject of religion. Yet religion, for better or worse, in every country of the world, is a truly mighty force. And it has been all down through the centuries.

Here in Pasadena, in our task-oriented fellowship, we have come to the conclusion that Evangelical students at every level, in every course they take, ought to be enabled to see the larger picture. We can’t wish away the millions of dollars of investment in secular

texts with beautiful pictures and graphics. They are what SAT scores lean on, whether you are in a Christian school or not.

What we can do, little by little, while setting an example for others to follow, is to compile “Supplementary Texts” (actually booklets) that add in these missing ingredients of the real world where the expanding kingdom of God is the principal reality. We are attempting to do this for specific widely-used textbooks.

The other day I went through the first 70 pages of a substantial text on American history and noted 22 places where significant additional facts need to be added, and, in some cases, faulty understanding contradicted.

Trouble is, the average Christian school teacher has been brought up on secularized texts and simply does not know what is missing.

Meanwhile the growing number of truly outstanding Evangelical historians, like Mark Noll at Wheaton and George Marsden at Notre Dame, are producing superb treatments of American history that rarely cross the threshold of the average Evangelical family.

Nevertheless, our best missionaries are products of our secularized school world. But how can a missionary to intellectuals in India cope with harsh criticism of the Christian tradition when all he knows, and all the Indian intellectual knows, is a very jaundiced record of the facts?

If the Bible is responsible for the unending persecution of Jews, the Inquisition’s burning of heretics, the Vatican’s oppression of Galileo and the Salem witch trials, you would think that for anyone to accept our faith they would have to go schizoid into an intellectual “warp.” That is, they might accept the nice people and the fellowship, but have to hold in reserve all kinds of intellectual doubts—or live in two disparate worlds. One of the most popular and pervasive secular viewpoints is Darwinian evolution.

Personally, I believe that no “scientific” theory has ever been more unbelievable. I just can’t see how the idea of random change, abetted by natural selection, remotely explains the incredible profundity of life on earth.

However, many Evangelicals who are devout believers in the Bible do not agree with me. In fact, there are a half a dozen alternative theories, and there are Evangelicals holding all of them. Now if earnest Bible believers hold some of these theories, whatever view we prefer, how can we insist that other believers or secular scientists must all be stupid or dishonest?

Can you still get to heaven if you don’t understand the “right” viewpoint about the age of the earth?

Francis Collins is the tall, solid believer who was tapped by the U.S. government to head the massive Human Genome project. He frankly believes in unaided evolution. As the editor of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, I am running a brief spiritual testimony by him in the Oct.–Dec. issue of *IJFM*. In that issue we also have three articles

by other Evangelicals who want earnestly to reduce the blood being spilled by crusaders for one position against another.

This whole fall issue of *IJFM* is on the frontier of science vs. missions. We cannot any longer take the Gospel into all the world without meeting highly educated leaders inside and outside of the church movements who have acquired essentially the same secularized education that pervades the United States. This is every day becoming more and more a major factor in missions.

This is why we have been pushing the absolutely marvelous video *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*.

And now I have saved the very best news for the last. Not in my lifetime, to my knowledge, has any professor in a secular university produced such a ringing defense of Christianity and as cogent a correction of secular biases as Rodney Stark, in his three books published by Princeton University Press: *The Rise of Christianity*, *One True God*, and *For the Glory of God*. The latter is the best. The dust jacket boldly claims that

“Whether we like it or not, people acting for the glory of God have formed our modern culture.”

He gives 80 pages just to the essential dependence of the rise of science itself upon Christian belief. (I have written Princeton for permission to reprint those 80 pages as a separate book.) He steps on a lot of toes. He shows how consistently biased most historians and sociologists are in the mainstream of academia. Astonishing. Every seminary student should have this book. Every student of science. Well, every student, period. Every Evangelical. (At one point he even quotes from *Mission Frontiers!*).

Quite honestly I regard this book to be one of the most valuable books I have ever owned. I would almost give my entire library for it. You can order it from Amazon.com or Half.com. There is nothing like it.

Stark’s academic credentials are secure. For many years he has been on the faculty at the University of Washington. Now, in retirement, he has recently agreed to teach at Baylor University.

Why am I so high on this book? Because it meets the EDGE head-on. It goes to bat with exhaustive hard facts to disprove a wide variety of myths that have flourished in the arid air of contemporary secularity. It, like the *New York Times* article mentioned above, is a credible case for overturning many negative viewpoints with which secular people are walled off from us. It sets the record straight. It will undergird the Supplementary Texts we envision. It can be cited with authority. It is truly a sensation without being sensational.



## **From Editor's Desk: The Religion of Science: The Largest Remaining Frontier**

*IJFM* Volume 20:4

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/20\\_4\\_PDFs/107\\_Editorial\\_20\\_4.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/20_4_PDFs/107_Editorial_20_4.pdf)

Dear Reader,

This is not your usual issue of *IJFM*. It may even “seem” to have nothing to do with missions. I assure you, however, that we are dealing here (in my opinion) with one aspect of an immense roadblock to missions at precisely the time when the expansion of the Gospel is becoming more visible for all to see, and therefore the world—the educated world all over the globe—is being forced to take the Christian movement more seriously.

I do not wish in this editorial to review the articles of this issue, but briefly describe why we chose them (one is written by a thoroughgoing scientist, one by a long-term missionary now college professor in retirement, one by a seminary professor, and one by a missiologist).

First, none of them is an attempt to persuade anyone of a particular perspective about the age of the earth. The last three articles are actually (and specifically) pleas for a more generous and accepting attitude toward the entire range of commonly held Evangelical views about the age of the earth, the idea being that we can't be of any help to each other in our quest for understanding if we don't listen to other Bible believing Evangelicals who might interpret the Bible in a different way. We are not talking at all about people who don't hold to a high view of the Bible; they aren't Evangelicals.

The second article (mine) about Darwin vs. the Intelligent Design (ID) movement, is not actually opposed to ID thinking. I am a solid proponent of ID theorizing. I just don't think ID goes quite far enough when it does not even attempt to absolve God from authoring evil and violence in the world of nature and the human species. Shall we insist that the “design” of 10,000 attacking viruses is God's work? Even Darwin, it turns out, was deeply concerned to produce even a wacky theory like evolution if it absolved God of the bewildering conclusion that He created a nature that was good and then made it full of violence and suffering.

The first article is by what may be the most prominent scientist in the USA who is an Evangelical. It will be a shocker. It was to me. We lifted just two pages out of a lengthy, highly technical article consisting of last year's highlight address at the annual meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA). The ASA is an organization of thousands of Evangelical scientists and professors that has been around for 55 years, and was started partly due to the initiative right here in Pasadena of a member of my local church, Dr. Peter Stoner, who was for some years an astronomy professor at the local community college. The ASA is a fine, sober group, not easily carried away by whims

The two pages we chose from that long ASA article retain his own personal testimony, which you can judge for yourself, and then (unbelievably to me) the very extreme view among Evangelicals that there is nothing basically wrong about the theory of evolution as conventionally understood. I could not believe my eyes. Thus, his perspective represents one extreme end of the spectrum that divides Evangelicals on the age of the earth issue. That is why we accompanied his personal testimony with his scientific testimony. I am not dropping my objectivity to disagree wholeheartedly with

his view. I am doing what this entire issue wants us all to do, namely, to respect the people behind the existing range of opinions. We can totally disagree with someone else's interpretation of the Bible without accusing them of not believing the Bible itself.

The fifth article has a special reason for being here. It is the longest and most detailed—but also the most diplomatic we have ever seen—as it deals with the age of the earth issues. It is a marvelously delicate handling of the issue. It is quite amazing that it comes out of a radio Bible class. It is outstanding in its appreciation of the many factors in the discussion.

This is, finally, the first time we have completed our listing of eleven frontiers. This not intended to be everyone's list. It is simply a description of my own actual experience. It is intended to elicit insights from readers about still other frontiers.

The “eleventh” frontier is the Religion of Science, which is clearly a barrier found today across many different ethnic traditions. It is one of the few frontiers that does not correlate specifically with the concept of unreached peoples, but rather runs throughout many different ethnic and cultural entities. Most seriously it limits people's sense of God's glory and thus even interferes with growth into the fullness of the Gospel for people within the major “reached” groups. Ironically, as primarily an impediment to glorifying God and of declaring His glory to the nations, it impedes a proper appreciation of God's handiwork in His creation—which ought to be the means of knowing and glorifying God!

In the pursuit of His frontiers,

Ralph D. Winter  
Editor

## Where Darwin Scores Higher than Intelligent Design

IJFM Volume 20:4 (2003)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/20\\_4\\_PDFs/113\\_Darwin.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/20_4_PDFs/113_Darwin.pdf)

According to Deborah Cadbury's book entitled *The Terrible Lizard*, which tells us about early dinosaur hunters, the tumble of new bones being dug up right in England soon became a significant factor in a vast and widespread shift away from what came to be called a "bondage to Moses," that is, bondage to the Bible.

Cornelius Hunter's book, *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil*, demonstrates conclusively that even Darwin, only a little later, was still concerned about the Christian faith in that he was pained until the day he died by the intellectual task of explaining how a good and all-powerful God could have authored the cruelty which he saw so pervasively in nature, and which many of the discoveries of dinosaur bones dramatically highlighted.

Both Hunter and Cadbury show that in the 1820s Biblical perspectives were major factors filtering interpretations of the bones being discovered of earlier life forms. This was true at Oxford University, for example, which was in that era a citadel of defense of the literal text of the Bible, somewhat of a Moody Bible Institute.

Today we have the wonderful and effective work of the Evangelical pioneers in the Intelligent Design (ID) movement, a perspective portrayed magnificently in the Illustra Media video, *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*. But neither the writings of these pioneer ID people nor this magnificent video reflect any stated concern whatsoever for the perplexing presence of pervasive evil, suffering and cruelty throughout all of nature. Strange, because the lurid presence of evil ("Nature red in tooth and claw") was a major factor in Darwin's thinking and the thinking of quite a few other key people who in his day were confused about how the existence of violent forms of life could be congruent with the concept of a benevolent Creator.

Thus, it would appear that some of our present-day creationists are so eager to give God all the credit for all of creation that the virtually unavoidable presence of evil to be seen there has become strangely less important than it was in Darwin's day and even to Darwin himself. Would it not be very ironic if the man we usually accuse of destroying faith in a Creator God were to turn out to be more interested in preserving the good reputation of that God than are we?

In saying that some of our creationists are glossing over the surprisingly prominent reality of intelligent evil in nature, I don't mean that any of these ID people really deep down are unwilling to confront the enigmatic reality of evil. I just mean that, from the current discussion as seen in their written materials that would appear to be the case.

As a matter of fact, I myself have all my life believed in what C. S. Lewis called "that hideous strength." Yet only recently have I begun to reflect on the possibility that this hideous and intelligent evil must not reasonably be dealt with among us any longer merely by superficial references to the philosophical concept of sin and to a *fall of man*. Why? Because the mere idea of sin is not personify-able. Sin as an abstraction is defined by some as the departure from what is right. In that case the concept itself does not

necessarily imply the potent and powerful existence of a diabolical personality any more than would a wrong score on a third-grade arithmetic test. The key question is, “Does it make any practical difference if we conceive of ourselves, on the one hand, as tempted by the freedom to sin or, on the other hand, fighting against an evil one who tempts us intelligently?”

Note, for example, the huge difference, back in the days of the Second World War, between, on the one hand, the often nearly invisible icebergs that sent many ships to the bottom of the ocean and, on the other hand, the stealthy, intelligent submarines which caused far greater damage. What if the sinking of thousands of ships had been conceived of as merely the result of inanimate forces? What if scientists had not figured out a way to bounce underwater sound off steel-hulled submarines in such a way as to distinguish the difference between an iceberg and a submarine? This technique, to be called sonar, came late in the war, and implementing it took even longer. By that time not a thousand ships had been sunk, not two thousand, but six thousand ships crossing the Atlantic, loaded with food and war material, had gone to the bottom. It may be hard to believe but the outcome of that enormous war turned on the subsequent success of fighting these *intelligent* submarines.

It could be alleged that I am missing a main point. A conversation I had with Philip Johnson several years ago brought this forcibly to my attention. I began by congratulating him (and Michael Behe) on the potent logic of the ID movement, but I said, “When you look at your computer screen and if it says suddenly, ‘I just wiped out your hard disk,’ you have not the slightest difficulty in concluding that you have suffered the onslaught of a computer virus concocted by an *intelligent, real person*. Curiously, then, when we contemplate a real biological virus which, though only a tiny assemblage, assails the health of an enormously larger human being, why do we have trouble concluding that we are dealing with an intelligent EVIL design?”

His answer, essentially, was, “Ralph, in my writings and public appearances I can’t even mention God much less Satan. I have a very specific battle to fight, namely, to take apart the logic of unaided evolution. That is all I am trying to do.” Okay, I have respected that response. I have not pestered him further. In fact, I am not even now endeavoring to fault the ID movement and its objectives.

Rather, I would ask a larger question. There are very many people, even Bible-believing Christians (not just non-Christians), who are to this day profoundly puzzled, perplexed, and certainly confused by the extensive presence in the created world of outrageous evil, created apparently by what we believe to be a God who is both all-powerful and benevolent. In coping with this, they may frequently attribute to God what is actually the work of an evil intelligence, and thus fatalistically give not the slightest thought to fighting back.

- When my wife died in 2001 more than one person tried to console me by observing that, and I quote, “God knows what He is doing.”
- When Chuck Colson’s daughter concluded that her brain-damaged son was, and I quote, “exactly the way God wanted him to be,” the impressively intelligent and influential Colson actually applauded her conclusion.
- When Jonathan Edwards fatally contracted smallpox in his effort to try out a vaccine that might protect the Indians in Western Massachusetts, the vast majority

of the hyper-calvinistically trained pastors of Massachusetts concluded that God killed him because, to quote them, “he was interfering with Divine Providence.” These pastors went on to organize an anti-vaccination society.

- Going further back in time, a Mother Superior in Spain woke up one morning and detected a small lump in her forehead. She concluded that it must be God who was doing something to her presumably to deepen her devotion and nourish her character. When it finally turned out that a worm was burrowing there, and had broken the surface so you could see exactly what it was, she concluded that it was God’s worm. When she would stoop over to pick something up, and it would occasionally fall out, she would replace it so as not to obstruct the will of God.

These are, however, only a few examples compared to the thousands of times a day among even modern Evangelicals that some blatant evil goes unattacked because it is resignedly if not fatalistically assumed to be the initiative of God. I am not so much interested in the philosophical or theological aspects of this situation as I am in the resulting passivity before eradicable evil, the practical fatalism.

I will go one step further. If we are dealing with an intelligent evil, even our thinking about that fact may likely be opposed and confused by that same evil force, that evil power, that evil personality. Is there any evidence of this additional complexity? In what form would it appear? How could we identify it?

The human period of history is paper thin when compared to the vast expanse of the previous story of the development of life on earth. But even in the few thousands of years of the existence of homo sapiens, it would seem clear that the growth of human population is directly related to the degree of acquired human knowledge of, and intentional resistance to, microbiological pathogens. A whole flood of books have appeared in recent years commenting on the plagues of history and on the general conquest of disease through medicine. Both war and pestilence have long been noted to be an impediment to population growth. But pestilence appears to be the greater problem.

The Second World War, we understand, was the first war in history during which more people died from military action than from war-introduced disease. Progress has been slow and even today, as antibiotics seem to be running their course, it has been a story of reverses and plateaus, not just triumphs. But the calibration of our conquest simply and crassly by population growth (or non-growth) is roughly workable. The phenomenon of population growth, however, is not widely understood or easily measured.

If the estimated 27 million world population in Abraham’s day 4,000 years ago had grown at the present rate of the world population, there would have been six billion people only 321 years later. Had it grown at the rate of Egypt’s current rate the six billion would have been reached in only 123 years. What actually happened was a growth so slow that 2,000 years later, at the time of Christ, world population was not six billion but only one thirtieth of that.

Again after three centuries of literacy during Roman occupation of south-ern England, the Roman legions were withdrawn to protect the city of Rome itself. Soon Britain lapsed back into illiteracy and into horrendous war and pestilence to the extent that its population did not increase in the slightest for the next 600 years (from 440 AD to 1066 AD).

At that point the tribal backwater that was Europe began gradually to crawl into conquest of both war and disease. The rest of the story of cascading increase in Western populations, as well as colonially affected global populations, is common knowledge. This increase, as already noted, is a rough and ready measure of the conquest of disease, a story which, as I say, is documented very clearly in a recent flood of books on plagues and the history of medicine.

Curiously, what is perhaps the most enduring characteristic in this conquest is the removal of false ideas about the nature of disease. The very discovery of unbelievably small pathogens was long in coming. Our major western theologians, whether Thomas Aquinas or John Calvin, knew absolutely nothing about the vast world of microbiology. They, in turn had been influenced by Augustine, who is credited with giving God the credit for much of what Satan does.

Thus, even our current theological literature, to my knowledge, does not seriously consider disease pathogens from a theological point of view—that is, are they the work of God or Satan? Much less does this literature ask the question, “Does God mandate us to eliminate pathogens?”

The recurrent pattern of attempts at discovery is disturbingly often a matter of looking for the wrong solution. A parallel would be looking for icebergs not intelligent submarines. Again and again medical authorities have confidently defined the causes of certain diseases as passive conditions rather than intelligently devised (and constantly revised) pathogens. For example, again and again it was “discovered” that stomach ulcers were caused by an infection, not stress. This happened in the 1880s, again in 1945, again in 1981 (in Australia) but the wrong solutions held sway unquestioned in this country for ten more years until the New York tabloid, the *National Enquirer*, ran a cover story on ulcers and infection describing the Australian break-through. Even so, after ten more years a survey of medical doctors in the state of Colorado revealed that less than 50% had yielded to the right solution.

A similar history is displayed in the case of tuberculosis, a major global killer. It was long thought that chilly and damp conditions were the cause. Eventually it became clear that the cause is a very clever pathogen that has recently been modified to become even more difficult to defeat.

But this pervasive and curious confusion about causes is not just a matter of past history. In February of 1999, *Atlantic Monthly* published a lengthy cover story confidently presenting the theory that heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimers, and even schizophrenia are the result of infections, not the usual “passive” factors such as diets high in fat or salt or whatever. Evidently in Europe such perspectives have been more widely pursued.

Now, you would think that so prominent an exposure of an idea so enormously significant would have reverberated back in 1999 in newspapers and other periodicals. But there was nothing in the *LA Times* for another month, and then only about three inches that did not recognize even remotely the import of the theory. Three months later a fairly long article on the subject appeared in the *LA Times*, although it did not mention the *Atlantic Monthly* article nor any of the researchers to which it referred.

Then there was mainly silence—for three years. Finally, in May of 2002, *Scientific American* sported a cover story that calmly and boldly declared that the passive factors in heart disease and the normal explanation of the progressive build-up of plaque

in arteries is little related to our nation's biggest killer. There is a totally different mechanism, which, it says, has been known for 20 years. It points out that gradual reduction of arterial channels would presumably produce gradual weakening in the person afflicted, and that heart attacks are characteristically most often sudden, and 50% of the time occur in people whose bodies do not display the usual symptoms. For the record, heart disease is not only the biggest killer but the most costly. At \$1 billion per day the cost of dealing with people afflicted with heart disease could rebuild the New York towers every three days.

Note that this new perspective is a total upset of long-standing assumptions (similar to the idea that stress causes ulcers), namely that *passive conditions of life, diet, exercise, salt intake, etc. produce heart attacks*. Now we hear that the actual explanation is not within the arteries but from within the walls of the arteries, namely, inflammations producing sudden and unpredictable eruptions that instantly block an artery totally. These inflammations are, furthermore, now feared to be the result not of inanimate, passive conditions, but of intelligent pathogens. Not icebergs but intelligent submarines.

The same general story, but far more complicated, could be described for the sphere of cancer. Very gradually, with uphill opposition again, the recognition of viral causes has gained steam.

We can ask why is it so hard for intelligent evil to be recognized. We can also ask why it is that almost all attention to cancer is focused on treatments of the results of cancer and less than one tenth of one percent of the billions ploughed into cancer goes toward understanding the nature of cancer, and even there the theory of intelligent pathogens is slighted and even resisted.

Everything I have said sums up as the problem of the failure to recognize intelligent evil. It is by no means simply a philosophical or theological issue. By far the largest human effort in America today relates directly or indirectly to the presence of disease and of the distortion of Creative Intent in the area of human life. It is a major error to look in the wrong direction for the cause of a disease. It would seem to me to be an even more serious error not to notice the existence of intelligent evil at all, which the published materials of the Intelligent Design group uniformly ignore. Darwin did not do that. Instead, he invented the wacky theory of *unaided* evolution. But Darwin at least recognized the presence of evil if not intelligent evil, and even the need to protect the reputation of a benevolent God. In that sense he scored higher than what we see in the written materials of Intelligent Design.

## Making Sense to Today's Scientists

(2003) (Foundations Reader, 303-07).

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

### Part I: Could This Have Happened?

#### *The Universe*

Many scientists believe that about 14 billion years ago the utterly amazing and puzzling “universe” exploded into being. Such estimates also indicate that almost five billion years ago our planet Earth came into existence as a part of a relatively minor solar system which in turn was part of an exceedingly larger galaxy, which in turn was one of billions of galaxies in the whole universe.

#### *Planet Earth*

When the planet Earth came into existence, all there was at that time, so far as we know, was what is called “the inorganic” world, that is, no life forms. Inorganic matter is itself an amazing world of complexity, consisting of an array of more than a hundred different and internally complex “atoms” and combinations thereof (molecules) plus electromagnetic radiation of many sorts (radio waves, infrared rays, visible light, cosmic rays), as well as mysterious forces such as gravitation and magnetism.

#### *Life*

However, to this already highly complex reality something new would be added: life, that is, the “organic” world. Most paleontologists believe that the first tiny life forms began to appear on this planet about three or four billion years ago but these forms were so tiny and “boneless” that fossils of their existence are of no help in clarifying their time of origin.

Apparently, however, during the next three billion years, larger and increasingly complex forms of life did appear, although not until close to the end of that period were they large enough (measurable in inches) and of such a character to leave fossil evidences. Meanwhile, disturbingly, during the entire period of Earth's history the planet has been pummeled massively due to weather, plate tectonics (continental drift), volcanic activity, earthquakes and collisions of asteroidal bodies from outer space. (It has been estimated that about fifty tons is added to the earth's weight each day from outer space objects and dust from such objects that burn up in our atmosphere before striking the earth.) The larger of these collisions have been very destructive of life forms.

#### *The Cambrian Explosion/Predators*

Then, relatively suddenly, a little over 500 million years ago the so-called “Cambrian Explosion” took place when, puzzlingly, a vast profusion of new forms of life appeared. Even more strangely *and now distressingly*, paleontologists widely believe, *life-destroying* forms of life (predators) appeared for the first time. This sudden appearance of a destructive—you might say, evil—force has constituted something that, from that point on, has become an absolutely major and horrifying feature of the natural world drastically affecting all forms of life including the human being.



### ***Asteroids!***

Scientists were shocked when the first moon landing reported back that the pock-marked surface of the moon was not due to volcanic craters but to *impact* craters. This discovery set off a gold rush on earth to find the equivalent battering from outer space. As a result, *Scientific American* in May of 2002 published a diagram pin-pointing sixty impact craters since the Cambrian Explosion, for each their date and size—all of them larger than fifteen miles in diameter—and all of them having significant effect on life forms at the time of their impact. Today we are aware that millions of tons of the earth's surface (inevitably including life forms) have landed on Mars, and vice versa, due to asteroidal collisions that typically splash up matter which goes into orbit, eventually (potentially) landing elsewhere.

Thus, the development of life forms both before and after the Cambrian Explosion has had a checkered career. One of the most distinctive periods of post-Cambrian life was the one dominated by the thousands of different species of what are popularly called Dinosaurs. This form of life followed the largest of all the asteroidal collisions about 250 million years ago. Most scientists today believe that the Dinosaur type of life was extinguished by another major impact from outer space sixty-five million years ago—the evidence being a 100-mile-in-diameter crater in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

### ***Mammals***

Apparently, mammals really came into their own once the dinosaurs were out of the picture. Then, very recently mammals have mainly been driven to extinction—virtually all mammals over 100 pounds have been killed off by humans in the last few moments of Earth's history.

### ***What Does This Mean?***

If what has been said thus far actually happened, we clearly have an amazing story crying out for interpretation. Was there a supreme being behind all of this? If so, was he only temporarily involved or does he continue to be involved? If no supreme intelligence was there, how did the entire inorganic universe pop into being, and how did the organic universe pop into being? What is the rhyme or reason behind all of this?

Quite frankly, for instance, outer space does not strike one as a very intelligible work of a god of love and peace. Neither does the pockmarked physical history of this planet—with all of its violence of wind, shifting continents, volcanic explosions and deadly collisions from outer space, which could reappear at any moment.

Then, too, in regard to the organic world, there could have been no life of any sort without the inorganic world, that is, if it had not already been true that hundreds of different "atoms," all structurally ordered, had not already existed, not to mention the incredible complexity within the nucleus of each atom—as well as all those rays and forces. Thus, it would appear that there is no great gain in assuming that life itself developed by a random process if the basic components of that life, awesomely complex, remain totally unexplained.

### ***A Supreme Intelligence?***

One theory might be that a supreme intelligence had reasons known only to himself for creating the universe and our planet the way they are. Yet, from a purely human point of view the significance of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and asteroidal collisions, etc., is understandably negative. It is all very prejudicial to the survival of life forms. Thus, it is hard to understand why life would have been created on this planet in view of these flagrant dangers.

However, to try to understand the involvement of a supreme intelligence in the long story of the appearance of life forms is even more difficult. Why would an omniscient being take so long, with so many apparent false starts and dead-end streets? And most difficult of all, why would such a being have introduced the Cambrian profusion of predatory, life-destroying life forms?

Trying to understand the apparently inhospitable universe or even the formidable natural dangers of this planet is one thing. Let us focus more precisely on the meaning of the presence of life combined with life-destroying forms of life.

### ***Intermediate Beings, Good and Bad?***

Suppose a supreme being intentionally created some intermediate beings with human-like free will, creatures that do not grow old but do learn and grow wiser, and with their free will are able to do lots of things, such as carry out the will of their creator, even rebel against the supreme being and seek to overturn his work.

If these less-than-infinite intermediate beings were the ones from the beginning employed in the development of life forms, then suddenly both the length of time involved and the occasional shortcomings of their work would be understandable. Most important, their capacity to turn against their creator would enable an understanding of the appearance of destructive forms of life in the Cambrian Explosion and a nature which since that time has been “red in tooth and claw.”

Meanwhile, the sudden appearance of *homo sapiens* in the final few minutes of this story presents both a marvelous and ugly picture. Marvelous, because no other form of life has exhibited anything near the same intelligence. Ugly, because no other form of life has been as cruel and dangerous to its own kind or as devastating to virtually all other forms of life. If we build on this point of view it would appear that a rebellious and destructive type of intermediate beings has corrupted and transformed *homo sapiens* from its first appearance.

### ***The Jewish Bible***

The Jewish Bible comes into the picture here. It would seem to begin with stories of the emergence of *homo sapiens* and seems to describe the various stages following a particular mass extinction in the region of what today we call the Fertile Crescent. An asteroidal collision would seem to explain that this particular region, or “known world,” became “formless and void,” the challenge to new forms of life being that of replenishing that particular “known world” with both animal and human life.

It is important to note that the Hebrew language of Genesis 1:1 allows it to read, “When God began to renovate things, the (local) earth was formless and void.” (Is it not reasonable that an ancient document would refer specifically to the world with which its hearers were acquainted? They did not know of a planetary spheroid, a solar system,

much less a universe. Do we not read anachronistically when we assume Genesis 1:1 refers to the universe?)

Curiously, what is typical in Earth's history of smaller, regionally-significant asteroidal collisions is the throwing up of masses of dust which does become a global phenomenon. The Sun and the Moon disappear totally. Gradually, as the dust settles, there is a faintly lightened period in each 24 hours. Later, rays of light get through to the surface of the earth and with those rays rainbows become possible, etc.

### ***Homo Sapiens***

But the greatest novelty of the series of events described in Genesis is the appearance on this planet for the first time of a form of life (*homo sapiens*) that has apparently been intelligent enough and capable enough either to rebuild the planet or destroy it.

When did *homo sapiens* appear? It may be possible to avoid a great deal of discussion about the exact time of the first appearance of *homo sapiens* if we don't bother too much with *fossils* but look rather at the first appearances of what can be called *cultural sophistication*. This is, in fact, a recent scholarly trend.

If we do that, two major evidences of distinctively human sophistication stand out. One is the first appearance of the selective breeding of plants, producing the wholly artificial major foods of wheat, corn, and rice. The other would be the appearance of the similar genetic alteration of animal life in the taming of wild animals, such as dogs from wolves. Both of these major events are calculated to have begun about eleven thousand years ago, just as the last great ice age receded, and both require an intelligence far beyond that of any of the so-called hominids.

In addition to these two "advances" of human achievement, of course, we have many other examples of truly amazing human tinkering with nature, such as the harnessing of electricity and radiation in a thousand ways, or the discovery of germs and the attempt to eradicate or suppress the most dangerous types thereof, etc.

### ***Setbacks***

Nevertheless, "war and pestilence" more than anything else have greatly postponed the replenishment of the earth by humans. World War II was the first war in history, it is thought, in which more people died of war activity than by disease. A gradual understanding and considerable conquest of disease has by now allowed the precipitous skyrocketing of population. How can we explain the meaning of this partial human success against war and disease creating a problem?

We have already supposed that a supreme being may have created intermediate beings which have been constantly at work over billions of years in the development of life (similar perhaps to thousands of intelligent engineers being constantly at work during the 100-year evolution of the American automobile). Also, we have supposed that there came a time (the Cambrian Explosion, 500 million years ago) when some of these intermediate beings broke loose and began to sabotage the very work to which they had so long contributed. This destructive conflict could have gone on at the DNA level, since these intermediate beings had already gained the intelligence necessary to tinker with genetic formulae, producing not only vicious and destructive new versions of animal life but also pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, and parasites with their deadly toll. The

overarching “war” has been that between these evil intelligent beings and humans, not between humans and humans.

### ***Adapting to the Onslaught***

Under such wartime circumstances, with 80 to 90 percent of all babies dying in infancy during much of human history, it would not be illogical to suppose that the intermediate beings still loyal to the supreme being would have defensively altered the animal and human DNA so as to become artificially prolific. Our recent dilemma of exploding population has thus become one of artificially coping (e.g. birth control, abortion, infanticide) with an equally artificial highly prolific species of human.

### ***Missions?***

Furthermore, such wartime circumstances give quite a different twist to the conventional outlook on Christian mission activity. Missions usually focus on rescuing humans from this world rather than restoring creation, or, to employ a biblical phrase, “destroying the works of the devil.”

We may quite often speak glibly of glorifying God in all the earth, and wishing to see all peoples worship Him when, in fact, to do that is an uphill climb, all of nature being distorted, life forms becoming vicious and deadly. If no evil intelligence is involved or recognized and the supreme being is supposed to be the one mysteriously authoring even the most tragic evils, how are we to rescue that supreme being from gaining a reputation of mysterious indifference to human suffering? Thus, it would seem reasonable to believe that he has never been indifferent but has, for example, from the creation of *homo sapiens* been encouraging and expecting his human followers (as well as his still-loyal intermediate beings) to ally themselves with him in the conquest of all sources of suffering, distortion, destruction and evil, in a biblical phrase, destroying the works of the devil.

If, however, all that is what it takes to glorify God, is that what missions are doing?

## **Part II: Restating These Ideas As a Very Brief Scenario**

God created intelligent angels with free will who, following his guidance over a long period of time (since they are finite), put together an immense variety of life forms with successively greater free will and less instinctive guidance.

One day about 500 million years ago, by which time angels in general had acquired a very advanced understanding of life, of DNA, RNA, protein structures, etc., a leading angel turned against God and led many angels to rebel with him. As a result, in the Cambrian Period, life forms began to display for the first time genetically altered life-destroying characteristics at every size-level from viruses to larger animal life.

The good angels, with God’s guidance, simultaneously fought back with all their acquired insight into the nature of life forms, designing and altering genetically as many as possible with never-before-seen defensive features such as speed, horns, quills, shells and scales to enable defense against animals of similar size. Then, in order to defend the larger life forms from smaller life forms such as viruses, bacteria and parasites, the good angels had to develop internal defenses, such as what we call “the immune system.” This defensive system alone in the case of the human species can detect and demobilize three

thousand billion different attacking pathogens. The awesome extent of these defenses readily confers an idea of the scope of evil in nature, that is, the ingenuity of Satan and his forces in distorting and destroying God's good creation and in the process tearing down His glory.

Good angels continued to develop new forms of life but they have often been distorted into destructiveness by the evil angels.

God again and again stamped out many or even nearly all forms of life through sixty major asteroidal collisions in the last 500 million years (since the fall of Satan), the most recent large collision 65 million years ago ending the reign of terror of the truly atrocious violence of the thousands of different predatory "dinosaurs."

The "Edenic Plan" was launched, perhaps eleven thousand years ago, in precisely the area where a much smaller asteroid impacted the Middle East, reducing that region of the earth into a "formlessness and void" condition (Gen 1:2) and at the same time engulfing the entire globe with an impenetrable canopy of dust in the atmosphere. Outside that area diseased and predatory animals continued to exist. As this dust settled, night and day became vaguely visible, then eventually rays of light and thus rainbows. In that area, good angels under God painstakingly recreated life forms in their original non-carnivorous state (as explicitly stated in Gen 1: 29 and 30), and went on to create a radically different form of life, the human being "in His image" which is variously called *homo sapiens* and *homo sapiens sapiens*.

This new form of life was intended to be an ally of the good angels fighting against Satan and his works, but the entire Edenic project fell prey to Satan, animal life and human life became carnivorous (Gen 9:3), man himself being seduced by Satan to become more a survivor than a soldier, preoccupied with his own salvation far more than the defeat of Satan.

As part of this onslaught humans have been deceived into believing that the distressing violence and suffering in nature is God's initiative not Satan's. Thus, we do not even see disease germs as the work of Satan. As a result, we are not fighting against the whole range of deadly pathogens in the Name of Christ even though the New Testament clearly states that "the Son of God appeared for this purpose to destroy the works of Satan" (1 John 3:8).

Our earthly mission begins to appear more clearly as we recognize as best we can the full extent of the "works of Satan" (shifting the blame to Satan and thus glorifying God), and as we ally ourselves with the good angels in destroying the works of Satan. "Without God we can't and without us He won't." Our mission is clarified as we learn more and more about the DNA-level mechanisms of distortion which account for most of the suffering in this world.

This approach, note well, removes for millions of thinking intellectuals the largest single intellectual barrier to belief—the question of "Why does a good, all-powerful God do evil?"

The story of man has quite apparently been that of groping back into mission, very gradually and progressively subduing both war and pestilence, the evidence being the recently staggering population explosion and, temporarily, the problem of overpopulation. This explosion has weakened resistance to disease and even the war against disease. The secular world in so far as it is seeded with basic Christian cosmology and world view is very slowly but steadily groping its way in a war against disease

germs, but is neither encouraged nor heavily backed by Bible believers, either theologically or literally.

This is where we are. Billions of dollars are spent on dealing with the results of disease but mere pennies go to the eradication of disease pathogens. Ominously, Evangelical mission forces are almost totally blind to this major dimension of mission.

## **Editorial Comment on Evil/Disease as a Frontier in Mission**

*(Mission Frontiers January–February 2004).*

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment32>

Dear Reader,

I would guess that a major reason you are holding this newsprint booklet in your hands is that it helps you in some ways to understand more clearly what God wants you to do.

In any case, nothing, nothing can be more important for any of us to know than what God wants us to do.

For us here at the Center it is crystal-clear that God's calling for all believers is for "Our Utmost for His Highest." The discernment of His Highest takes study. Much of what we do here in Pasadena is to keep our eye on every part of the world to see what God is doing and what obvious and strategic needs are there.

### **Dimensions, frontiers**

Okay. Essentially that is the business the Center and the university here are in. It is also the major reason for the theme of this issue: What is God doing, what specifically is left to be done, and where can we help? Or, what is the best way we with our specific strengths and limitations might offer the most strategic help? That is, what are the dimensions of the unfinished task?

Here at the Center and university we are "24/7" focused on what is most strategic and most needed. We call these "Frontiers."

We started out by zeroing in on groups by-passed by existing missionary work, called "Hidden Peoples" or "Unreached Peoples." They fall into the major categories reviewed in this issue.

But in order to reach out effectively to these groups, we need to try to understand which methods and approaches are not really working, and if we are being slow to adopt new approaches which might enable us to reach out more intelligibly to strange populations. This describes another kind of frontier, which typically requires rethinking, ingenuity, and in-depth knowledge.

### **Other Frontiers?**

One example of this other kind of frontier (especially among the increasingly educated leaders around the world) is what in my editorials I have been mentioning lately, namely, the horrifying divergence between those millions of intelligent people who trust in science and not religion and those millions who trust in religion and not science. Call this frontier "the Religion of Science." See excerpts from Professor Hammond's new book on pages 16-17.

A second frontier of this other type can be called "Fatalism about Evil." It is a common but debilitating "passivity" in the face of evil. In so far as we automatically attribute all misfortune, all disease, all sickness to the "mysterious" mind of God, that perspective cuts the nerve of any intense, intentional fighting back.

For example, Charles Colson is as brilliant and dedicated a Christian as they come. Yet, after his daughter had struggled for many years with an autistic son, call him Alex, Colson praised her when she came to the conclusion that “Alex is exactly the way God wants him to be.”

First, the idea that God would want any child to be brain-damaged is inconceivable.

Even more important, this fatalistic perspective, no matter how brave and noble, cuts the nerve of anyone wanting to join the increasing number of parents who want to get to the bottom of why autism is skyrocketing. Colson’s immense influence would be a great help to those parents, such as my oldest daughter and son-in-law, whose own son’s autism has led them to do all they can to get to the roots of this mounting plague.

However, don’t assume that very many others are concerned. The enormous Medical/Pharmaceutical industrial complex gets 99% of its funds from treating people who are already sick. It does not have a lot of extra money to find out why people get sick.

Furthermore, if hyper-calvinistic theology leads nearly all Evangelicals to accept autism as “the mysterious hand of God”, we must count Evangelicals out of the efforts to find out not how to deal with autism after it appears, but why it is happening with increasing frequency.

What has this to do with missions? It means that if we set out to “declare His glory among the nations,” by revealing the true, penetrating love of Christ for sick and suffering people, as well as His hatred of evil, we must decide whether diseases are of God or not. The question is not merely about what Jesus actually did or said about disease, but what He would have said had those people back then known what we know about disease.

Should missions go on spending millions of scarce mission dollars on raising children up to the age where they can die of malaria (four die every sixty seconds) if they are not doing absolutely everything they can to ferret out the nature of the malarial parasite and how to eradicate it?

In other words, is it the whole gospel just to protect people from malaria and treat the sick? It would seem that our mission mandate includes portraying our God as One whose love extends beyond treating sick people to the actual eradication of the incredibly ingenious malarial parasite itself. With our increasing knowledge, do we not have proportionately broader responsibility?

Isn’t this a frontier? Isn’t it doubly difficult a frontier due to a twisted non-biblical theology that blames God for all illness?

Malaria is just about as bad a global plague as is the HIV virus. We see many Christians seeking to help the AIDS-orphaned children, and being kind to those writhing in the pains of malaria. But, do we see anywhere in the world any kind of a substantial Christian institution which in the Name of Christ is pursuing the total eradication of either HIV or malaria?

Thus, it may be that we are telling people around the world that our God does not care, does not know what to do, or worse still, is Himself the author of these evils (for our good, of course). Fortunately, the God of the Bible is different!



**Okay, some details:**

The full chapter of Professor Hammond's article on pages 16-17 appears in the 2003, 20:4 issue of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*.  
[[https://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/20\\_4\\_PDFs/117.hammond.pdf](https://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/20_4_PDFs/117.hammond.pdf)] That entire issue is on the theme of the extensive alienation of Evangelicals from science, young earth vs. old earth, etc. and its impact on missions.

## Editorial Reflections: Evolution

(2004) (*IJFM* 21:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/21\\_4\\_PDFs/Editorial\\_Reflections\\_21.4.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/21_4_PDFs/Editorial_Reflections_21.4.pdf)

### Evolution: Who's Panicking Now?

Years ago a widely read book sported the title, *The Ugly American*. Its chapters jumped around the world where Americans are at work giving bad examples of our people and our influence, people primarily in political circles overseas. One chapter described the work of an American engineer who went out into rural villages helping the people a great deal—and became a hero to them. He was the “ugly” American of the book’s title, not part of the foreign capital city’s social whirl.

But, of course, more people by ten to one see a book’s title and don’t read it. Most people thought that the authors were labelling all government representatives as “ugly Americans,” and in another sense they were. This is what electrified Americans, and attracted wide attention.

At that time I lived in Guatemala, and for the first time as far as anyone could remember, US Embassy people made a token visit out to a rural city, putting on a drink-all-you-want party for all Americans and a handful of prominent nationals in that part of the country. Of the thirty or so people gathered, well over half were non-drinking missionaries. The party was not a success. But it certainly proved the power of a book title, even if misunderstood.

Now I would like to believe that the same thing will happen with two recent cover stories. *Wired* magazine for October, and *National Geographic* for November both fall into the same trap (implying what they don’t believe). *Wired* carried in large letters the title of a short article way in the back of the magazine—obviously chosen to attract attention—“*The plot to kill evolution.*” In even larger letters, *National Geographic* trumpeted on its cover the question, “*Was Darwin wrong?*”

In neither case does the actual text of the articles inside give Darwinists any reason for concern. But in both cases I am sure many panicky readers are going to be held spell-bound, reading every single line, fearing that some not-so-nice thing is going to be said about the sacred doctrine of evolution.

*Wired*’s article actually presented a bit of the critical view of evolution in a longer and more objective account of the three-year running battle in the State of Ohio over how to teach evolution, and whether any critical views can be mentioned in their school materials. But the article is “loyally” and plainly opposed to the Intelligent Design side. For example, it describes a key debate between four real scientists, two on each side. The two favoring evolution are described as “scientists.” The two who feel evolution should be taught along with its problems, are described as mere “representatives” of the other point of view.

The big “mistake” *Wired* made was to print a lengthy side bar written by a technology guru, George Gilder, a man who edits the highly praised *Gilder Technology Report*, now tied in with *Forbes* magazine. Gilder, speaking quite authoritatively, predicts the downfall of Darwinism as “a faith-driven 19th-century myth.”

Frankly, the *Wired* article may have gone as far as you can go, or a bit too far, and still be printed in a periodical seeking to maintain secular subscribers. Sure enough, in the December issue (that came out early in November) *Wired* devoted a full page to mostly screaming letters denouncing the magazine for even opening the door a crack to scepticism about Darwinism.

The longest letter, however, taking up half of the space for letters, is a polite, measured letter defending the Discovery Institute, somewhat maligned in the article, which was a major player in winning very mild approval for criticism about Darwinism in the State of Ohio school system. You've got to hear one of the screaming protests, though. It starts out,

I'm designed intelligently? As far as I can see, I was designed by an idiot. My parts are neither interchangeable nor replaceable. I could use a new ankle right now, and almost everything I do injures my back...

That blast is not going to convert many to Darwinism. Surely he has forgotten about heart transplants and kidney transplants.

The *National Geographic* article by contrast is 30 pages (more pages and pictures, less text) and begins with the sentence, "The evidence for evolution is overwhelming." It makes no clear reference to any opposing ideas or people or literature, much less an opposing movement.

Furthermore, it subtly takes advantage of the inherent ambiguity of the very word evolution, which can be used quite sensibly if you are referring to the "evolution of the American automobile" (where thousands of intelligent engineers were at work at every point) or even to the genetic engineering over time, due to either incidental or intelligent selective breeding of individual species—an intelligent activity which none of the hominids ever pulled off and, we are told, did not occur until 11,000 years ago.

On the other hand, the concept of an all-encompassing *evolution* of life from an inorganic "soup" is something greatly different, and its weaknesses are shielded by *National Geographic's* constant bundling of that view together with the sensible uses of the word.

The web site, [www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/0411](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/0411), is already full of mainly emotional spoutings on both sides—very light weight. Even the Discovery Institute's specialists were quoted as saying in the article that their presentation "framed the issue quite differently than our [more emotional?] sup-porters." Evidently the screamers on both sides are hogging the air waves. This is no time for ridicule or sarcasm. It may bring laughs but that's all. Discourtesy is not the best approach.

When I was a teenager two brilliant believers waged war against unbelief. Harry Rimmer, some said, "led (church) audiences in laughs" about the evolutionists. Irwin Moon produced such high quality films about the marvels of creation that they were used in 235,000 public schools. I must admit, however, that some statements of the evolutionists are a bit humorous. Nancy Pearcey in her book reviewed here, quotes the most outspoken of all prominent evolutionists, Oxford professor, Richard Dawkins, as saying,

"Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose," but he feels he must disprove that. (p. 183)

There is little doubt that people on both sides are getting panicky. But panic attacks don't produce clear thinking, much less win arguments.

Stepping back, we might ask why the emotional content on both sides? Some individuals on both sides seem to be defending an orthodoxy in ways that are emotional and even irrational to some extent. One group may be fearful of the consequences of acknowledging a Divine Being who judges behavior. The other group may be fearful of the consequences of losing a Divine Being who represents great hopes.

If somehow the concrete issues could be disentangled from such fears it would appear to be easier to compare notes on things.

## Editorial Reflections on “Science and Insanity”

(2004) (*IJFM* 21:2)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/21\\_2\\_PDFs/93\\_Editorial\\_Reflections.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/21_2_PDFs/93_Editorial_Reflections.pdf)

### Evangelical Missions and Anthropology

If you got bogged down in the early history of anthropology in the last issue, you ought at least to go back to where Wheaton College hoves into view carrying the flag. The first professor of anthropology at Wheaton is not as well known as a Wheaton anthropology major named Billy Graham. The first anthropology professor at Westmont is even less well known.

But what started in Christian colleges, and with the help of Moody Press—which published *The Missionary and Anthropology* in 1945 (a book that profoundly affected me)—really mushroomed in mission circles. As early as 1948, Wycliffe’s Summer Institute of Linguistics included a course on cultural anthropology, and the American Scientific Affiliation published a book (*Science and the Christian Faith*) whose longest (165 page) chapter was on anthropology by William Smalley and Marie Fertzner Reyburn, a then professor at Wheaton. That chapter also influenced me greatly.

You can thus pick up at that point last time and then more fully appreciate the rest of the story this time. Whiteman has done us all a great service.

Wheaton, in a fit of folly, actually closed down its anthropology department in 1975. But that is what took James Oliver Buswell III, son of an earlier Wheaton president, freshly relieved of a job, to the position of Academic Vice President for the next 23 years at the William Carey International University. For all those years he kept track of the Evangelicals he knew who went into anthropology.

Whatever the story of *the* past, for the rivers of young people flooding out into short term missions today, anthropology is just as crucial as ever.

### Science and Insanity

A fascinating quote comes to us from Areopagus Proclamation, a monthly one page newsletter (“thoughtletter”) published by Daryl E. Witmer’s AIIA Institute, Box 262, Monson, Maine 04464.

Witmer is quoting in turn a columnist George Caylor in dialogue with a scientist:

*Caylor*: “Do you believe that the information [in the DNA code] evolved?”

*Scientist*: “George, nobody I know in my profession believes it evolved. It was engineered by genius beyond genius, and such information could not have been written any other way. The paper and ink did not write the book. Knowing what we know it is ridiculous to think otherwise.

*Caylor*: Have you ever stated that in a public lecture, or in any public writings?

*Scientist*: “No, I just say it evolved. To be a molecular biologist requires me to hold on to two insanities at all times. One, it would be insane to believe in evolution when you can see the truth for yourself. Two, it would be insane to say

you don't believe in evolution. All government work, research grants, papers, big college lectures—everything would stop. I'd be out of a job, or relegated to the outer fringes where I couldn't earn a decent living."

*Caylor*: "I hate to say it, but that sounds like intellectual dishonesty."

*Scientist*: "The work I do in genetic research is honorable. We find the cures to many of mankind's worst diseases. But in the meantime we have to live with the elephant in the living room."

*Caylor*: "What elephant?"

*Scientist*: "Creation design. It's like an elephant in the living room. It moves around, takes up an enormous amount of space, loudly trumpets, bumps into us, knocks things over, eats a ton of hay, and smells like an elephant. And yet we have to swear it isn't there."

This dialogue sounds like another conversation I heard about but cannot document. A Chinese paleontologist visiting the USA was questioned when he made an off-hand comment about the unworkability of the Darwinian theory. He was surprised, but then analyzed the situation as follows: "In China we can't criticize the government but we can criticize Darwin. In the USA you can criticize the government but you can't criticize Darwin."

One lesson from the Chinese scholar is that overt pressures are one thing. Covert, cultural pressures are equally as strong, perhaps stronger. The one is visible and external. The other is greatly invisible and comes with and within society itself. The latter is the power our children, teenagers and college students run into, often unknowingly, since it is covert.

### **Stunned into Silence?**

This comment rightly ought to be in the letters to the editor section. But it is a query by the editor not to him concerning the total absence of response to the highly provocative piece last time by Jonathan Rice, "The Tragic Failure of Britain's Evangelical Awakening."

Please don't miss that because it may prophetically define the future of our globe's now "mile wide inch deep" Evangelicalism. His most poignant quote was:

Between 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel, and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, tender-minded, prudish, and hypocritical.

That is, the unquestionable transformation of Britain by the Gospel was in many respects short lived. Rice applies this ominous observation then to the church in India.

Here is a more recent, definite transformation which may become short lived. It is a quote from *Atlantic Monthly's* redoubtable Robert Kaplan, whose global fling this time was to follow a U.S. Army Colonel (Wilhelm) around in Mongolia for a few weeks. Never mind why the U.S. Army was in Mongolia. If you want to read Kaplan's whole article it is in the March 2004 issue. But Kaplan records a whole lot of off-the-cuff

comments by this colonel about the U. S. Army. One of them is the following unexpected comment out of the blue (unexpected since neither is remotely an Evangelical Christian):

The full flowering of the middle ranks [of the US Army] had its roots in the social transformation of the American military, which according to Wilhelm (a liberal who voted for Al Gore in 2000), had taken place a decade earlier, when the rise of Christian evangelicalism had helped stop the indiscipline of the Vietnam-era Army. “This zeal reformed behavior, empowered by junior leaders, and demanded better recruits,” he said. “For one thing, drinking stopped, and that killed off the officers’ clubs, which, in turn, broke down more barriers between officers and noncoms, giving the noncoms the confidence to do what majors and colonels in other armies do. The Christian fundamentalism was the hidden hand that changed the military for the better. Though you try to get someone to admit it! We could never have pulled off Macedonia or Bosnia with the old Vietnam Army.

Is this transformation going to be short-lived, too? Once the soldiers encompassed by Evangelical beliefs muster out and face insistent intellectual questions is their emotional faith going to cave in as the quote about Britain implies?

### **Face to Face?**

Here is something new. We would like to move distinctly beyond simply shipping out information to readers around the world. We would like to begin to encourage local, face to face, dialogue—and in the process more feedback and response to us that can embellish our Letters section.

In this we are admittedly taking a cue from the respectable monthly journal, *First Things*. Each month since last November they have listed the names and addresses of those who have volunteered their homes where monthly or so readers can gather and chew over together what is in the journal.

Who will be the first to open their home for this kind of dialog? One home in one place is enough to begin. This can grow gradually or rapidly depending on interest. We will immediately post on our web site (and in the next issue) the phone number people need to call to find out when and where to go.

We can cross over with readers of *Mission Frontiers*. Many times long articles in *IJFM* are stripped down for *Mission Frontiers*, which is a lighter version of some of the *IJFM* content with far more readers. But the more serious readers of *IJFM* will undoubtedly lead the way.

This does seem to be the way to go these days of rapidly opening new opportunities (and roadblocks) for missions, challenging goals, unsolved problems, in a word, Frontiers of mission.

So, think about it. You can try it just once or twice. Maybe no one in your area will call you up to find out about the meeting. Or, over time you may grow a nice periodic party that can meet in different places and you can meet some really nice people.

The timing of *IJFM* is quarterly, *Mission Frontiers* is bi-monthly. No matter. You can choose the times you meet. When you do meet, by prearrangement you can phone in toward the end of the meeting and one of us here can talk with you about your ideas, conclusions, questions, points of view. Who will go first?

## **The Embarrassingly Delayed Education of Ralph D. Winter**

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 344-50).

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

Everything here represents either widely accepted scientific understanding or biblical interpretations that are seriously believed by widely respected Bible scholars.

Granted that some of these ideas may seem unusual, to my knowledge there is nothing here that can fairly be construed as heresy. Further explanations are at the end.

### **What About the Gospel?**

I could have and would have used the word “Gospel” in what follows were its meaning not highly reduced in common Evangelical usage. In the Bible the word does not refer merely to the heralding of good news but the coming of the Kingdom of God in this world. That is good news. It is also the implantation and extension of God’s will in this world. We read more than once in the New Testament about “obeying” or “disobeying the Gospel.” Even “hearing” the Gospel implies a yielding to God’s will, not just listening and assenting to the truth of a message.

Thus, to “hear” the Gospel means an acceptance of the lordship of Jesus Christ and vital, total involvement in the phrase of the Lord’s prayer, “Thy will be done on earth.” We see the same thing in the Great Commission’s “teaching them to obey all things I have commanded you.” All this implies the extension of God’s will on earth not just telling people how to get to heaven. Only if believers are known for both seeking and standing up for God’s will in all and every part of life can we properly glorify God. Otherwise we misrepresent Him. And, as a result our conversions are half way conversions that may not last or may not truly happen at all.

*1950*

Soon after 1950, when I was 26 years old, discussions at the level of the Wheaton College Board (following the views of Dr. Russell Mixter, Chair of Wheaton’s Dept. of Biological Sciences) came to a significant decision. The board determined that Wheaton faculty would be allowed to believe that the flood in Genesis was local, covering “the known world” but not the entire planet. Of course, once you speculate that Genesis did not necessarily refer to the entire planet, other new interpretations of the first few chapters of Genesis loom. In any case, in 1950 I had no knowledge of this decision at Wheaton. Neither did it occur to me that any Bible believer would take that position. I would not find out about Wheaton’s decision until thirty years later.

*1958*

Eight years after Wheaton’s decision, the widely respected department chair of Old



Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Merrill Unger, went into print (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1958) with a highly unconventional view of Genesis 1:1, 2, namely, that Genesis 1:1 was a new beginning, not THE beginning. That is, Genesis chapter 1 is the beginning of *the human story* and not the beginning of *the universe*. But it was not until I was 80, 46 years later, that I typed into Google the words "before Genesis 1:1" and thus learned of Unger's point of view about "the geologic ages" occurring before Genesis 1:1.

1969

Then, it was in 1969, when I was 50, that the USA landed on the Moon. But it would be 28 more years, when I was 78, before I heard that what we found there included the fact that the numerous, quite visible Moon craters (unobliterated by weather or erosion) were actually asteroidal impact craters not volcanic craters—as had long been believed.

2007

Now, in 2007, it has been 32 years since the Moon landing. Ever since then hundreds of scientists have been scouring the surface of our weather-swept earth for similar asteroidal impacts. Hundreds of huge craters have been discovered and thousands of smaller ones. Now, for example, many specialized scientists believe that the 100-million-year dominance of the dinosaurs was suddenly ended by the global turbulence created when a huge asteroid left a 100-mile wide crater in the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. Indeed, one study reported in *Scientific American* (March 2002) tells of the discovery of 45 impact craters at least 15 miles wide. Furthermore, it is understood that even smaller asteroidal impacts often darken the whole earth until, as the dust settles, first glimmers of light indicating light and day appear and later the Sun, the Moon and stars become visible—a sequence which, if that of Genesis 1, is a sequence of *restoration* not of *creation*.

Something very strange and puzzling but widely discussed by both paleontologists and evolutionists is the sudden and very wide diversity of life forms appearing in what is called the *Cambrian period*. That sudden, spectacular diversity is why this period is usually referred to as the Cambrian *Explosion*. Such an event obviously damages seriously the idea of a gradual Darwinian process. However, where have I been? I did not know until recently that a not-often-mentioned peculiarity of the Cambrian period, in addition to the very-often-mentioned sudden, un-Darwinian profusion of life, was the first appearance at that time of *predatory, life-destroying life*. I first saw this in *National Geographic* and later in technical books on paleontology. Was the Cambrian event the first clear evidence of C. S. Lewis' "Hideous Strength"? More specifically, has the slow progression of increasingly complex life forms been the work of obedient angels—while the violent, predatory life forms have been the effect of angels whose rebellion caused the distortion and violence first appearing in the Cambrian Period? Is that why, when Satan appeared much later in the Garden, he already had a lengthy crime record? Did he "fall" when the Cambrian Period began 500 million years earlier, thus explaining the unremitting destruction, suffering and wildly diverse, violent animal life for the next 500 million years?

Back to Unger. His exegesis of Genesis 1:1, 2 (along with C. I. Scofield and a host of other Bible expositors) proposes that v. 2 describes the result of some sort of a destructive event. *Tohu wa bohu* in v.2 could mean “destroyed and desolate,” not merely “formless and void.” In that case such a destruction was the basis for the creative events in chapter 1. Furthermore, notice that the text of chapter 1 insists that both the animal and human life created at that time was not predatory or carnivorous. Hmm.

Furthermore, paleohistorians and paleoneurologists may have a better idea of when truly human beings first appeared than ordinary paleontologists whose focus is fossilized bones. Paleoneurologists, in contrast, look to changes in genomics. Paleohistorians pay attention to evidences of unprecedented intelligence rather than to the sizes and shapes of bones. Paleohistorians have come to the fairly settled conclusion that both plants and animals began to be genetically engineered through highly intelligent selective breeding about 11,000 years ago. Recent articles (even *Newsweek*, Mar 19, 2007) suggest that truly human forms appeared 50,000, or 37,000 or even 5,800 years ago. These are the dates when three unique genes first appeared that are apparently essential to true human beings.

The third of these unique genes, ASPM, clocked in at the 5,800-year date. Could ASPM be the unique “Edenic Gene” characterizing Adam’s stock in Eden? If so, this could mean that prior to Eden humans lacking this third gene were living all over the world. Widespread evidences are that such humans were vicious and carnivorous cannibals. Were some of them wiped out in an area of the Middle East when the impact of a smallish asteroid initiated the events of Genesis?

If that happened, the later breakdown of the Edenic new beginning would have resulted in the interbreeding of the animal and human life of Genesis 1 with the already-distorted and carnivorous forms of life outside of the Garden of Eden. This would have caused a degradation of the unique “image of God” type of Edenic humanity (bearing the ASPM gene). That interbreeding would have meant both moral degradation as well as genetic distortion in the form of carnivorous behavior (chapter 9) and the resulting steady shortening of life.

The creation of a “new man” in Christ undoubtedly restores spiritual life that was extinguished by Adam's sin—sin which was guaranteed to cause (and did cause) instant (spiritual) “death.” But spiritual restoration would not necessarily roll back genetic distortions, which may be what we call original sin. Are we humans not still carnivorous in our digestive systems? Despite being spiritually transformed by Christ do we not still need both our shotguns and immune systems as long as both large animals and microscopic forms of life are still dangerous? Does not, as in Romans 7, our spiritual nature still fight against our physical nature? The “renewing of our minds” in Romans 12:1 curbs our inherited bestiality except when we may run berserk like Hutu pastors wielding machetes in Rwanda. The “old man” is still there unless crucified daily.

### **Thus?**

If this scenario is by any chance correct, then there is clearly no contradiction between the Bible and the latest thinking of contemporary paleontology and paleoneurology. There is no conflict if the universe is 13.7 billion years old. There is no problem if the

Earth is 4.5 billion years old. The simplest forms of life may very well have begun to appear 4 billion years ago.

Then, after 3.5 billion years of the intensive labors of angels who were all good (and, under God's guidance, tinkering with DNA) life forms would develop to a threshold where already larger animals (not vicious nor predatory) would finally appear.

At that point, totally unexpectedly, after 3.5 billion years of development, during just the next, most recent, half- billion years (one eighth of the time), massive distortion, chaos, suffering and pain would suddenly appear as good angels continuously fought rebel angels led by Satan. During these last 500 million years life would continue to get more and more complex and fabulously diverse, as teams of good angels developed new and creative life forms in different parts of the world, but now having to arm them with defensive traits in all- out war against the constant counter distortions of evil angels.

This lengthy, contested development of life forms, contrary to Darwinian Evolution, could have been a process similar to that of thousands of intelligent engineers across the 20<sup>th</sup> century developing different but similar automobiles in different parts of the world with ever increasing complexity. Unlike unguided Darwinian processes, however, is the fact that no manufacturer developed cars that ate other cars! By contrast, all life forms are subject to premature death and destruction. And, in such a scenario (of good angels developing new and more sophisticated forms of life), it would not seem strange—it would be expected—that new models would be closely similar to earlier forms of life. That is, finding “missing links” would not prove *unguided evolution* any more than it would confirm *continuity of intelligent design*.

Curiously, ever since the Cambrian Period 500 million years ago, asteroidal collisions have apparently repeatedly knocked out much of life on earth, the dinosaurs being one of the most curious and violent species to perish suddenly. Perhaps they deserved destruction? In this scenario, the destruction of all life in even a local area would have produced initial global darkness and then the restorative sequence described in Genesis chapter 1. All this could have been witnessed and remembered by intelligent (but distorted, bestial and predatory) human beings outside of the area of Eden. The breakdown of the Garden of Eden would have then exposed both animal and human life (created, as in Genesis 1:29-30, in a non-carnivorous state) to forms of life that were distinctly carnivorous and violent, and the “fall” of man would then ensue.

This would then mean that Adam's “fall” would have brought a curse upon Edenic life and initiated globally a struggle against the corruption and evil of Satan's doing, good angels working together with reconciled man in a struggle against darkness. This is essentially the story of the Bible as well as the last two millennia.

Mission and evangelism then can be seen as a means of recruiting and renewing humans in a struggle which is not basically between God and man but between God-plus-redeemed-man against the kingdom of Satan and his works.

This is a battle to restore in people's minds the glory of God by helping people to see that

not only human but angelic *evil is to be identified with Satanic initiative and not God's initiative*—a fact widely and extensively misunderstood in Evangelical circles today, witness James Dobson's earnest but misleading book, *When God Doesn't Make Sense*. Or, witness a Harvard professor's unchallengeable statement: "If the God of Intelligent Design exists he must be a divine sadist who creates parasites that blind millions of people." Or witness the testimony of a world famous professor of Biblical studies, a Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton graduate, the prolific, erudite professor at Duke, Bart Ehrman,

This made me think more deeply about my own understanding of why there is suffering in the world. Finally, because I became dissatisfied with all of the conventional answers I decided that I could not believe in [a] God who was in any way intervening in this world given the state of things. So that's how I ended up losing my faith.

In order to glorify God we must resist the common idea that all events are initiated by God. We are to rejoice in and praise God *in all things* but not rejoice and praise God *for all things*. As long as angels and men have free will God is not in the usual sense the initiator of all things.

This scenario is the very opposite of sitting back and assuming that God does all things both good and bad. Rather, it explains the urgent and momentous obligation to distinguish evil from good and to fight all evil and every evil with everything in our command (not just first century knowledge).

The scope of the Christian mission that then devolves on every follower of Christ is to seek constantly what is the maximum contribution he or she can make to glorifying God and fighting evil. This includes healing the sick, rescuing those who are suffering for any reason, preventing disease and malice, and eliminating or eradicating sources of evil and disease. It requires us to engage meaningfully in the global battle against human slavery, corruption in both government and private enterprise, family breakdown, and so forth.

In most cases it is necessary to *organize*. It is not enough for individual believers to do good deeds. Individuals can do much but many things require group action. In some cases groups, such as mission agencies, already exist. In many cases new organizations need to be initiated. It is not necessary to fly a church or even a "Jesus" flag. In the long run God will get the glory. Otherwise what we do may be interpreted as a means of aggrandizing our particular faith. *But clearly, fighting evil is instant common ground with every group and society. Winning people over to our religious/cultural tradition is not.*

## Evolved or Involved?

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 245-47)

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

I feel very uneasy about the word evolution since it is so often employed to describe a progression of life that developed *without any intelligent guidance at any point*. While some Evangelicals may believe in that kind of “unguided evolution,” I would rather just stay away from the word because I certainly do not believe life could have arisen by a purely random process, even with the factor of “natural selection of the fittest” thrown in as a guiding mechanism.

By contrast, I think *develop* is a nicer word than *evolve* since it does not tend to push us to believe no guiding hand is involved. It clearly allows the involvement of intelligence in the process. Thus, for example I would prefer to speak of the development of the American automobile in the 20th century rather than the evolution of the American automobile in the 20th century. Since thousands of intelligent engineers were involved at every moment.

But this attitude toward evolution as a word is just my personal preference. I know that in the English language a secondary use of the word evolution is fairly common in processes where human beings are involved with guiding hands. People do speak of the evolution of the computer, for example, when it is not at all a case where computers evolved without guidance. And in this sense you could speak of the evolution of the American automobile.

However, one might read somewhere of “The *evolution* of dogs from wolves and wheat, corn, rice, and potatoes from almost inedible forms of plant life.” Such *developments* certainly took place all right, but it is irretrievably true that those derivations would not have happened had some very intelligent human beings not been *involved* in the process—a use of the word *evolution*, note, in the guided sense. Indeed those developments may actually peg the time human. But remember, this is not the usual use of the word *evolution*. Intelligent external involvement is not the most common usage of the word *evolution*.

Thus, if we recognize that *evolution* usually means specifically “unguided” development, we cannot then wisely speak of the evolution of either dogs or potatoes because these were developments that were definitely guided by intelligence, high intelligence, clearly not unguided evolution. Intelligence was certainly involved in the process.

Yet the ambiguity will continue to exist. When you hear that “the Pope believes in evolution” you really don’t know whether he is talking about a process that is guided or unguided. For example, an older denomination recently took a poll of its members and found that 1) 99% believe “The universe was created by God,” and 2) 92% believe that “Life is so complex that it has to be the outcome of intelligent design,” and yet 3) 85% believe that “Evolution theory is compatible with the idea of God as Creator.”

In this case I feel sure that the people who believe in *unguided* evolution, who are many, are not many in this poll. Quite likely most of the 85% are expecting intelligent guidance to be involved in the process.

So, next time someone asks me “Do you believe in evolution?” I am going to answer, “Do you mean *unguided* evolution?” If they say yes, I will say no. And I will also say that personally I am even uneasy about using the word due to the persistent ambiguity of the term *evolution* in any case of *guided* development.

Let’s go back to the dogs! At every point in that development from wolves to dogs you can be sure highly intelligent selective breeding was involved. It could even be called *genetic engineering*. New forms of life, at least slightly different from the originals, were developed by that intelligent involvement in selective breeding. In this sense virtually all of the foods we eat were genetically engineered long ago in many ways by the involvement of intelligent human design.

But a new factor has recently appeared. Human beings have by now learned quite a bit about DNA, genes, and chromosomes, and are helping people with genetic diseases to be healed. Really scary possibilities come to light. Are we playing “God” by selectively breeding cats of a certain type? Or, when a disease gene is replaced with a healthy one? In a sense, yes. We are doing God’s work. But we are also doing God’s work when we evangelize. We have God-given abilities to do right and to do wrong but no restriction forcing us to do nothing in the area of genetics.

In my theology, Satanic disruption, distortion, and destruction of God’s good creation is so extensive and pervasive that it even extends to what are often called “genetic defects.” I have a strong suspicion that these defects are often actually intelligently evil *distortions* by Satan not just things that went wrong accidentally. Why? Because, simply, some of these are so cleverly destructive. The same goes for destructive viruses, bacteria, and especially parasites. These represent incredibly ingenious evil. They represent, I am thinking, the *involvement* of intelligence. They are not just unguided evolution or, much less, errors in creation. It would seem that God sometimes makes use of such things as forms of punishment but that the evil distortions themselves are not of His direct initiative.

In fact, something here is very ominous to me. Today, I see many books and articles about the origin of evil, or about “Where is God When Things Go Wrong?” or “When God Doesn’t Make Sense.” But I can scarcely find any of them attributing all or even some of this disorder and evil to the intentions of a created, evil, counter-being that turned against God and has been for a long time distorting life forms throughout God’s good creation. Unbelievably, in view of that pervasive degradation, some authors actually insist that we should not ask “Why?” but simply trust that God has in mind our good—the theory of the “mysterious good.” For example, one pastor told me I ought to thank God for the cancer that killed my first wife and the same cancer that is now killing me! This I do not believe.

Thus, for me the evolutionary process which I would prefer to call *development* could easily have involved intelligently evil as well as on-going intelligent good. Thus, Satanic meddling with our DNA could likely have engineered many genetic distortions and authored many destructive forms of life—from brilliant viruses to monstrously destructive dinosaurs.

The good angels, meanwhile, have not been idle. With God's guidance they have devised the human immune system and they have armed many creatures with all kinds of defenses such as hard shells, porcupine quills, changing color, etc.

Perhaps God does not want us either 1) simply to cage or kill all wild and dangerous animals, or 2) to let them do their predatory violence. Maybe it is closer to his desire for us to *restore them* genetically to their original, created, herbivorous state. Maybe that is why He has been waiting patiently for humans to find out what we now know about genetic processes.

But, note, amidst all this theorizing we are working quite blindly if we are unable basically to recognize the extensive existence of intelligently damaged and "violitized" forms of life, or we fail to understand that such pervasive distortions of God's good creation are the work of an evil one.

The tendency to overlook this factor of an external, intelligent evil can readily be seen in the arena of health.

The more I think about it the more strange it seems to me that God would expect us to go through some secret, esoteric, spiritual hocus pocus in order to get well. Isn't that gnosticism? Even psychosomatic illness is not strictly speaking "spiritual." What do you think?

Obviously from the time Roberta was attacked by cancer we have been deluged with cures. They are still coming. Most of them emphasize one and only one very specific panacea, like Barley Green, colloidal silver, MG3, Ambrotose, grape diet, coffee enema, exercise, sleep, sunlight, diet, prayer. Each thrust ignores or minimizes the others. None reflects on the possibility of an intelligent, external evil.

Here is an illustration in regard to the idea in one book that if you eat what the Bible tells you to it will defend you against all disease. Okay, suppose there are kids going around bashing in cars' headlights. You can't defend your car against that possibility of damage by going back to the owners' manual and following it meticulously by putting in premium gas, highest quality transmission oil, proper antifreeze, etc.

Reason? To do all of that is all to the good and it will prevent many different kinds of breakdowns, but in this hypothetical case there is also *an outside, independent, intelligent evil to be dealt with*. That is my idea of the role of pathogen-induced disease.

The most repulsive example of overlooking an intelligent external evil is the true case of a comatose woman who after some months of total coma seemed to develop skin abrasions on her toes. Pretty soon the infection or whatever, despite medical attempts to stop it, actually exposed some of the bones. Finally, they realized rats at night were nibbling on her. In this case they did not assume a better diet would help, or exercise, or prayer. They at last discovered that an external intelligence was the problem.

Along this line something that truly caught my attention a couple of years ago was when I found out that quite a few secular paleontologists now believe—as part of their concept of lengthy development of life on earth—that there is an identifiable point when no previous form of life was either predator or prey. They contend that suddenly in the "Cambrian explosion" of new life forms (550 million BC) they now see forms of life that destroy life at every level, from viruses to dinosaurs. What came to my mind instantly when I encountered this is that this must have been the point at which Satan and his evil minions turned against God and began to use their long developed skills int he

development of life now to systematically distort and corrupt His good creation. Just a thought.

Let's return to the concept of unguided evolution vs. involved intelligence. We need a lot of wisdom here. For close to 200 years human beings have discovered old bones which do not belong to any present-day creatures. During that period, many Christians duly concluded that life must have developed over a lengthy period of time. In my youth most Evangelical leaders believed that either the "days" of Genesis had to be long periods or that between Genesis verse 1:1 and 1:2 a huge period of time elapsed. Back then only the Seventh Day Adventists believed that no form of life on earth could be older than man. More recently a lot of Evangelicals have taken the position that the seeming age of the earth is a huge mistake, based on many false assumptions.

Ken Mulholland, for twelve years our board chair, before he died in 2003—of the same cancer I have—told me that at Columbia Bible College, seminary, university, etc. a good rule of thumb is that undergraduate faculty members tend to believe in a "young" earth while graduate faculty believe in an "old" earth. Perhaps this is true in other schools as well. There are thousands of Evangelical professors who make up the membership of the American Scientific Affiliation (which was started by an astronomy professor-member of Lake Avenue Church when I was a teenage-member). The entire Affiliation is holds the position that life on earth was developed over a period of time.

Admittedly, however, some Evangelicals who really know their science are on the other side of the fence.

I personally welcome open discussion of this question of the age of the earth. But, unfortunately, little *discussion* is going on compared to the amount of heated *debate*. The Navigator press publishes some of Hugh Ross's books. His letters to the Institute of Creation Research go unanswered.

The October–December 2003 issue of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, which I edit at the moment, contains a range of views and articles, most of which plead for communication and mutual respect not debate and condemnation of one another. In these cases it is not that one party believes the Bible and the other doesn't, but that the two parties differ in the way they interpret it. That is, we have an inerrant Bible but not necessarily inerrant interpretations.

I personally have no doubts whatsoever about the creation by God of the universe, our planetary system, and life on earth. But at the same time I have wondered whether such truths are presented in the Bible other places than in Genesis, and not in Genesis. In that case perhaps Genesis 1:1 refers exclusively to recent events, specifically the very recent creation of humans. Paleontologists are in general convinced that life on earth has been set back and redeveloped many times following massive asteroidal collisions with the earth. *Scientific American* in May of 2002 displayed a chart of 60 "extinction events," 45 of which they have traced to impact craters that are 15 or more miles across. There are thousands of smaller ones.

Thus, to me it would be perfectly logical to understand that Genesis is an accurate description of one of many setbacks. That is, it describes what happened fairly recently following a large impact whose extinctions were mainly regional. Thus, in the very first verse in Genesis we are reading about recent and regional events not planet-wide catastrophe much less the creation of the universe. It is a fact that the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1 can be understood in that light. The NRSV for example has a significantly



different translation from the King James. I don't blame anyone, of course, for making the plausible assumption that the Bible might likely begin by describing the creation of the universe. The real question is not whether it might have done so but whether it did. It is not for us to decide what the Bible *ought to say*.

The main perspective, for me, in Genesis, is that it is at the very end of a lengthy history, when God created human beings. Of course, the paleontologists have discovered man-like animals as long ago as a million or more years. But even very recent man-like beings such as the Neanderthal are now believed on DNA evidence to be sub-human, unrelated to humans.

Recently scholars have indicated their belief that the intelligent cultivation and breeding of plants and animals could not be more than 11,000 years old. For me the Genesis account fits right into this period. The six days of creation described there seem to be a strikingly reasonable description of what would happen following a major, regional asteroidal collision, allowing for the new Edenic beginning in that region. Note that almost always asteroidal collisions throw massive dust into the air that blocks out all light, all over the earth, but as the dust settles first you see light and darkness and only later can you actually see the object-sources of light, the sun, the moon, and the stars, etc. And, in that region animal life was entirely wiped out.

Logically, one of the things God was then counting on is for human beings, created at that moment to be of help in replenishing the earth.

Of course, all this is speculation by one who certainly believes every verse of the Bible. My point is not to convince anyone, even myself, but to encourage generous discussion of what the Bible means. We do not do well to close our minds to the possibility that we have often simply misunderstood the Bible and in the process given it a bad reputation. That has been done.

For example, when both Calvin and Luther opposed the Copernican theory employing Bible verses, in those cases they simply did not understand the Bible. People have even "proven that the earth is flat" by quoting the Bible. We do not deny the inspiration of the Bible to question interpretations.

In other words, for many thinking Evangelicals the inspiration of the Bible is not the issue. The issue is what does the Bible really teach and on what matters is it silent, focusing on what it addresses readers at a time when they by no means yet knew everything about the planet, the solar system, etc. These would give exciting revelations of God's glory later on.

To me it is important (as they teach you in seminary) to know what a passage "meant" before trying to understand what it "means" today. I also think it is important to go one step further and ask the question, "What would Jesus have said to his hearers if they had known what we know about germs?" Would He have warned them against perversions of their DNA by Satan? Would He have encouraged them to fight back and not to assume that destructive forms of life were made that way in the original creation by God? Would He have encouraged His hearers to master enough microbiology to be enabled to restore distorted forms of life to their original state? Or, would He have suggested that cancer is a perfectly normal and expectable evolution as a famed Anglican Priest/Scientist recently stated? Would not Jesus have urged His hearers to go all out to discover what Satan has done to produce cancer and to seek to conquer this dread disease that will invade half of all males in this country before they die?

Note that right now Evangelical theology says virtually nothing about all this. Thus, do we have a frontier of mission here which we could not have understood without recent discoveries? Even more important is the question, "In order properly to glorify God is it necessary to distinguish what Satan is doing in this arena and avoid attributing all this evil to God?" Is our evangelism properly empowered if in a sense we are preaching about a God who is not concerned about our seeking out the origins of disease and is content with us mainly just treating the results of disease?

These are questions that come to mind

## From Editor's Desk re scientific community; Religion of Science

(2004) (IJFM 21:1)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/21\\_1\\_PDFs/02\\_04\\_Editorial\\_21\\_1.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/21_1_PDFs/02_04_Editorial_21_1.pdf)

In our last issue we very definitely introduced again the existence of mission frontiers which are related to, but different from, the Unreached Peoples Frontier as it is usually conceived. That is, if we recognize the existence of the “unreached people” of the scientifically educated community of, say, Hyderabad, that recognition in turn simply points at an intermediate task. Then, unwrapping that task we quickly find the frontier we addressed last time—“The Religion of Science.”

This time, however, “other” frontiers hove into view, such as the profound and truly awesome warning contained in Rice’s comments on the virtual collapse of the Evangelical Awakening in England. His study of this startled him into dramatic insights about a parallel situation, the church in India. But his comments can just as easily startle all of us as we view what may be beyond the amazing current success of the Gospel in China, Africa, and Latin America.

As a matter of fact Rice’s comments are equally applicable to the apparent strength of the Evangelical revival that is taking place in America today.

Bluntly, this frontier—the question of whether we are building enduring Christianity or not—in one sense outranks all other frontiers, including the Unreached Peoples Frontier. That is, what is the wisdom of avidly building a widespread movement to Christ which is going to collapse tomorrow into Gospel resistance?

Notice how Rice’s comments cast quite a shadow over Philip Jenkin’s (*The Next Christendom*) rosy picture of the future of Christianity being in the Global South. But it isn’t just Jenkins. Long before the book appeared missions leaders had been hailing the splurge of growth on the mission field as at least a big thing.

My own thoughts about this dread paradox of wild success leading on into desperate failure are as follows:

There are at least two dimensions of knowing God in Christ. There is an emotional awe in worship and daily life, call it an awareness of God, and there is an intellectual insight into Who He is. Is it possible to be aware of God with very little accurate insight into Who He is? Yes. Is it possible to possess a lot of insight into the nature of God with little hour-by-hour awareness of Him? Yes.

*Awareness* arises in worship and in daily devotions and in hour-by-hour God-consciousness, in “practicing the presence of God.” It is the result of “praying without ceasing.” It flourishes in times of true revival and awakening.

But we need to be cautioned by the fact that while authentic, and enormous spiritual revival underlay the First Crusade, that tragic effort swept thousands of ordinary people into a headlong and earnest effort that became a scourge and a scandal—clearly, for lack of *insight* into the nature of the person of God.

We are well acquainted with the opposite, where seminaries become cemeteries, hording massive information in their libraries about God’s nature but handling all that

holy information with a professionalism that can easily replace any real awareness of the Living God.

So what is the answer? We must begin by recognizing the all-important necessity of *both* awareness and insight. We must be willing to suspect insight without awareness and awareness without insight.

It is fair to say that the hallmark of the Evangelical movement in its early days was its stress on authentic, emotional experience. Sections of Evangelicalism today actually define Evangelicalism in purely intellectual terms, in a list of doctrinal truths to which we assent. There, however, we may find little or no reference to the central feature of the Evangelical Awakening of the 18th Century (which produced Evangelicalism), namely “assurance of salvation,” and, for many, “a second work of grace” that was “here and now” and highly emotional in its manifestation.

Today, that stress on “experience” (not intellectual knowledge) has moved on into the Pentecostal and Charismatic and Apostolic spheres, while the older Evangelicals look on askance, holding tight to their less emotional forms of worship and their lists of doctrines.

But let’s be honest. Although some Evangelicals have moved from *awareness to insight*, far fewer have gained them both, and many of us may at times play fast and loose with both. That sorry fact has often been pointed out by citing two books, Carl F. H. Henry’s *The Uneasy Conscience of the Modern Fundamentalist*, and Mark Noll’s *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.

Why have Evangelicals been slow to add insight to awareness? Even building on the incomparable “insight” into God’s nature and glory which we can see in “the face of Jesus Christ”—His character and ministry—does God not want us to employ heart and mind in updating the limited understanding of those times? That is, should we not just try to understand what Jesus meant by the things He said back then, but seek to fathom what He would have said back then if those people had known what we today know about germs, for example.

Perhaps because the tightly-held theological truths which are usually employed to define Evangelicalism today constitute only rudimentary insight without the additional glory of God to be seen in the discoveries of a whole stream of devout believers working away in the realm of understanding nature (Kepler, Maxwell, Faraday, Newton, etc.). Our knowledge of God has not by any means kept pace with the daily increasing evidences of His glory, because those evidences are seen as merely secular achievements of science.

Years ago I was asked to write a review for *Christianity Today* of five books that had recently come out on the subject of Evangelicalism. The one I liked the best was *The Evangelical Renaissance* by Donald Bloesch. I ended my lengthy review by saying that “you can no more define Evangelicalism by citing doctrines than you can eat soup with a fork,” or something like that.

However, as crucial it is that we hang on to the historic Evangelical awareness of God, we must seriously and even urgently add a competent intellectual grasp of God’s glory in the much larger world known to modern man. It is absolutely tragic that millions of keen thinkers would be truly awed into a quasi-religious scientism through their contact with God’s Book of Creation, while still other millions would be caught up in God’s Book of Scripture to the point where they elevate it as a magical object which must somehow provide an explanation of all later exploration of the universe.

Clearly God calls us by heart and mind, not heart or mind. Yet the predominant character of much of the rapidly spreading “faith” around the world (and around America) today consists of multitudes being entranced by the availability of the promises of God unrelated to a true and thorough awareness of and insight into the nature of God and His creative handiwork.

## The Most Precarious Mission Frontier

(2004) (*IJFM* 21:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/21\\_4\\_PDFs/Precarious\\_Frontiers.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/21_4_PDFs/Precarious_Frontiers.pdf)

The most precarious frontier facing us today is that of a profoundly larger, and startlingly new understanding of our mission, startling in more than one way. Let's begin with a brief recapitulation, tracing, among other things, eight "Precarious Perspectives" on which this frontier of mission is built (see list on page 172).

### The Plain Facts

The story of God's work on this planet (and in the whole universe) is apparently a long story. But certain things are becoming fascinating interpretations—at least to some of us who are over 70 and have had extra time to think about it!

Astounding beauty and symmetry is evident in all creation. But there is also violence and cruelty, pain and suffering throughout all of nature. *Evidence is mounting that life has been developing on this planet over a very long time.* We don't have to accept that idea but we may do best to consider it—call it *Precarious Perspective #1*.

Furthermore, what evidence we have (which is growing to be monumental) indicates that after most of the smaller and intricate developments of life took place, *suddenly in the Cambrian Period we find in the world of animals the first appearance of predatory life forms.* From that point on we see nothing but life against life. Few forms of life die a natural death. Something has gone terribly wrong. The average believer does not stop to think whether God would have created originally vicious animals, or if Satan has had any great influence on all life forms. This is **Precarious Perspective #2**. Listen to Bruce McLaughlin, a science professor with a doctorate from MIT. McLaughlin is also a pastor with an apologetics web site (*see www.christianapologetic.org*), who is protesting the view of another fine professor/pastor, David Snoke, whose article makes God the author of the violence and suffering in nature:

According to Scripture, the universe was originally good and the glory of God is still evident in it (Rom. 1:20). But something else—something frightfully wicked—is evident in it as well. Of their own free will, Satan and other spiritual beings rebelled against God in the primordial past and now abuse their God-given authority over certain aspects of creation. Satan, who holds the power of death (Heb. 2:14), exercises a pervasive, structural, diabolic influence to the point that the entire creation is in bondage to decay. The pain-ridden, bloodthirsty, sinister and hostile character of nature should be attributed to Satan and his army, not to God. Jesus' earthly ministry reflected the belief that the world had been seized by a hostile, sinister lord. Jesus came to take it back.<sup>1</sup>

At the same reference, another Evangelical scientist, Moorad Alexander, protests the same thing:

Animals were either already affected by the Fall of Lucifer or else the Fall of Man affected animals ... Hence it is more logical to attribute animal pain and death to Satan and not to an omnipotent God. The millennium reign of the Messiah will be characterized by the restoration of the harmony in the whole of creation (Isa. 11:6-9) that was broken not by the sin of Adam but by Satan (Rom. 8:18-22) .... Snoke's analysis may be partially successful in casting doubt that the Fall of Man gave rise to the viciousness and death in the animal kingdom. However, Snoke does not even mention the [earlier] fall of Lucifer (Isa. 12:14) and so his inference that such features of the animal world were created by God leaves much to be desired.<sup>2</sup>

Tony Campolo, a professor of sociology at Eastern College, PA gives us one of the most eloquent cases for Satanic distortion of creation (long before Adam) in his book, *How to Rescue the Earth Without Worshipping Nature: A Christian's Call to Save Creation*.

There Campolo refers to Eastern Orthodox theology (which was not affected by Augustinian thinking as much as ours has been) in these words:

Since Satan's fall, he and his followers have been at work perverting and polluting all that God created. Before Adam and Eve were ever created, Satan worked to create havoc throughout creation.<sup>3</sup>

Is this **Precarious Perspective #3**, *that nature has been pervasively distorted into violence by Satan?* And that suddenly at the time of the Cambrian Period (See Figure 1) predatory life appeared for the first time, long before Genesis?

The Bible, in any case, is the one book that recognizes both the beauty and the distortion of creation. Then, early in its pages it reveals a global plan to push back the darkness and evil, to restore the original glory and reconcile all peoples back into an eternal fellowship with God.

### **Where We Have Been**

That is the "Original Good News"—the reconquering of evil in all the earth, the restoration of God's glory and His glorification by all peoples. But this is not quite the same as what we usually talk about. I am reminded of what Nancy Pearcey has said,

The Christian message does not begin with "Accept Christ as your Savior;" it begins with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."<sup>3</sup>

At my church we hear all about the wonderful grace of God in our salvation and what He has done for us. We are exposed to marvelous works of man—music and worship—but little during a year about the latest breakthroughs in science which for centuries have portrayed incredible new insights into His glory. *This is what both Jews and Christians have usually taken faith to mean, namely, human pardon and salvation. But, in addition, they have not emphasized, as clearly as the Bible does, God's glorification (that is, the re-establishment, the restoration of that glory).* Is this **Precarious Perspective #4?**

During the 2,000 years before Christ, the Jews and their forefathers did in many ways manifest the glory of God. We got our Bible from them. It tells how they both

succeeded and failed. Even before Christ, they were scattered all over the Roman empire and beyond, and, as James said, “Moses has been preached in every city” (Acts 15:21).

For 100 years before Christ they even sent missionaries out, as Jesus put it, “traversing land and sea to make a single convert.” Greeks and Romans were sitting in the backs of synagogues listening intently to readings from the Jewish Bible. Such people were called in Acts, “devout persons” or “God-fearers,” like Cornelius, the centurion.

However, an artificial barrier had been erected. The assumption was that people who were not Jews could not know God’s glory and glorify Him in their lives and join His eternal family unless they first became Jews. That is, they had to adopt Jewish foods and holidays, and Jewish circumcision (which was a fearful, dangerous and sometimes fatal procedure, especially for adults). Some of the Greeks and Romans had actually gone that far because they were so attracted to the Bible and the people of the book. But such proselytes or “converts” did not represent what God had in mind, and were far fewer than the God-fearers.

### **A New Beginning**

One intense, dedicated Jewish leader, however, after being struck down on a journey, saw the simple, electrifying truth that a change of heart, not behavior alone, was what counted, whether that behavior was Jewish or Greek. This startling discovery took him three years to fully assimilate, but then it gradually began to swing the door open to multitudes of other-wise disenfranchised people.

The statistics in his day are roughly these:

- 100 million in the Roman empire
- 10 million being Jews
- 1 million non-Jews attracted to the back seats of synagogues, called “God-fearers” or “devout persons” (the equivalent for speakers of Semitic languages such as Aramaic, Syriac or Arabic may have been “Muslim”).
- 100,000 Greek and Roman “converts” to Jewish culture, called proselytes.

Paul went to the God-fearers, the million that knew a lot of the Bible but had not decided to become Jewish. He set them free, by the thousands, from the thought that they had to become Jews to be acceptable to God. Many were already reconciled to God; they needed to be “saved” from Jewish legalism. *The idea that Paul was a missionary primarily to people who had heard a great deal of the Bible*—is that **Precarious Perspective #5?**

Paul was not often in contact with what we call unreached peoples. The people he dealt with were somewhat like Muslims today. Muslims have peeked into our Bibles. Many of them have devoutly accepted what they have understood. They took over the word for God used for five hundred years by Arabic Christians, Allah—a word used by 30 million Christians today. They took over the idea of praying five times a day from those same Christians. They elaborated a worship service that is entirely borrowed from Christian, Samaritan and Jewish wording.

The Christians with whom they were in contact did not have the whole Bible in their language, thus all Bible quotations in the Qur’an come either from the Torah, the Psalms or the Gospels. We would object as much as Muhammad did to the “tri-theistic” concept of the Trinity he found among those Christians.



But Christians down through history have treated them as total pagans. They have, by contrast, often treated Christians and Jews as “people of the book,” and reserved for all others the word “infidel.” For much of Evangelical history we have considered all others, Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Hindus, etc. as infidels. Is a different approach necessary? Is this Precarious Perspective #6?

### Let's Go Further

This is just background. Today we are blessed by greater access to the meaning of the Bible and Christian history than any previous generation. Today our understanding of God's creation is monumentally and magnificently greater. Because of that, to be able to begin with God and His creation is more powerful evangelistically than ever. Many of the peoples of the world, like those of the Judaic religions (Jewish, Christian, Muslim), are people for whom our Protestant gospel, a corrective to Catholicism, is quite intelligible and cogent. They can at least lean back on a vague cultural background to the Old Testament. This is also true today for hundreds of other peoples who have had contact with the Bible of the Christians. But all the rest of the world (the most difficult cross-cultural challenge) are people with whom we cannot just jump into the New Testament. We must begin with God and His Creation. Even Jesus cannot be fully understood without that foundation.

Nancy Pearcey effectively employs a three stage picture. She speaks of Creation, Fall, and Redemption.<sup>4</sup>

I would like to add two more stages that will give it even greater value. I feel it would help her case to speak of 1) Creation, 2) Fall of Satan, 3) Re-Creation, 4) Fall of Adam, 5) Redemption (Restoration). One reason for the two additional stages I suggest is to try to make sense out of the apparent age of the earth. Note, however that this perspective has lately been seriously challenged by much of the homeschool movement's materials.

In our Evangelical past—from the time ancient bones were being discovered bones began to be unearthed. The apparently lengthy age of the earth, and lengthy development of mainly strange earlier life forms was then stuffed either into the days of Genesis 1, or (as with the *Scofield Study Bible*) was inserted between 1:1 and 1:2 (right in the middle of a Hebrew sentence). However, all that great age could have *preceded* Genesis 1:1 if we had not all assumed that an ancient, Spirit-moved author had written of things no one had ever seen. Yet, as “holy men of God were moved by the Spirit” wrote what they did, they mainly wrote what was intelligible to themselves and to their hearers. This is **Precarious Perspective #7**, the idea that the “old earth” preceded the “young earth,” indeed, preceded Genesis 1:1.

Thus, it is a fact that Genesis 1:1 could also be interpreted to read, “When God began to (re)create things, everything was formless and void (the Hebrew phrase used for the aftermath of a war).” This thought became possible and much more understandable, curiously, when we landed on the moon, discovered that the many *volcanic* craters were actually *impact* craters resulting from asteroid collisions, and, then, turned around to look more closely for evidence of similar collisions on our weather-eroded earth. In fact this discovery set off a global search movement! Different teams, now that they knew what to look for, found evidence of thousands of impacts. Dozens of them involved rocks larger than three miles in diameter, travelling faster than a rifle bullet causing 1) craters 15 to

135 miles across, plus 2) “formless and void” destruction over a much larger area, and in many cases 3) dust that darkened the entire earth.

To humans outside of the destroyed area, darkness was thus the first indication of an asteroidal collision. (Of course, those in the destroyed area did not live to record the aftermath.) As the global canopy of dust settled, a glow of light would begin to be seen half of the day. Still later the sun and moon would be identifiable as sources of light, and actual rays of light would come through. But life *in the area of physical devastation* would have been entirely extinguished. The largest impact yet discovered may have killed off 90% of all life forms (around 240 million years ago). Still later (65 million years ago), a slightly smaller asteroid killed off all forms of dinosaur life. The events of Genesis are then more recent still. This, surely, is another uncommon view, **Precarious Perspective #8!**

**But what does all this have to do with missions, frontier missions? Why go into it anyway?**

First, *to defend the Bible*. It establishes the credibility of the Bible. Without a credible Bible, missions is worth very little. Missions is mostly the history of the impact of the Bible, not preaching. However, note that both Calvin and Luther seriously undermined the authority of the Bible for many believers in their day by insisting that the Bible actually opposed the Copernican exposition of a heliocentric solar system.

Note well that by interpreting the Bible to say something it may not be saying does not establish the credibility of the Bible, it tears it down. Today many serious Evangelicals, who continue to accept the old age of the earth, are profoundly disturbed by the artificiality of making Genesis incorporate that lengthy previous period. And, Wheaton College, for over fifty years, has allowed its professors to teach that the flood was local. It is time for some wholesale reconsideration of various views. We know a great deal more about this planet and outer space now than we knew even fifty years ago.

Second, *to expand our mission vision*. It crucially enlarges our understanding of the devastation of Satan’s ongoing activities in distorting creation and thus tearing down God’s glory. It therefore requires a larger presentation of the Gospel to unreached peoples which lack prior contact with the Old Testament. It defines a larger mission of not just getting people out of this world safely into heaven, but that of getting redeemed people to turn around and fight along with Him against “the works of the Devil.” (1 John. 3:8: “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil.”)

In missions we look dumbly on while many of our most strategic workers, trained and experienced for years, die off like flies from diseases we treat but do not attempt to eradicate. Some have thought that we must not exterminate dangerous pathogens because they must be the work of God. This was the thinking of pastors in Massachusetts in Jonathan Edwards’ day who on those grounds spoke against employing vaccines against small pox which was annually decimating his Indian charges at Stockbridge. They actually founded an “Anti-Vaccination Society” to thwart his efforts. But it shouldn’t take a genius like Edwards. Apparently all it takes is a Jimmy Carter with a layman’s theological intuition to set out to exterminate guinea worm and river blindness.

Finally, *to empower evangelism by glorifying God*. We have a much-empowered Gospel if we accept our mandate to restore creation and restore His glory by objecting to the wide-spread teaching that all this violence is of God—which is what the Intelligent

Design movement tacitly does by not addressing the overwhelming evidence for Intelligent Evil Design.

What if alternative theories about Genesis being the beginning of everything, not just a new beginning late in the planetary story, are wrong? Does this not discredit the Bible in the same way Calvin did by opposing Copernicus?

The overwhelming majority of scientifically trained Evangelicals hold to the traditional Evangelical acceptance of an old earth. Does it matter that the concept of an exclusively young earth created 6,000 years ago has only fairly recently been associated with Evangelicals (gradually since the thirties, and before that an exclusively Seventh-Day Adventist doctrine)? Have those recently accepting young earth theories gone wrong in the attempt to shore up the reliability of the Bible?

A while ago I asked the dean of graduate studies at one of the most outstanding Christian colleges where the professors stood on the old earth/young earth dichotomy. He said that the graduate faculty is mainly old earth, the undergraduate faculty is mainly young earth. What a deal! According to my analysis here we can believe in both an old earth (before Genesis 1:1) and a young “recreated” earth (Genesis 1:1). Why not? Are the shifts too precarious, is this analysis built on too many precarious perspectives?

Neither interpretation of Scripture implies a rejection of the Bible’s inerrancy. Belief in inerrancy does not mean inerrancy of interpretation. Either view could be wrong. But, meanwhile thousands, hundreds of thousands of keen scientists and educated mission-field believers around the world feel forced to doubt the Bible and the Christian faith because a recent interpretation of the book of Genesis seems to deny the facts.

### **Conclusion: Painful Change**

Does all of this add up to a very crucial and “Precarious Frontier”? In conclusion, let’s think for a moment about how long-standing positions and perspectives get changed. It is fascinating to see this happen to other people; it is hard for us to face this for ourselves. For example, it is ridiculously easy to fault some defenders of unaided evolution for their emotionally or politically biased points, their evident anti-theistic assumptions. As one Chinese paleontologist pointed out:

In China we can criticize Darwin but not the government. In America you can criticize the government, but not Darwin.<sup>5</sup>

However, in all honesty we need to realize there are emotionally biased people who oppose unaided evolution. They, too, are human and may be subject to the trauma of giving up other long-standing assumptions.

So, let’s glance at a few historic examples of theory-collapse in order to warm up to what we ourselves may have to give up.

1. Some intelligent ancients before Christ gave up the thought that the earth was flat when they saw its shadow on the moon as curved; the insight did not quickly catch on.

2. Much later people were slow to accept the heliocentric solar system idea. Even Martin Luther and John Calvin opposed it on the basis of biblical misinterpretation—and thus discredited the Bible.

3. A huge change of perspective had to take place when germs were discovered and were known to bring disease. This was long con-tested and is little believed around the world even today.

4. When very large and strange bones were discovered that belonged to species long gone, people had to digest this new perspective. In that case, Evangelicals and other Christians had little disagreement for at least a century.

5. A second “Copernican Revolution” took place when Hubble, in the 1920s, determined that our galaxy was only one of many, and that our own star (the Sun) was merely a tiny speck within our local galaxy. He also discovered that the universe is expanding at an incredible speed. People don’t seem to have trouble with these theories.

6,7. Currently, however, two major scientific theories are in danger. First evolution (as hinted at in the book review section this time). Second, the idea that much of the lengthy DNA molecule is “junk DNA.” The latter theory, if discredited, confronts scientists with an unimaginably more complex DNA to decipher.

Neither of these two scientific theories will fall easily. For the scientist, evolution is energized and protected by prejudices that are desperately held, and its fall will be a huge disappointment to those who have been delighted to wish God away.

Just as scientists confront two theories that are about to collapse, we Evangelicals confront two concepts: young and old earth. I mention the potential fall in the belief in junk DNA primarily because the collapse of this theory is so beautifully described and predicted by John S. Mattick (the very Australian scientist whose research tends to fault the idea of junk DNA). As you read his words, reflect on our problem in case some of our religious orthodoxies need to change:

Assumptions can be dangerous, especially in science. They usually start as the most plausible or comfortable interpretation of the available facts. But when their truth cannot be immediately tested and their flaws are not obvious, assumptions often graduate to articles of faith, and new observations are forced to fit them. Eventually, if the volume of troublesome information becomes unsustainable, the orthodoxy must collapse.<sup>6</sup>

The painful disengagement of many scientists from a settled theory, which Mattick describes, is not unique to either science or religion. It is human, sociological, psychological. It’s as difficult as it has been for Seventh-Day Adventists to give up their repeated end-of-the-world predictions. It would be as difficult as Evangelicals giving up their (gradually and recently inherited) Seventh-Day Adventist concept of instant creation.

The head of the department of the history of science at the University of Wisconsin, Ronald Numbers, is the son of an Adventist pastor who for many years earnestly preached the six-day creation of the earth. Numbers wrote a thick book<sup>7</sup> on the development of “Creation Science” which is very kind to all sides, very appreciative, but lays out in great detail the gradual stages of acceptance of that originally Adventist concept by mainstream Evangelicals. The book is a real treasure, telling with compassion and understanding how earnest believers arrived at conflicting perspectives over a period of many decades.

Whether we take one side or another in the many cases of sincere attempts to understand the Bible is not utterly crucial. Believing the Bible is inerrant does not obligate us to believe that Bible interpretations will always be inerrant.

But, if we insist the Bible says some-thing it was not intended to say—as did Luther and Calvin regarding an earth moving around the sun—we may unintentionally tear down confidence in the Bible.

The discovery not much over a hundred years ago of tiny very dangerous germs, for example, instantly validated the wisdom of many Old Testament rules for handling materials we now know to be suspected of carrying dangerous germs. This does not mean that the Biblical writers were aware of the valid technical reasons for their precautionary rules—any more than when we speak of the “sunrise” we are conscious of the technical details behind that statement.

Let’s try to be very sure of what the Bible says before assuming that a given interpretation is the only possibility. What I have sketched here is only conjecture. It does not question the truth of the Bible. But, granted, if valid, it does build on a series of perspectives that I have termed precarious because they involve changes of settled positions. Here they are summarized:

1. Evidence is now virtually overpowering that life has been developing on this planet over a very long period of time.
2. In the Cambrian Period, in the world of animals, *predatory* life forms first appear.
3. Nature began at that point to be pervasively distorted into violence by Satan. And that predatory life appeared for the first time, long before Genesis. And, in Figure 1, these violent forms of life are again and again blotted out by devastations.
4. Evangelicals rightly stress a reconciliation-of-man aspect and a promise of heaven. This is what both Jews and Christians have usually taken faith to mean, namely, human pardon and salvation. But, in addition, they have not emphasized, as clearly as the Bible does, God’s glorification (that is, the re-establishment, the restoration of that glory).
5. The idea that Paul was a missionary primarily to people who had already heard a great deal of the Bible: He set them free, by the thousands, from the thought that they had to become Jews to be acceptable to God. Many were already reconciled to God; they needed to be “saved” from Jewish legalism.
6. Muslims have, by contrast, often treated Christians and Jews as “people of the book,” and reserved for all others the word “infidel.” For much of Evangelical history we have considered all others, Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Hindus, etc., as infidels. Is a different approach necessary?
7. The idea that the “old earth” preceded the “young earth” and preceded Genesis 1:1.8. That the events of Genesis, the asteroidal devastation described in 1:1, and the flood mentioned later, are devastations and new beginnings, re-creation, replenishment.

All of these perspectives relate to a new and larger understanding of our mission in this life. If that were not the case, the particular issues would be merely oddities to be taken lightly.

### **Endnotes**

1 *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith*, Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation, Volume 56, Number 3, September 2004, page 237.

2 Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992, p. 38.

3 Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004) p. 45, see review on page 179.

4 *Ibid.*, page 45.

5 Quoted by Phillip Johnson in an August 16, 1999 *Wall Street Journal* article entitled, "The Church of Darwin."

6 John S. Mattick, *Scientific American*, October 2004, "The Hidden Genetic Program of Complex Organisms," p. 61.

7 Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992)

# Impacts, Eruptions and Major Mass Extinctions

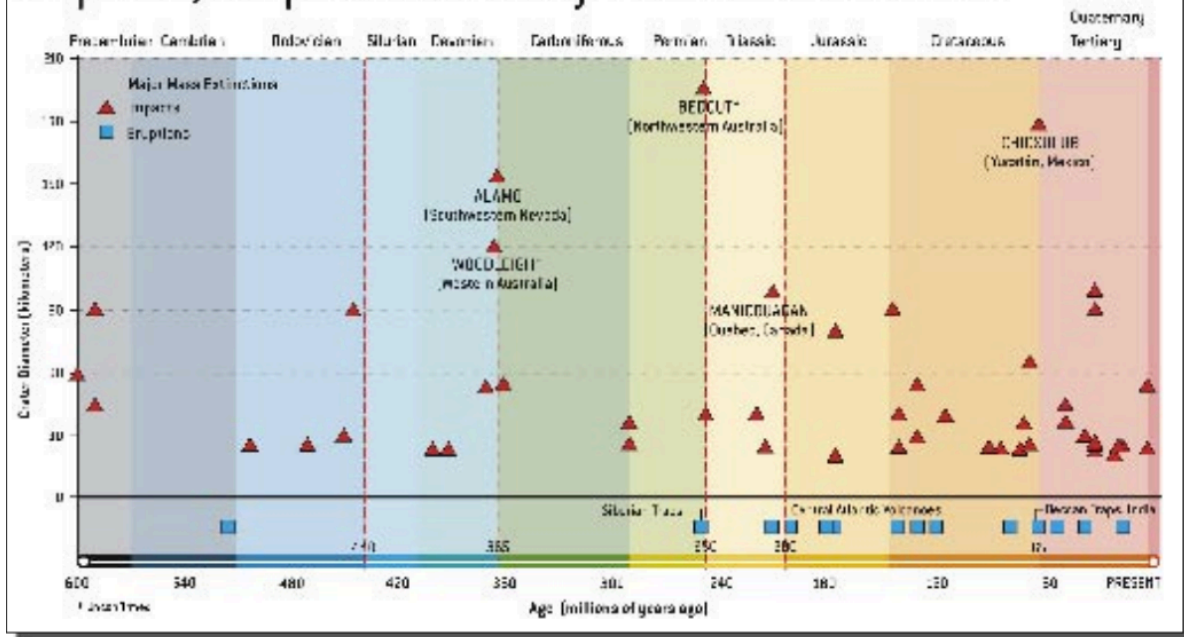


Figure 1

In this diagram, taken from the March 2002 issue of *Scientific American*<sup>1</sup>, the 45 small dark triangles represent collisions that have been detected in various parts of the earth from huge rocks from outer space.

These shown only represent rocks large enough to be *three miles or more in diameter*, leaving remnant craters 15 or more miles across, mostly larger. Thousands of smaller impacts, unrecorded here, have taken place, which are much harder to trace. The Arizona meteor crater is plain to see, however, and it is only a mile wide.

The vertical placement of these triangles represents the size of the craters, those at the top of the chart being larger than those lower down.

The largest one, which eliminated 90% of all life forms, took place 250 million years ago, and is here shown just to the right of center. More recently, the collision extinction of the dinosaurs, only 65 million years ago, hit Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, leaving clear evidences of a crater 110 miles in diameter, estimated to have been caused by an object 30 miles in diameter.

*What is the meaning of all this? This is the period in which predatory forms of life first appeared. This is the evidence of the emergence of evil prior to Adam. Was it when Satan fell?*

(Incidentally, it would appear that life has again and again been wiped out or nearly wiped out. Is this parallel to the phenomenon of the biblical flood closer to our time?)

Many of the dinosaurs were really atrocious, ferocious (God-designed?) creatures. All were destroyed by the major Chicxulub collision 65 million years ago. Since then, mammals have come into their own.

Homo Sapiens appeared so late in this picture that the length of the period would be represented at the far right by less than the thickness of a piece of paper (actually 3 ten-thousands of an inch).

It would appear that at the present time we are in the middle of a 22,000-year "interglacial" period. Also, that the enormous collision in the middle of the past 500 million years, was related to the breakup of the continents and the plate

tectonic drift which allowed the location of the continents today.

At 1.5 ten-thousandths of an inch the asteroid that carved out the chaos described in Genesis 1:1 may have hit, providing the opportunity for an "Edenic" sphere. In this sphere, then, a new variety of human created "in God's image" first appeared along with many animals *none of which were carnivorous* (1:29,30) as was also apparently the case prior to the Cambrian Period.

Ominously, the last-minute appearance and gradual domination of this planet by fallen humans displays an unnerving violence of human against human which is not characteristic of any other form of life. War, plus pestilence, held down world population for a long time before Christ. Now, relatively suddenly, the opposite problem of overpopulation presents itself, as both war and disease have been partially conquered.

<sup>1</sup> Luann Becker, *Scientific American*, March 2002, "Repeated Blows," p. 79. Figure 1 is by Aaron Firth (based on graphic by Michael Paine). Used by permission.

## Twelve Frontiers of Perspective (Excerpt)i

(2005) (Foundations Reader, 267-81).

<https://wciujournal.wciu.edu/twelve-frontiers-of-perspective>

### Perspective Eleven: The Religion of Science

This frontier has been mentioned in passing under the needed revolution in pastor training. It eminently deserves to be considered a frontier in its own right.

This largest remaining frontier is, ironically, the result in part of the very intellectual vigor of the Christian faith. It is the science community, which is now as global as the Christian faith itself. All effective scientific endeavors are dependent totally not so much on a particular “method” but on *a faith in the existence of order in nature*. This is a uniquely Biblical insight. It is the result of the Christian tradition.

It is as though the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture have spawned two global faith-communities, and that to most of the adherents of either faith the “other” is invalid. Millions around the world have been challenged and awed by each of the two books, and have been captured by profound belief in them, and are so confident of the glory they have found that anyone from the “other” side who questions the glory which they perceive may be automatically assumed to be blind and/or faithless.

This is not to say that a large minority of each of these two faith communities does not partake of the cultural tradition of the other. There are many scientists who are church-goers without as profound a faith as they have in the truth and beauty of their scientific experience. There are many Bible-believing people who are happy with science and technology but who do not regard it as a holy experience comparable to what they experience at church.

More troublesome by far are those zealots on each side who seek to tear down faith on the other side. We think of people like Carl Sagan<sup>3</sup> or Richard Dawkins<sup>4</sup> for whom confidence in the Bible is ridiculous, or some of the zealous believers in the Book of Scripture who actually twist scripture in their attempt to dethrone science. I refer to a perverse quoting of Psalms 19:3 as saying (speaking of the handiwork of God in creation) that “there is no speech or language where their voice is heard,” rather than “there is no speech or language where their voice is *not* heard.”

The Book of Scripture itself extensively attributes a revelation of God’s glory within what we call General Revelation. Paul in Romans 1 seems to present the ultimate summary of the power of General Revelation. He goes on to imply in chapter two that there are gentiles that “do by nature the things the law requires” without ever seeing or hearing from Scripture.

Whether or not we can readily make these statements congruent with our popular formulas for getting to heaven, they are extremely significant in missions in regard to foundations on which to build. Various religious faiths contain ambiguous mixtures of truth and nonsense. We do not do well to ignore anything which is true, no matter where we find it.

In fact, perhaps the most classic of all missionary mistakes is the perspective with which Abraham dealt with Abimelech. Why, Abimelech asked, did Abraham tell a lie and try to deceive him? Because, Abraham said, “I said to myself there is no fear of God in this place.” Instead of expecting to find that the Holy Spirit is in contact with all peoples, and building upon that foundation to the extent he might, Abraham presumed that all virtue was on his side and that Abimelech could not have possessed any spiritual foundation to build upon.

Thus, in crossing this frontier into the realm of science we must not ignore the presence of the Holy in the very world of science. If we can be people whose devotion to the living God is richly nourished by both books, we can respect the genuine beginnings of belief in the lives of



many, if not most, scientists, we can rejoice in the faith they have which will give them reason to hear of another kind of faith.

But it is not as simple as that. Zealots on both sides have erected high walls to dichotomize and polarize the two Books. Simple, honest inquiry across this frontier is thus as uncommon as it is difficult.

On the other hand, this frontier would seem to be, inherently, the easiest of all frontiers to cross, as well as having the greatest potential in terms of communicating with the modern world. We need ourselves to love His Word and His Works, and we need to share the manifest glory from both of those books if we wish to cross this huge frontier.

## Book Review: Blue Twilight: Nature, Creationism, and American Religion

(2005) (*IJFM* 22:2)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/22\\_2\\_PDFs/75-77Book\\_Reviews.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/22_2_PDFs/75-77Book_Reviews.pdf)

This is a book of ruminations about a variety of subjects, generally critical of fundamentalist Evangelicals. Here is a comment on one specific item. Gilkey states that the Little Rock, Arkansas trial in 1981 challenged in Federal court a state Act 590 in which “creation science” was described as involving “the sudden creation of all things out of nothing.”

That was 1981. Since then the Big Bang theory has gained wider and wider acceptance in scientific circles, a theory in which the entire universe did in fact pop into existence out of practically nothing. More precisely, the Big Bang theory involves an initial expansion incredibly faster than the speed of light. Light speeds at 186,000 miles in one second. In one year light travels 31,500,000 times that far. The Big Bang theory postulates that from a tiny particle things expanded in less than 1/1,000th of a second, to the size of a galaxy 100,000 light years across. That is, 100,000 times 31,500,000 times the 186,000 miles light travels in one second.

Obviously scientists are not having difficulties in believing in this incredibly sudden emergence of the universe. What many refuse to believe is the idea that the many varieties of life emerged suddenly on earth. Most of all, most scientists today are very sure that no intelligence could possibly be involved in the very slow and lengthy development of life on earth. Yet, paradoxically, they are conversely very sure, also, that millions of dollars invested in huge radio telescopes in Florida— set to listen for coded sounds from outer space—is an activity very likely to establish the existence of intelligent life “out there.”

That is, some evidence of coded signals coming from outer space will be for them enough to establish life out in space while the boundlessly complex human cell is not evidence enough to establish intelligence in life on earth.

One thing that is quite unfortunate is the widespread assumption that the Bible itself disallows any kind of lengthy development of life. As I tried to indicate in an earlier issue, “The Most Precarious Frontier,” (and again on p. 72) that what the Bible describes in its first chapter is very likely a recent re-creation of non-carnivorous life, and that Genesis 1:1 follows, not precedes the lengthy pattern of life development displayed in the crust of the earth.

As I see it, it does little good to say that all those eons of time can be snuggled into elongated “days” of creation in Genesis. Why? Because the lengthy record of earlier forms of life (thousands of different dinosaurs, for example) is unremittingly a record of fierce, violent, carnivorous life, while the forms of life recreated in Genesis chapter 1 are entirely non-carnivorous, according to the text. That God would begin again as recorded in Genesis with non-carnivorous life is perfectly understandable if earlier creation had been extensively perverted and a new beginning was launched in a destroyed sector of the known world. Thus, Genesis 1:2 is best translated “destruction and desolation” not “formless and void.” Genesis 1:1 “*bara*” does not mean created out of nothing but is what a potter does to clay.

By putting the “old earth” before Genesis 1:1 an immense paralyzing weight is lifted from the sincere Bible reader. This way the “young earth” is described right in the Biblical record. The “old earth” precedes the Genesis account. Far more details are laid out in the book reviewed next.

## **Book Notes: Life on a Young Planet: The First Three Billion Years of Evolution on Earth**

(2005) (*IJFM* 22:3)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/22\\_3\\_PDFs/102-105Book\\_Reviews.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/22_3_PDFs/102-105Book_Reviews.pdf)

**Ellis, Richard, 2004, *No Turning Back: The Life and Death of Animal Species*, New York: Harper Collins, 448p, ISBN: 0060558032—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

After writing 11 books on forms of life in the sea, Ellis wrote one, *The Empty Sea*, speaking of extinction of certain forms of underwater life. Then he did a book on already extinct sea life. Now he addresses the general question of extinction—of all forms of animal life. This book is a detailed and prodigious effort to give a range of opinions on the massive and mysterious disappearance of a thousand times as many forms of life as now exist. Rather than give answers it commendably stresses the unknowns in the lengthy story of extinctions.

It is clear that the human being has been by far the most destructive force. It is also clear, but mysterious, that present-day animal life is diminutive compared to earlier forms. Take for instance the ammonites with shells six feet across or flying pterosaurs with forty-foot wingspans.

But it does not question the existence of what might readily appear to the quite mysterious factor of violence in nature. It rightly laments the relatively huge attention scholars have given to the *origin* of species compared to their attention to the *demise* thereof.

**Davis, James C., 2004, *The Human Story: Our History, From the Stone Age to Today*, New York: Harper Collins, 478p, ISBN: 0060516208—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

This is a truly fascinating book. I know of no other book which as simply and as readably recounts the human story in every part of the globe— not in generalities, but with intriguing detail at every point (yet with only the very most important dates, names and places).

Davis devotes a whole chapter to early Hebrew history, which covers the Biblical period, plus a twenty-page chapter to Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam as world faiths. However, religion is fairly absent in the entire remainder of his story. The index makes no mention of D. L. Moody, Billy Graham, Catholic, Protestant, Thomas Aquinas, etc.

This book admirably and winsomely presents the straight secular view of the human story. He is optimistic about the future due to his upbeat story of the past! Unlike Ellis' book, which covers a billion years, this story describes the last few seconds of that longer story (as the last 9 seconds of a 24-hour day).

**Knoll, Andrew H., 2003, *Life on a Young Planet: The First Three Billion Years of Evolution on Earth*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 287p, ISBN: 0691120293—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

Knoll is Professor of Natural History at Harvard, and a world class paleontologist. His book's main title needs the subtitle to avoid mis-leading. It does not intend to discuss anything more than life prior to the Cambrian Period that began 543 million years ago.

However, he repeatedly acknowledges the perplexities for the concept of Darwinian evolution posed by the suddenness of the Cambrian period. That period between ten and thirty million years in length, even if the latter length, is only 1% of the period of the development of life, and yet is the origin of almost all present forms of life.

He concludes with two pages devoted to comments about science and religion, and the moral power of the latter, and adds, “That these two ways of ways of comprehending should be confused in either form or purpose strikes me as both absurd and unfortunate” (p. 245).

**Diamond, Jared, 2005, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, New York: Viking, 598p, ISBN: 0670033375—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

Having hit a home run with his earlier study entitled *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Diamond is writing again. One difference is that this book is less boring. Again, his hallmark is his very wide sweep of knowledge which he brings to the plate about the human experience. In *Guns*, the most important thing about the book was the very significant question he raised: “Why and how did the West get ahead of the rest of the world?” In this book he addresses even more lengthily the even more urgent question, “Why do societies fail after flourishing?” This is the other side of the coin. This book and this second question is not more important but is both more fascinating and more urgent.

The book teems with examples of environmentally destructive situations leading to the decline of societies. It is a veritable encyclopedia of what human communities ought not to let happen. Amazing stories of corporate greed fill its pages.

His final, summary chapter is a *tour de force* of dangerous trends such as loss of arable land, toxicity in ground water, etc. But he is “cautiously optimistic.” His key point of contrast with past collapsed societies is the fact that today (unlike the past economies he describes) we can be aware of what has gone wrong, and what is going wrong elsewhere, even if at a distance.

Incidentally, the fact that Diamond is a professor of geology demonstrates the fact that many different academic disciplines are being drawn into the conversation about the human future. Now we have human geography! The adjective justifies a very different thrust of study and concern from the earlier type of geography that had little or nothing to do with human beings.

Again, there is, as with his previous book, no aware-ness nor at least no reference to religious or ethical factors pro or con. Academic giants such as Harvard’s saintly Christopher Dawson (*Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, *The Dynamics of World History*) are totally missing from the bibliography. I guess geographers don’t need to know their history?

**Parkin, ed, David, 1985, *The Anthropology of Evil*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 288p, ISBN: 0631154329 —reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

Just as some anthropologists make no mention of religion, determinedly seeing it as merely a part of culture, many more—perhaps in order not to appear judgmental—have avoided the word and even the concept of evil.

Parkin, Professor of African Anthropology in the University of London, acknowledges that hiatus. He gathered twelve other anthropologists (one American, the rest British) to address the phenomenon of evil, each from the viewpoint of the non-

Western society of which they had special knowledge. He himself contributes one chapter on the perspectives of Muslims and Non-Muslims in coastal Kenya.

The various chapters of the book underscore the near futility of generating any very solid generalizations. Each presents a wildly different situation somewhere in the world. To generalize about concepts of evil is apparently far more difficult than to trace concepts of a high god.

Discussions of Judeo-Christian views, by way of exception to the global kaleidoscope, are to be found in the Editor's own twenty-five page Introduction and in the first chapter entitled "Theological Thoughts about Evil" by Donald Taylor, a graduate student in his same department.

Both of these essays mention the distinctive personification of evil found in the New Testament—an idea not in the Hebrew Bible to anywhere near the same extent. In both cases this significant transition or progress of concept over the centuries is attributed either to the direct influence (while in Babylonian captivity) of "Persian dualism" (i.e. Zoroastrian dualism) or to the indirect influence of that dualism via Manichaean Christianity, which, indeed, took over unscathed the two equal Gods of the Zoroastrians, one good and one evil.

My own comment from here on, excuse me, is that standard Christianity, as exemplified by New Testament documents, appropriated the Hebrew word for *adversary* (*satan*), and, perhaps, with the single exception of Jesus calling Peter a hindrance (*satanas*), used it dozens of times to refer to a powerful "god of this world." Even the Post-Exilic book of 1 Chronicles inserts the word Satan (21:1-25) in the place of the word God in the much earlier (2 Sam 24:1-25) verbatim story of David counting the people. I consider these two passages together to constitute the "Rosetta Stone of Biblical hermeneutics," displaying a new insight into the involvement of Satan, not merely the significance of God's overall sovereignty.

For us today it is very urgent to recognize that Augustine, trying to be different from his earlier Manichaean involvement, unwittingly took over a Neo-Platonic perspective of a god who himself did evil, Satan becoming unemployed. Augustine's enormously influential legacy in Western Christianity (not recognizing Satan's involvement) has led, and still leads, many to wonder why in daily life quite often "God does not make sense."

The missiological significance of this Augustinian "adjustment" is that we even today cannot go all out against evil if it in fact is of God—as when Jonathan Edwards wanted to defeat smallpox with vaccine he was warned by the Massachusetts pastors that he would be "interfering with Divine Providence."

**Souder, William, 2000, *A Plague of Frogs: The Horrifying True Story*, New York: Hyperion, 318p, ISBN: 0786863609—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

Here is an impressively thorough, four-year job of a professional newspaper reporter. What details! He leads you almost minute by minute in the lives of those key persons he introduces.

The book is a documentation of the massive, destructive, physical distortions appearing in frogs leading to their worldwide decline and in many cases total extinction. Most of the action in this narrative account takes place at first in northern Minnesota. By

the end of the book it includes the entire planet, as well as amphibians and reptiles (not just frogs), since the distortions were that far-flung.

The trouble is that what began as a detective case in a specific locale, and which seemed to be understandable in a fairly short period of time, turns out, disappointingly, to be, even by the end of the book (and the four years), a jumbled mass of multiple factors—parasites, pesticides, increases in ultraviolet light, global warming, etc.

However, facts are facts: 7.5 thousand tons of pesticides are employed on just the corn fields of Minnesota alone (p. 18). And, harvesting of a certain type of frog dropped in ten years from 50 tons annually to less than one ton (p. 278). Unfortunately, the obvious role of pesticides can't even be explored: "Pesticides remain the prime suspect but their source remains off limits to investigators (p. 281)."

The last sentence reminds me of the shocking report of one of *Harpers Magazine* senior reporters, Barbara Ehrenrich, that Monsanto provides the money the American Cancer Society uses to fund their walkathons and runathons, but those funds are given *on the condition* that the ACS not investigate toxic environments as a source of cancer!

Thus, missiologically, we see that the public continues to be deluded on the subject of the evil effects of contaminated ground water, harmful to sensitive wild life but inevitably to humans as well. Curiously the distortions of wild life seem always to begin in the sexual organs, interfering with procreation. It is said that 40% of the salmon going down the Columbia River change gender by the time they get to the ocean. What about gender confused humans? Obviously a society dominated by commercial considerations is not going to grapple with these problems effectively.

**Fortey, Richard, 2004, *Earth: An Intimate History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 444p, ISBN: 0375406263—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

This is another one-word-title book of his, following *Life: A Natural History of Four Billion Years of Life on Earth*. His earlier book relentlessly focused on the development of life forms without a whole lot of reference to the playground on which that development was taking place.

This more recent book fills in the amazing turbulent past of this planet, making you wonder how any kind of life could have survived.

For one thing this book is distinctly more than a jaunt across the globe describing interestingly diverse geography. It does that but at every point is conscious of the long story of millions of years behind what you see. Almost one's first impression is that this planet was not a good place for life to have been spawned. What with enormously destructive volcanic action, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis and asteroidal collisions (barely mentioned), it seems that humans have worked around such events if not tossed like chips in an angry sea.

But it is in fact a travel log. Witty, urbane, highly sophisticated in dialogue, actually exciting to read, it becomes (as with the book on the plague of frogs) difficult to distill systematic knowledge other than repeated recourse to the fundamental movements of plate tectonics. Inductively you must go. I find such books unnecessarily entertaining page by page but when the reader is not seeking entertainment but insight such books become difficult to mine.

Yet, overall, it is a splendid thing to take into account the long and horrendous history of this planet and not assume that things always used to be this way. The

spectacular video, *Our Privileged Planet*, extols the fine tuning of atmosphere and gravitation which enables life as something which was obviously prepared designedly for human life. But it does not acknowledge so readily the stark horror of our planet's geologic past. Surely there was a more pacific planet that could have been chosen! However, if 45 huge asteroidal collisions slammed into the earth in just the last 500 million years was there theological meaning to that? Perhaps this was a repeated extinction of life forms so distorted from God's intent that starting over was the best plan? And then, the destruction that apparently preceded Genesis 1:1 (the result of which is described in 1:2?)—was that a very recent asteroid? The sequence of the following events in Genesis 1 would seem to describe that kind of event. We read of darkness on the entire planet from an enshrouding canopy of dust, the gradual setting of that dust enabling glimmers of light, the eventual appearance (not creation) of the Sun and Moon, etc., all inevitably witnessed in other parts of the planet and later faithfully recorded by Moses.

Regarding the thought just expressed I am very happy to report that after much searching, I discovered virtually in my own cultural backyard amazing support for this pre-Genesis view. See the Reflection on page 106.

Reagan, ed, Michael, 2004, *Reflections on the Nature of God*, Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 160p, ISBN: 1932031693—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter

This has got to be one of the most beautiful books you have ever held in your hands. Most of every page is a beautiful four-color picture of creation. The first part of the book to page 72 portray astronomical pictures that are breathtaking. Page 73 marks a total shift to pictures of sights on earth, mostly animal life—some of the strangest and most exotic pictures you have ever seen.

I have three comments. The title may have been intended to have two quite different meanings. One referring to nature as the handiwork of God. The other allowing nature to help us understand the nature, the attributes and essence of God.

Secondly, why, why did the editors select outer-space shots achieved by state of the art telescopes and yet not employ microscopes, and even electron microscopes, to display the even more incredible beauties and complexities of nature that are too small to be seen by the naked eye?

Thirdly, it is “passing strange” that the total harshness of outer space and the total violence of life on earth are totally ignored. Is that unworthy of mention? Or merely incomprehensible? Or, perhaps, controversial? Why is it so unlikely for modern man to take note of evil, especially of intelligent evil—the kinds of pathogens, for example, that pull down nine out of ten Americans into premature death usually amidst severe suffering? Can we avoid mixing that kind of information into our understanding of the nature of God? If not, what a handicap for our evangelism!



## Editorial Reflection on Evolution

(2005) (*IJFM* 22:3)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/22\\_3\\_PDFs/106-109%20Editorial\\_Reflections.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/22_3_PDFs/106-109%20Editorial_Reflections.pdf)

### Evolution Again

All it took was an off-hand comment by Bush about Intelligent Design and we now have *TIME Magazine* coming out the very next Monday (Aug. 8, issue dated Aug. 15, 2005) with a cover story entitled, *Evolution Wars: The push to teach "Intelligent Design" raises a question: Does God have a place in science class?*

A couple days before the Christian Post newspaper ([www.christianpost.com](http://www.christianpost.com)) quotes Dr. Rana of Reasons To Believe (Hugh Ross & Co.) as saying that Intelligent Design (ID) thinking is "ludicrous."

And *Discover* (magazine) runs a long article entitled, *Darwin's Rottweiler: Sir Richard Dawkins—Evolution's Fiercest Champion, Far Too Fierce.*

In this latter article *Discover* does not show Dawkins in a very favorable light at all. His views are not stridently questioned but his manner and approach is displayed as grotesque.

Neither *TIME* nor *Discover* are normally sympathizers with any sort of "softness" on Evolution critics. But Bush has raised ID to a new level of respectability—or to a new level of the necessity to pay respects to it. Yet Rana harshly distances himself from it! Very strange!

But even the *TIME* cover story is remarkably lenient regarding Intelligent Design. A paste-in, running more than two and a half pages, quotes two against two on the question "Can You Believe in God AND Evolution?" The two saying "Yes" are Francis Collins, head of the U. S. Government's Human Genome project and Michael Behe, the microbiologist who kicked ID into orbit with his famous book, *Darwin's Black Box*. Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville and Steven Pinker, a Harvard professor, say no.

I do think that the question on *TIME*'s cover is unfair to proponents of ID. They do not raise the question about God—any more than the zealots manning those huge radio telescopes in Florida seeking signals from outer space that would indicate intelligence "out there."

But two days after Bush made his comments, PBS ran an interview with Behe in which he pointed out that only a few years ago the editor of the most prestigious science journal in the world, *Nature*, complained that proponents of the Big Bang theory of the origin of the cosmos were merely trying to smuggle religion into astronomy. But today most cosmologists accept the Big Bang theory as the best explanation of their data.

However, in none of this flurry of discussion is the presence of evil brought up. ID people don't apparently mind trying to prove that the intelligence they discern is a good or friendly intelligence. The one person who brought up the evil issue in all this is,

ironically, not a theologian but the Harvard psychology professor, who is not clearly a Christian. He states, eloquently,

The moral design of nature is as bungled as its engineering design. What twisted sadist would have invented a parasite that blinds millions of people or a gene that covers babies with excruciating blisters?

Thus, it seems to me that ID only gets us out of the frying pan and into the fire. It proves intelligence, allowing a belief in a Superior Being, but does nothing to protect that Being from being branded with the incredible cruelty exhibited 24/7 in a nature which is shockingly “red in tooth and claw.” Where is our doctrine of Satan when we need it?

### **Before Genesis 1:1?**

In my opinion the most reasonable assumption concerning the appearance of life—and then of evil—on this planet is to suppose that God decided to employ intermediate beings (angels) in the development of life—that’s why it took so long. He wanted them to learn, and they did? But toward the end of the learning process, when the intermediate beings had come as far as cellular life, one of the top intermediate beings (IBs) exercised the free will both angels and men have been conferred to react savagely and to attempt to tear down the glory of God by distorting and destroying the forms of life that were being created. This would seem to have happened fairly recently in the so-called Cambrian Explosion of life, where predatory forms of life first appeared.

From that point on, destruction and cruelty reigned in all of nature from the tiniest forms of life, viruses and bacteria, to the largest dinosaurs. This then is the setting in which the Genesis story begins.

Does anyone believe that the geologic ages with their suffering and cruelty preceded Genesis? Scary question when you think of something espoused by no one else you know of. But consider the long-time Dallas Theological Seminary professor, Merrill Unger, writing in a widely respected Bible commentary (*Unger’s Bible Handbook*) published by Moody Press. He states without criticism,

Some scholars prefer to envision a relative beginning, allowing events such as Satan’s fall (cf. Ezek. 28:13-14; Isa 14:12) and the geological ages of the earth to precede 1:1 or 1:2 (the Gap Theory) ... The phrase, ‘Now the earth was formless and empty,’ has been rendered, ‘and the earth became...’ to portray a chaotic visitation of divine judgment upon the original earth. To place a gap in 1:2 is untenable by the Hebrew text ... If a gap exists it must occur prior to 1:1 rather than after it. Genesis 1:1-2 appear as a unit ... Although the gap theory framework seems to be declining in support, it does commend itself as a potential explanation for the fall of Satan and for the findings of modern science that suggest long geological ages of Earth’s prehistory (Unger 1984:10).

The great value of this interpretation is that it does not burden Genesis 1 with explaining the incredible complexity and apparent length of time in which a thousand times more species came into existence and then went extinct than now exist. We are today rightly concerned that, say, 20% of existing species are endangered. That is nothing compared to the 99.9% which have already come and gone.

Rather, it allows the sequence of events of Genesis 1 to describe accurately and historically what typically happens following a major asteroidal collision with the surface

of the earth. It harmonizes the “old earth” and the “young earth” theories which are splitting Evangelicals right down the middle today.

Putting the geologic ages before Genesis 1:1 allows an understanding of how nature has become so violent and full of suffering and premature death. Something evil was already far along when Adam succumbed to Satan’s devices. Apparently both animals and humans were already distorted and carnivorous. Now the new (non-carnivorous) humans made in God’s image and the non-carnivorous animals reverted and intermarried with those which were already fallen.

Finally, it allows a very different understanding of the “plan of salvation” which is so central to Evangelical thinking. Namely, instead of just being rescued from the penalty of sin and being provided with a positional righteousness allowing entrance into heaven, we are rescued from sin and recruited to God’s side in the ongoing battle against Satan. Our post-new birth suffering is more like casualty in war than punishment or simply the “mysterious will of God” who, in any case works, all things for His glory (Rom. 8:28).

Last Sunday the sermon at my church emphasized that we are rescued “from” sin and boredom, etc., but we are also rescued “to” a life—here on this earth!—of being soldiers in the army of the Kingdom of God. I take that to mean the defeat of the works of Satan (distortion, disease, etc.) that commonly reflect negatively on God’s glory. I talked to the pastor afterwards, and suggested that instead of talking simply about “ruin and rescue” he ought to add a third R—“recruit.” Also to his trilogy of Bible content—Creation, Fall, Redemption—he ought to add “Conquest.”

### **Misleading Donors?**

It is painfully difficult to report that a gross misunderstanding of the mission situation is being unrelentingly pushed by some well-meaning people who are either profoundly confused themselves or willfully deceptive. Many of these misunderstandings can be found in Christian Aid Mission’s 50th anniversary issue of its magazine, *Christian Mission*.

It is not as though sending money and no missionaries never has any merit. Without any reference to the work Christian Aid does on the field, the biggest problem is the steady stream of misinformation to which people back home are being exposed regarding standard missions.

Take, for example, the half-page statement you see on the left as you open the magazine, headed, “The Mission and Ministry of Christian Aid.” This brief article points out the fact that fifty years ago foreign missionaries were not allowed in Nepal. At that time, however, Christian Aid got behind a Nepalese national financially. The article concludes by saying,

Foreign missionaries are still not allowed in Nepal, but with the help of Christian Aid the number of believers has grown to over a million.

This sentence gives a great deal of credit to Christian Aid! But the facts are that during those same 50 years the United Mission to Nepal has been an umbrella organization for dozens of standard foreign mission agencies working all over Nepal, maintaining hundreds of foreign missionaries in that country.

No doubt what Christian Aid has done for Nepal has helped, but well over a thousand different foreign missionaries have also been faithfully at work during those 50 years. Not none, as the Christian Aid statement reads.

*Isn't that misleading?*

Across the page is something much more subtle—and forgivable—attempting to describe the reason underlying Christian Aid's different approach of sending no missionaries, only money,

When William Carey went from England to India as a missionary in 1792 he found no churches or native missionaries. When Bob Finley traveled throughout India in 1948, 1951, 1973, 1974, and 1975 he found thousands of Evangelical churches and tens of thousands of native missionaries. He soon came to realize that a new day had dawned in the history of missions.

What this statement does not reveal is that India is a huge continent of ethnic and cultural diversity. These thousands of churches in India (which really are there) are 95% within a stratum of culturally oppressed minority peoples.

Sending them money to reach the rest of India is not the only thing that has to be done. A parallel would be *if the only Christians in the USA* were among native Americans, that is, Navajo, Choctaw, Apache, Cherokee, etc. Suppose also that Japan was mainly Christian and Japanese believers wanted to spread the Gospel in the USA. Would it be sufficient simply to send money to Navajo believers and expect them to fan out and effectively reach the huge US population of non-Christian caucasians? And, would it be fair to say that no other method is valid?

It goes on in the next paragraph to say,

By 2005 Christian Aid Mission has made contact with about 6,000 indigenous missionary ministries based in “mission field” countries. They have deployed a combined total of 400,000 native missionaries who are winning souls and planting churches in almost every country on earth, including those now closed off to missionaries from America.

This says Christian Aid has “made contact with about 6,000 indigenous missionary structures.” That “about” figure at best implies a database with names and addresses. However, the real misinformation is to call the 400,000 “deployed” workers “native missionaries.” They are no doubt winning souls and planting churches as missionaries in years past faithfully taught them. But for the most part they are winning, their own people, who speak their own language. It says further on, “... because they already know the language and customs of their people.” Under a picture it says, “Native missionaries are much more effective in reaching their own people than are foreigners from a diverse culture.”

This is fine. It is excellent evangelism. It is the sort of thing which missionaries always depend on once a beach-head has been made in a new cultural basin. But local pas-tors and evangelists are doing a very different thing from extending the Gospel into a group where, as in Carey's day, there are not yet any believers or churches. Indeed, the little known fact about missions is that most of the peoples of the world are seriously alienated from groups nearby that are ethnically different. It would be much better for a Navajo evangelist to go to Norway to reach out to the Laplanders than for a Norwegian to go from the mainstream culture in Norway. It would be better for a Norwegian

missionary to come to the USA to reach the Pueblo Indians in Arizona than for a white citizen from Phoenix. This is simply the way it is and it is one of the most unavoidable obstacles in missions.

In any case, all missionaries are native in their home culture and foreign in their field culture. You are either a “native” where you are or a “missionary” where you are. The phrase “native missionary” is a contradiction in terms. If you can already speak the language and understand the culture (as those supported by Christian Aid are purported to be) you are native, not a missionary. If you can’t speak the language and have to learn the culture where you are, then you are no longer a “native” in that situation, but a missionary who faces cross-cultural barriers of communication. Real, cross-cultural missionaries, are not merely pastors paid to reach their own people for less money. They often face greater local prejudices and barriers of culture and communication than would a missionary from afar.

Often foreign missionaries soon come to be the most trusted people in the situation. Very often groups do not trust a group just one language barrier away from them. This is why rarely in the Middle East are the thousands of Christians (surrounded by millions of Muslims) the best ones to win those Muslims. You can understand that Christians living in minority enclaves through centuries of oppression are often the last ones even to wish that the Muslims would come to Christ, and if one here and one there does, they are not allowed to enter a Christian assembly!

Compare what I have just said with this statement on page nine in the Christian Aid report,

Generally, with a few notable exceptions, those who go from one country to another as missionaries end up hindering rather than helping the cause of Christ.

This statement is found just below a big picture of Finley’s new book, *Reformation in Foreign Missions*. The book is described in part as follows:

We have patiently explained how the foreign missionary movement of the past 100 years is a church tradition that has no basis or precedent in the New Testament, since there is no record there that our Lord ever sent an apostle to a foreign country where he did not know the language.

For one thing, note that he apparently is willing to grant the legitimacy of foreign missionaries at work prior to one hundred years ago. As a result of that work by foreign missionaries, Finley was able to encounter “thousands of churches” in India. They were there precisely because of the work of foreign missionaries in the previous hundred years! (But even today 95% of the churches are confined to a single social stratum.)

Secondly, the phenomenal spread of the Gospel into the Roman empire in Paul’s ministry was specifically due to the fact that for hundreds of years “foreign” Jewish believers had established maybe a thousand synagogues throughout the entire Roman empire. Their strangeness of diet and culture did not prevent their integrity and worship of the true God to go unnoticed, and in Paul’s day there may have been as many as a million non-Jewish “God-fearers” and “devout persons” sitting in the back rows of the synagogues. They were there because they were attracted by the integrity and clean living of the foreigners, the Jews, that had come to live among them.

Those Jews had to learn the language and the culture of their new locale. They were no doubt often misunderstood. Nevertheless thousands of Gentiles were attracted to their synagogues (such as Cornelius in the NT).

This shows that not just money coming from a distance but that people of integrity coming from a distance are very basic. Indeed, if the people need to witness the way Christian family relationships are supposed to be, the unspoken witness of a missionary family is often the most impressive thing.

Thomas Wang is one of the most widely known and respected Chinese Christians today. His grandmother was allowed by her family to work in a missionary home. She was warned not to listen to the teaching of “the foreign devils.” But she saw the husband opening the door for his wife and treating her as an equal. That did it for her. Sending money cannot take the place of sending godly people, godly families. This is what it means to respond to Jesus’ call for us “to be my witnesses,” not just words, not just money. Sending money is not sending witnesses. In all of the remaining untouched people groups there are not yet any local pastors to pay to evangelize.

The Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (with dozens of agency members) reports that there are 500,000 pastors in that country (with the largest population in Africa). But there are still at least 100 languages in Nigeria within which there are not yet any pastors to pay to reach their own people. And their next-door neighbors are not necessarily the ones most likely to reach them.

[Note, a more complete description of the kind of mis-leading information mentioned here can be found in the November–December issue of *Mission Frontiers*.]

## Editorial Reflections: Intelligent Design

(2005) (*IJFM* 22:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/22\\_4\\_PDFs/172-175%20Editorial\\_reflect.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/22_4_PDFs/172-175%20Editorial_reflect.pdf)

### Intelligent Design, Again

Pennsylvania Judge Jones wrote that he wasn't saying the intelligent design concept shouldn't be studied and discussed, rather its advocates "have bona fide and deeply held beliefs which drive their scholarly endeavors."

But, he wrote, "our conclusion today is that it is unconstitutional to teach ID as an alternative to evolution in a public school science classroom."

So says the news report. By now it is loud and clear that in many communities in America today, the majority of citizens are more afraid of religion than favor it.

But before we leave the actual text of the Judge, it is curious that he does explain that ID may be "studied" but not taught as "an alternative to evolution." Whenever it is studied, that being apparently constitutional, it would seem likely that some of the students would take it to be "an alternative to evolution."

Others could well imagine that ID is one way to explain evolution. However, we all know that when the Judge spoke of "evolution" he was referring to the type of evolution NOT involving any intelligent input.

Since the Bible plainly states in many places that an intelligent God created life, this legal ruling is therefore equally plain in denying the truth of the Bible.

I am surprised that we face a situation today that no longer views science as unable to pronounce on the presence or absence of religious truth, but considers itself perfectly capable of denying the very possibility of any other form of intelligence in the universe.

Similarities between 2006 automobiles don't require the thought that they evolved from a single source. They indicate that a variety of intelligent designers were influenced by trends of design and were employing the latest technology. Curiously, evolutionists interpret the similarities in DNA between different forms of animal life as the basis of concluding that these differing forms are intelligent enough, or intricate enough, to have morphed themselves into different species. A theist, on the other hand, could just as easily, or even more easily, take those similarities to imply the work of a common intelligence or various intelligences in consultation.

If scientists don't believe they are looking for order, symmetry, even ingenuity, before they even find it, they are not likely going to find it. If they feel they must rule out in advance any evidence of intelligence, what are these huge radio telescopes focused out into the heavens doing in Florida? I can imagine they can say that in this or that instance they don't see intelligence. I cannot imagine that they would confidently predict that there can be no such thing. But they are saying that, or at least their political spokespersons are saying that they say that.

But the most painful thing about this collision of Evangelicalism with American dominant culture, is the fact that for ID people to prove unintentionally that God is the author of the violence and suffering in nature is no great gain. The Harvard professor responding to ID in the *TIME* cover story on evolution a few weeks ago was quoted as

saying essentially that “if nature as it is comes from the hand of God, He must be a divine sadist who creates parasites that blind millions of people.” That is a perfectly logical conclusion when we insist in intelligent design in nature without any comment on the equally clear evidence of intelligent evil design in nature.



# Planetary Events and the Mission of the Church

Donald McClure Lectureship, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

October 3-4, 2005 (*Frontiers in Mission* 286-307).

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf)

These three lectures are an honest and exciting new attempt to recognize Genesis 1 as a literal, eye-witness account. This attempt rejects Darwinian random, unguided evolution. It tries to answer questions that have often arisen about the sequence of events in chapter one. It upholds an inerrant Bible. It explains how nature became so violent a scene and how bad things may not always be the “mysterious” will of God but the work of Satan. It refocuses our understanding of Christian mission today, expanding it from an effort to rescue and redeem humanity into a full-blown Biblical effort to restore glory to God by destroying the works of the Devil. “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn 3:8).”

## Contents

### Part 1: Pre-Edenic Events

A description of widespread scientific thinking regarding the last 500 million years: major life forms reflecting pervasive distortion and violence, punctuated by repeated and massive “extinction events” due to asteroids hitting the earth, all of this preceding Genesis 1:1.

### Part 2: Genesis and the New Beginning

Following a massive regional asteroidal collision knocking out most of life in that region, Genesis then picks up the story. As dust settles, light gradually returns, new life is created that is neither violent nor carnivorous - neither animal nor human life. Immediately this new beginning is seduced by Satan and reverts to violence which continues throughout the next 6,000 years, leading up to the present. This relatively short period is one of redemption and advance through storm in spite of constant Satanic attacks of war and pestilence - animal life being distorted and suffering, animals eating animals, humans killing both animals and themselves.

### Part 3: The Future that Ought to Be

The recognition of a wartime situation and thus the mobilization of redeemed people in the identification and destruction of deadly diseases as well as deadly delusions that also take life. This is a mission to restore glory to God!

## **Part 1. Planetary Events: Pre-Edenic**

Let's begin by glancing at four significant discoveries, conclusions or inferences humans have made in fairly recent history.

### **Introduction**

As telescopes improved, astronomers discovered that the things they could see out in space appeared to be expanding, racing farther and farther away from each other. This unexpected discovery meant that things must have started out closer and smaller. By tracing the contents of the universe backwards, scientists came to the remarkable conclusion that the entire universe began suddenly about 13.7 billion years ago, exploding from a tiny speck. Some scientists at first ridiculed this idea, calling it derisively, "The Big Bang" theory. Some warned that religious people would assume that this theory confirmed their Biblical ideas about creation.

However, now that this Big Bang theory has become widely accepted, and its derisive name has stuck, the concept itself is still very difficult to imagine. Within even the first second, we are told (this is very hard to believe), the universe exploded into a size larger than our galaxy. Now, our galaxy is so large it takes 100,000 years for light to travel across it going at 186,000 miles per second. Thus, if the universe expanded larger than our galaxy in the first second, the new-born universe would in that case have expanded at least 3,154 billion times faster than the speed of light. This would be true because simple arithmetic tells us there are 3,154 billion seconds in 100,000 years.

Equally breathtaking, but for different reasons, are two more conclusions, first, that the planet Earth came into being about 4.5 billion years ago, and, second, that tiny life forms began to appear about 4 billion years ago.

But, far more unexpected is a fourth double conclusion which is widely accepted as true: 1) the occurrence far more recently—about 500 million years ago—of the curious and astounding Cambrian Explosion of larger life forms, and at the same time, 2) the first appearance of predatory forms of life. This relatively abrupt and massive profusion of larger forms of life is, incidentally, all the more credible because the scientists who have accepted it have done so despite the fact that its suddenness would seem to be so very contrary to the gradualism expected by classical Darwinism. The vicious, predatory aspect will be considered further on.

The vast majority of fossils large enough to be detected appear in the 500-million-year period following the mysterious Cambrian Explosion. For example, about 160 million years ago the thousands of different incredibly destructive dinosaurs came into 100 million years of existence. Then, when the dinosaurs disappeared, about 65 million years ago, mammals came into their own, and of course humans have appeared far more recently. The chart on the next page indicates some of this.

### **Addressing the Puzzle**

It is clear that few things have been as fascinating, and at the same time as endlessly puzzling, as the results of human inquiry into the far distant past. Today, even children are often as well-acquainted with dinosaurs as I was familiar in my childhood with the ABCs and Columbus sailing the ocean blue.

However, here I am most interested in the human period. While life is thought to have been under development for a total of four billion years, human forms of life are exceedingly recent, and truly human creatures may only have appeared at the point of selective breeding of plants and animals which is about 11,000 years ago. On this see further below.

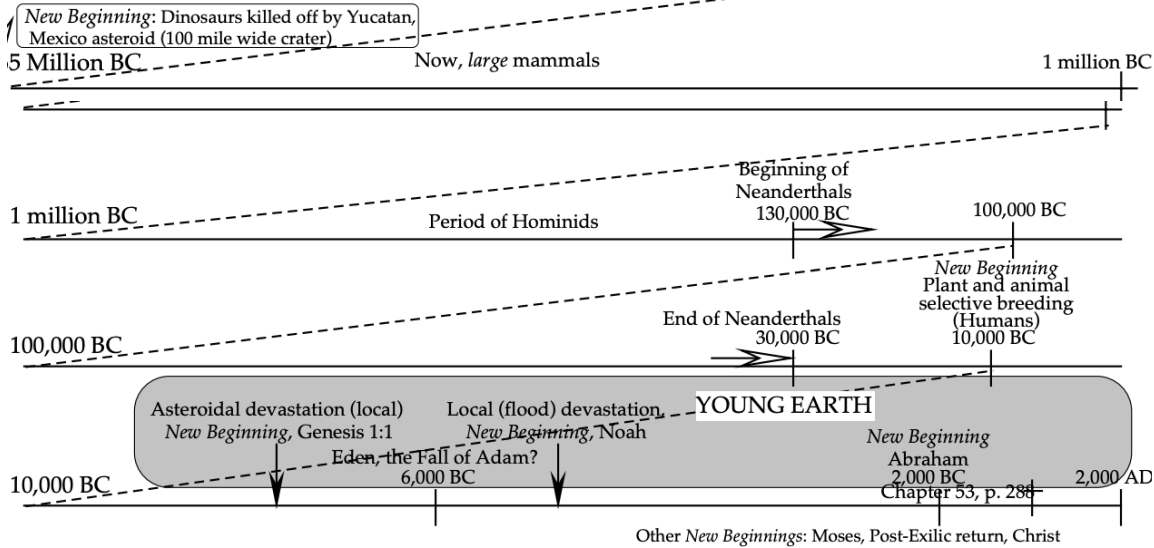
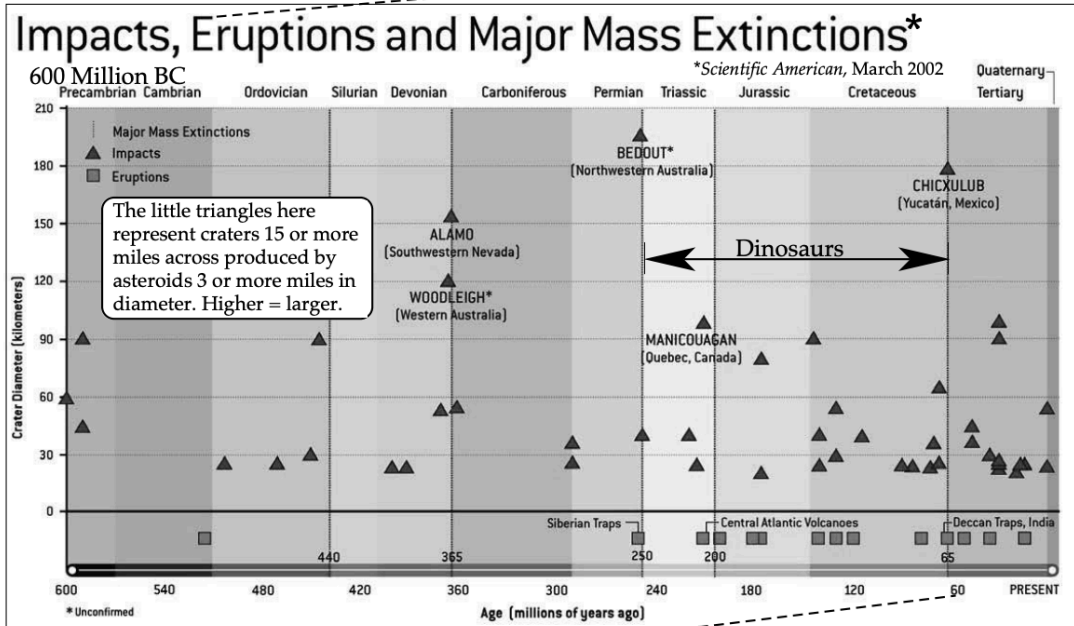
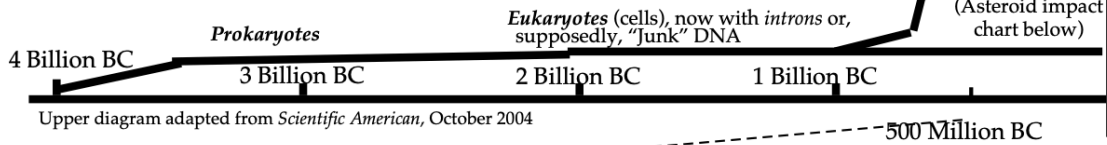
If the entire 4 billion-year period of the development of life were squashed into a 24-hour day, three hours would account for the last 500 million years, while the human period would become merely the last quarter of a second. But 500 million years itself is

THE CHART ON THE NEXT PAGE contains one diagram at the top which is redrawn from *Scientific American*. It displays the 4 billion period many have concluded is the period of the development of life. The next one down portrays only the most recent 600 million years, also from *Scientific American*. You can see the small dotted line running from the near right hand of the first to the near left of the second to show the portion of the first that is expanded for closer observation. Other dotted lines further below do similar things.

# Cambrian Explosion

# The Enigma of Life

New Period of  
**Predatory Life**  
Fall of Satan?



43,000 times as long as the human period. Even if just the last 500 million years is reduced to 24 hours, the human period is still only the last 2 seconds.

Interestingly, far more bones and shells and other evidences of earth's history have been uncovered in the past 20 years than ever before. In fact, digging up bones and ancient artifacts has become a global activity of scholars, competing with looters and falsifiers.

Cave drawings and arrowheads tell us a great deal about the impressive intelligence of forms of life earlier than humans. We are well acquainted, for example, with the capabilities of the Neanderthals, who are nevertheless no longer considered ancestors of humans due to recent DNA testing.

### **The Appearance of Humans**

However, nothing that was accomplished by earlier forms of life is as impressive as evidences beginning about 11,000 years ago of the activity of deliberate, determined, patient, intelligent *selective breeding* of both plants and animals.

Worldwide, today, what we usually eat without appropriate gratitude, rice, corn, wheat, potatoes, are all genetically altered plants which give mute witness to the fact that fairly recently some very ingenious forms of life—working with apparently unique intelligence—worked for lengthy periods of time to achieve amazingly extensive modification of several plants that were originally virtually inedible, but which are now quite useful for human consumption.

Also about 11,000 years ago, these same new uniquely intelligent forms of life began carefully and skillfully breeding wolves into the 235 different species of dogs which today in multiple ways are friendly benefactors of human beings.

Some scholars are now thinking that the appearance of this kind of radically superior intelligence is more significant than the study of fossil bones in determining the time of the first appearance of true humans. Thus, in this light, I want to suggest two ideas for discussion purposes: 1) that the first appearance of humans can be detected from the first evidence of the intelligence necessary for the genetic alteration of plants and animals, and 2) that all of this may have occurred before Adam.

### **Huge but Local Destruction**

Not widely understood as yet is the possibility that only about six thousand years ago some of these very intelligent human beings in various parts of the earth may have heard an enormous “boom” from an impacting asteroid from outer space. Although not as large as some earlier impacts, this one could have been large enough to have blotted out all life in a fairly large region of the earth, accompanied by a huge “boom” of sound flashing past humans further away at the speed of sound (about 750 miles per hour), an event leaving only a fleeting impression. More easily remembered is what would likely have happened next, namely, the almost immediate appearance of darkening dust in the atmosphere producing a shroud of thick and total darkness holding the entire earth in its grip, something humans living in every part of the globe would not easily forget even if they lived too far away to hear the initial boom.

It would then take time for this dark encompassing cloud of thick dust to settle. First it would thin out enough for light to come through dimly - just enough to tell day

from night. Then the light would get brighter as time went on. Finally, the sun, the moon and later the stars would again become visible—the sequence we read in Genesis, chapter one. This is not a creation sequence but a recovery sequence.

I hasten to add that this is all supposition. However, if truly modern, highly intelligent humans did first appear 11,000 years ago, and if some time after that a sizable asteroid did hit our planet, it would certainly seem possible for the human beings surviving to have passed down an oral tradition about that event or recalled at least that sequence of events in its aftermath.

### **What about Asteroids?**

Before thinking further about the possibility of oral tradition of this kind, it may be helpful to understand the background of my supposition that a major asteroidal collision could have occurred fairly recently in our planetary history.

All this actually began with our landing on the moon. When that happened, all of a sudden all those visible pock marks on the face of the moon - which had always been assumed to be volcanic craters - turned out to be impact craters! Absolutely stunned, geologists began a mad scramble to track down evidences of similar impacts on earth, evidences which, of course, are far more difficult to find on earth due to the erosion of wind and rain which are completely absent on the moon.

Now, after 30 years of geological pursuit, we are being offered credible evidence of literally thousands of asteroidal impacts on the earth, both large and small. The vast majority of these impacts are small and, in fact, millions of small asteroids fortunately burn up before actually hitting the earth. This rain of objects from outer space is a process that continues unabated until today, their ashes settling down to earth at the rate of an estimated 40 tons a day.

Of special concern in this scenario is the fact that quite a few asteroids colliding with the earth in the distant past have been large enough to gouge huge craters and devastate a wide area of the earth miles away, maybe hundreds of miles, beyond the crater itself. The evidence of one meteor that hit only 50,000 years ago in the arid, rainless desert in Arizona is still an awesome, gaping hole a breath-taking mile across and a quarter of a mile deep.

But, let's ignore the thousands of smaller objects from outer space in the last 600 million years, and even ignore all those thousands of asteroids that created craters less than an enormous 15 miles across. At this date forty-five craters 15 miles or larger have been found. These much larger asteroidal collisions consequently killed off far more life on earth. The largest crater so far discovered - in northwestern Australia - is 135 miles in diameter, and is estimated to have killed 97% of all life on the entire planet. A slightly smaller one, 65 million years ago, created a crater only 100 miles across. However, the latter is the one credited with killing off all dinosaurs in all parts of the planet.

Although none of even these larger asteroids extinguished all of life, it seems evident that life on earth has had drastic ups and downs due to asteroids alone—without mentioning volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, etc., almost all of such events occurring prior to the appearance of human life.

Note that in the case of virtually all asteroidal collisions of any great magnitude, a familiar sequence would have unfolded as mentioned earlier: thick darkness, later, dim

light half of the day, then, finally, rays of light from the directly observed sun, moon and stars, the very sequence described in Genesis.

Paleontologists have observed, interestingly, that the aftermath of such explosive “extinction events” has often been the occasion for the fairly abrupt emergence of quite different forms of plant and animal life. For example, the huge impact that extinguished the entire spectrum of thousands of different forms of dinosaur life was followed by the era of mammals, when their size zoomed from two pounds or less, to a ton or more.

The 45 largest asteroidal collisions mentioned are pegged at dates prior to the human period, that is, before there were humans in existence to witness their effects and create oral tradition about them. Thus, all we can go by are the evidences in the rims of their craters of certain things like crystallized iodine.

### **Record of a Recent Collision?**

However, suppose there was a smaller collision relatively recently—after humans appeared on the scene—that is, in the last 11,000 years. In that case would we not expect surviving humans living at a distance to include a recollection of such an event in their oral traditions?

Let’s look into this. In the last few years following the Moon landing it certainly has begun to seem possible that the collision of a fairly recent asteroid might have wiped out a large, regional sector of human life—such as the area of the Fertile Crescent, or just the Dead Sea—and that surviving humans outside that area could have noticed the characteristic sequence of events without understanding exactly what had happened. They might have only observed the thick darkness, the dim but increasing light, the final appearance of the Sun, Moon, and then the stars. Could such recollections have passed down, say, in oral tradition, down through Egyptian archives to Moses? *And, does the sequence of events described in the first chapter of Genesis describe this sort of sequence?*

If Genesis 1 describes such a train of events, then we would not expect the humans who created the Genesis narrative to be speaking of cosmological events that were only understood much later in the human story. Rather, logically, we would expect Genesis 1:1 to describe not the initial creation of the entire universe, but a much more recent new beginning, in merely a region of the earth (the “known world” of the people of that time). If there were such a collision, would not the next thing be the replenishment of animal and human life in that region?

To accept such a supposition would instantly require certain radical adjustments of popular exegesis, because it would mean the first few chapters of Genesis were entirely local events.

What adjustments? First, the Gen. 1:1 phrase, “In the beginning God” would have to be translatable as, “At the time God began.” Second, the Hebrew word “bara” would have to be able to mean “recreate” not just “create” (it does not mean “create out of nothing”). Thirdly, the familiar phrase, “formless and void” from the Hebrew phrase *tohu wabohu* would have to mean something like “destroyed and desolate.” The single sentence in Hebrew running through Gen. 1:1, and 1:2, would then come out something like, “Things (in a regional area) were quite destroyed and desolate when God began to recreate...”

Even more obvious would be the need to understand the whole of early Genesis as talking about events that were universally significant, yet geographically local. This would include the idea of a local flood, which has been a tolerated view in the Wheaton College faculty as far back as the 1950s. Even the “table of nations” in Genesis 11 would have to refer to predominantly Middle Eastern peoples, not Chinese, East Indians, or Eskimos.

Furthermore, it would be helpful if we were aware of at least some biblical scholars who have recognized all of these possibilities, even as it would be helpful to discover that these ideas (all but the asteroids) were more widely held some years ago.

Finally, speaking of nice things, today the most avid supporters of a world only six thousand years old are an outspoken group of so-called “Young Earth” Evangelicals. Can we listen to Merrill F. Unger? He was a conservative and respected Dallas Theological Seminary professor, head of the Department of OT studies. He expressed pre-Genesis 1 views in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (the official journal of the seminary) in 1958, as well as later in his very widely used Unger’s Bible Handbook (500,000 in print, in 24 editions), published by the press at the Moody Bible Institute. In his *Handbook* he says,

“In the beginning.” These opening words of Genesis have been commonly assumed to refer to the original creation of the earth and the universe, and well they might. But the question is asked, May they not envision a *relative* beginning as to God’s creative activity of the earth in a much later period in preparation for earth’s late-comer man? ... If “In the beginning” is a relative beginning with regard to the late-comer man, then “created” does not refer to God’s activity in bringing the earth into being *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), but His refashioning the earth and its sidereal heavens at a much later period in geological history. (Italics his)

Unger goes on to state that it is not grammatically possible to put the old earth between verses 1 and 2.

In view of these comments from Dallas Seminary’s Unger, I feel emboldened to suggest that there is apparently no insurmountable exegetical obstacle to the suppositions I have mentioned for the understanding of the text. In fact, we should perhaps feel ashamed that many of us have tried for so long anachronistically to read into the literary record of Genesis modern cosmological information about the origin of a universe and a planet, information totally unknown at the time of the writing or oral formulation of Genesis.

Those who might oppose this view—the “Young Earth” group—are highly visible within the homeschooling movement. Ronald Numbers has pointed out in his magisterial book, *Creationism: the Evolution of Creation Science*, that the Young Earth view of an earth only 6,000 years old was derived in the last seventy years from the emergence within Evangelicalism of a once mainly Seventh-Day Adventist understanding of Genesis. This relatively recent accrual from Adventism is not strengthened by the fact that even earlier, C. I. Scofield clearly presented the idea of the vast geologic ages occurring prior to the six days of Genesis 1 (in a “gap” between 1:1 and 1:2) in his *Scofield Reference Bible*, which was to become the most widely used study Bible of all time. Scofield, furthermore was backed by a list of prominent scholars on the title page of his famous study bible, including Moody Bible Institute faculty.



In any case, followers of the “Young Earth” perspective can at least take comfort in the fact that the interpretation I have described here does not conflict with, but would tend to substantiate not an awesomely ancient, but recent and quite literal (“eye-witness”) understanding of the events of Genesis.

### **The Ominous Presence of Evil**

This entire scenario, however, simply lays the groundwork for an element in the story that is highly crucial to our concept of Christian mission, and which explains my personal interest in this whole subject.

Note the striking contrast between the type of animal life apparently inhabiting “the vast geologic ages,” being uncovered by paleontologists, and the distinctly non-carnivorous kind of life described in Genesis 1:29-30. By contrast, the thousands of creatures whose bones are being dug up from earlier earth history are for the most part outrageously vicious. This same frightful viciousness is also seen in the pervasive cannibalism of virtually all early evidences of humanity.

Furthermore, it is curious and highly significant that life-destroying forms of life, we are told by paleontologists today, first appeared suddenly at the time of the enigmatic “Cambrian Explosion” we have already mentioned. Of course, 500 million years ago may seem very distant, although tiny forms of life may have appeared as much as 4 billion years ago, that is, eight times earlier. The point is, that for most of that very distant past, life forms were too small to have left fossil records. However, just prior to the Cambrian event (in the Ediacaran period) there are evidences of animal life that was radially symmetrical, like starfish, as well as bi-polar forms of life with a front and a back and four legs.

Still begging for interpretation is the evidence that these pre-Cambrian forms of life did not possess protective shells or quills, nor the kind of sharp teeth characteristic of predatory life. Thus, here is a theological question: at this point seven eighths of the way along in the development of life, when predatory forms of life first appeared, *did some of the intermediate beings rebel and begin to distort nature? Are these events evidence of what might be meant by Satan “falling?”*

The most thorough contemporary, Biblical discussion I know of referring to angels good and bad being involved in creation and its distortion is an essay by Robert C. Newman, a professor at the Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, PA. It is entitled, “Rumors of Angels: Using ID to Detect Malevolent Spiritual Agents,” and appears in a series of the Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute (report #56, 2005, [www.ibri.org](http://www.ibri.org))

In any case, as noted, the kinds of life we see recreated in Genesis 1 are clearly stated to be non-carnivorous. Even Adam and Eve are described as non-carnivorous. Nevertheless some people hold the idea that the animal life appearing in Genesis 1 must be the animal life reflected in all the old bones of vicious animals. This in itself seems difficult to maintain, for that could then only mean that all of these incredibly old bones come from animals which would have had to appear after Adam, and have been distorted as a result of Adam’s fall rather than Satan’s much earlier fall. That in turn would mean that that enormous complexity would have both appeared and mainly disappeared very recently within just the brief period (the “two seconds”) of human life on earth. Existing life forms are very small in number compared to those now extinct.

In summary, in case Genesis 1 does happen to be an accurate eye-witness account of conditions of the earth following a massive but regional asteroidal collision, the oral history of those events would have had to have been preserved by unaffected humans outside the area.

Remember that the new creation of animal and human life as described in Genesis is a significantly different type of life. Adam, we are told, is the type of human being distinctively created “in the image of God.” That could at least mean “as God intended,” that is, for example, non-carnivorous. It is not until later in Genesis that Adam’s lineage is described as reverting to carnivorous behavior and a gradually shorter life span, following his fall and the breakdown of the Edenic New Beginning, the reversion logically being hastened by interbreeding with the previously distorted and depraved forms of vicious carnivorous human life elsewhere on the planet.

In any case, the clear implication is that the rampant, destructive violence observable all throughout nature was and is a perversion of God’s original intent and design. Eden, in that light, would then be a New Beginning which was a re-creation of undistorted life, just as Isaiah 11 describes in the end times the lion lying down with the lamb in the ultimate triumph of God’s intent—once again *in the form of non-carnivorous and non-violent life*.

In other words, the immense complexity and duration of what is perceived from thousands of old bones (and many more thousands of no-longer-existing forms of life) does not easily fit into the few short years between Adam and today. It does not seem to fit into the first chapter of Genesis. It very easily fits into a period prior to Genesis 1:1.

### **The Question of the Process of Creation**

Now that we have plunged into the concept of God “creating” or “recreating” life, a small digression may be in order. The paleontologists are telling us that the development life on earth took an exceedingly long time. On the one hand, the enormous, sudden changes at the time of the Cambrian Explosion do not readily correspond to the gradual process envisioned by Darwin. But, neither does that sort of lengthy process seem to be the work of what some people think of as an infinitely wise and powerful wand-waving Supreme Deity—unless, for example, that Supreme Being was working through finite intermediate beings who did their work in a lengthy learning process.

But, are there intermediate beings? Are some of them small enough or smart enough to tamper directly with DNA as modern humans are beginning to do? If there are such beings, it would seem quite reasonable for them to have been involved in a lengthy learning curve. We can then imagine that their final achievement of cellular development and the consequent potential for large animals might have been the occasion of one of the key angelic leaders deciding to turn against God and systematically sabotage His creation. Here again note Robert Newman’s essay noted earlier,

Organisms which possess incredible complexity beyond what natural selection could “design” from the available offerings of chance, and which also seem to be clearly malevolent, might well be the work of malevolent spirit beings.

Interestingly, the evolution of the American automobile throughout the twentieth century may provide an example of an “evolution” which is actually the example of the work of finite beings. We see mostly continuity all along from model to model with no

missing links, although, for example, at one point most cars got smaller. At another point some cars appeared with engines in the back. More recently, SUVs loomed into the picture, etc.

At every point along the way, however, *the changes that took place with automobiles were due not to random mutations but to the meticulous involvement of thousands of intelligent engineers*. The obviously necessary role of those human engineers could, it would seem, be parallel to the role of intermediate beings (good and bad) in the evolution (and distortion) of life forms. This perspective is radically different from the currently popular concept of Darwinian “unguided evolution.”

One question may come up. If loyal angelic beings took millions of years to develop life (all along under God’s guidance) how then could the various forms of life mentioned in Genesis 1 be re-created in six days, even if those periods of time were longer than 24 hours?

I don’t see this as a serious problem. To me this is like assuming that although swarms of highly intelligent automotive engineers took an entire century to go from a Model T to a Lincoln Continental, that with that backlog of experience they could not readily put out new models each year. But they do. Thus, obviously, if loyal intermediate beings (angels) had been steadily learning about genetics, developing a variety of life forms over a very long period, they would certainly have had no problem in re-creating non-carnivorous life forms in a very short period.

In other words there does not seem to be any stubborn obstacle to understanding Genesis to harmonize with current scientific knowledge of the earth, and to accepting a version of both the so-called “Old Earth” scenario as well as the “Young Earth” concept.

### **An Intelligent Counterforce?**

It would seem clear that one value of understanding the great ages of the earth as coming before Genesis 1:1 is the lack of conflict with the concept of an old earth. Another value, that to me is even more important, is the significance of recognizing the full extent of the distortion of nature by an active, intelligent counterforce. This, in turn, defines the need for those defending God’s glory today to deal seriously with the continuous worldwide assault by the microbiological world on both animal and human life.

This kind of recognition—this apparently belated insight—would seem to be essential to any truly serious mobilization of believers to fight back against the origins of disease. This, in turn, then defines an appreciably larger concept of mission, and is my primary concern.

Therefore, unless and until that recognition of a larger concept of mission is more widespread, we are confined and restricted to a “gospel” which concentrates almost solely on individuals gaining assurance about getting into the next world and merely staying out of trouble while spreading that gospel until then. In this common understanding of the Christian life there is no war going on. Worse still, many thinking people are honestly wondering again and again how a loving and all-powerful God can both create, and put up with, or condone, the pervasive violence and suffering and sickness in this world. Furthermore such people do not understand that in this war God is expecting our help.

In other words, what puzzles both theologians and scientists regarding the specific process of the creation of life is made significantly more understandable by taking into

account that additional strange factor, namely, the evidence of a destructive counterforce to whatever might seem to be beautiful and good.

After all, one of the least mentioned and yet most unavoidable characteristics of nature is the absolutely pervasive evidence of a counterforce distorting, degrading, and destroying all that is good, pitting animal against animal and human against human, and in addition pulling down all forms of animal and human life by means of a virtual hurricane of deadly viruses, bacteria, and ominously clever parasites.

Curiously, those who commendably urge the recognition of Intelligent Design in nature do not usually offer comment on the resulting problem of people having to assume that violence in nature is due to the work of God rather than Satan. As a Harvard professor in a TIME Magazine cover story said that if Intelligent Design is true, "What kind of a divine sadist would create a parasite that would blind millions of people?"

Similarly, even Darwin pondered the paradox of an omnipotent God of love and the apparently gratuitous death of his little niece, the premature death of his father, and the rampant violence and suffering throughout the nature he knew so well. His resulting proposal of a purely natural, and random evolution was in one sense his method of absolving God of blame for the evident evil in nature. It might have been easier for him had he seriously considered the existence of the factor of intelligent evil opposition to God. Newman, in his mentioned essay, quotes Darwin as saying,

What a book a devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering, low, and horribly cruel works of nature!

We can plainly see the evidence of virulent evil in the earliest remains of hominids, humanoids, or even modern humans who perversely and yet pervasively display extreme cruelty and homicidal behavior - the sort of thing bluntly described in Genesis. We also see evil in the omnipresent evidence of destructive disease. If divine intent is reflected in the re-creation that may be described in Genesis, as well as the final situation described in Isa. 6 and 11 (in which the lion will lie down with the lamb), *we can readily recognize that nature-as-we-know-it is clearly not the way a loving, powerful divine being intended it.*

However, if dangerous wolves can be altered genetically through selective breeding over a lengthy period of time, so, you would think, could man-eating tigers. That procedure would seem to be better than either of the two main alternatives we have at present - either to "kill or cage." I have read that there are only 5,000 tigers remaining in the wild, while in the U.S. as temporary pets there are another 10,000. I say temporary because treating wolves or tigers in a friendly way does not change their DNA. Nor, apparently, can either animals or humans become herbivorous just by being fed plant life.

The often overlooked genetic distortion that has already happened would seem clearly to be a more serious problem than can be coped with either through behavioral or nutritional modification. Patient, multigenerational selective breeding can make a difference. But that is a process which is inherently clumsy compared to gene splicing. "Original sin" in this light could be the result of genetic distortions re-inherited in the reversion following Eden. This may be why despite "the power of the Gospel to transform lives" humans still have seemingly indelible inclinations to sin, as Paul testifies in Romans 7.

## Restoration in the Teeth of Opposition?

The thinking of the University of Chicago anthropologist, Robert Redfield enters here. He puzzled for years over the gradual but substantial changes that have often taken place in human society over the centuries. He first wrote the book, *The Village That Chose Progress*, which tussles with what really happens when an indigenous, tribal society encounters the modern world. (He did not think the changes were all that good.) Later, in a lectureship at Cornell University, he raised a lot of eyebrows and opposition in a famous speech entitled, “The Transformation of Ethical Judgment,” which is now the final chapter in his book, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*. In this lecture he asked what was happening when a young chieftain in a tribe of Plains Indians in the USA summarily abolished human sacrifice.

I realize it is not politically correct to assume anything like absolute historical progress in human ethical judgment. As I say, Redfield ran into a lot of flack. Many other reasons, therefore, are commonly adduced for the significant decrease of widow burnings in India and the near total amnesia in China today regarding the binding and grotesque distortion of little girls’ feet. Also, there is the legendary ingenuity of the Chinese in human torture that is no longer a national boast.

Many serious books have been written about the puzzle of seeming progress in human society. Years ago the missionary statesman, Frank Laubach, wrote *The World Is Learning Compassion*. One fairly recent book wrestling with the question of historical progress would be Jared Diamond’s very different ruminations about the mysterious rise of Western civilization in his *Guns, Germs and Steel*.

Could it be that human progress in knowledge of nature and technology has also been accompanied by a small but significant process due to “selective breeding,” a process that has in fact genetically restored some of humans’ pre-fall nature, varying from region to region? In the USA we have had our Jimmy Jones and his slaughter in Guyana, but can we imagine a U.S. mayor becoming a Pol Pot, or leading the way to chop off the hands of thousands of children as in Sierra Leone? Is the difference genetic or just cultural?

In any case, you would think that the constant attack of deadly disease germs, although their existence surfaced after Calvin died, would be enough to force us to wonder about an intelligent counterforce to the intent of the divine.

Unfortunately, the word Satan often swims in the same world as Santa Claus, the *Tooth Fairy*, and *Harry Potter*. Thus, if there is in active existence a frighteningly intelligent counterforce to divine intent, modern Christians don’t usually think or talk much about that possibility. Such thoughts are almost never heard in church or seminary classes.

Paradoxically, once you emerge from church into the rest of the world, turn on the TV or a computer game, go see a movie, open a newspaper or visit a prison, the pervasive theme of good versus evil fairly jumps out at you. Embarrassingly, the world would seem to be doing more of the fighting against evil than what is constituted by overtly Christian efforts. Could it be that the Kingdom of God is being more advanced by the indirect influence of the Christian movement on the world than by the formal Christian churches and organizations of our time?

In contrast to the intuitions of “the world,” the Western Christian tradition has often tended to concentrate on the next world, and, for this world, on merely the

obligation to maintain good behavior. This has been especially true since the Reformation's massive over-emphasis on simply how to get to heaven.

In current Evangelical thinking there would not seem to be any all-out or all-encompassing battle to be fought, nothing that would make the calling of every believer, lay or clergy, to be a participant in that battle.

The key issue, as I see it, is the difference between 1) seeing our mission simply that of resolving a tension between man and God and 2) seeing our mission as clarifying the tension between God-plus-redeemed-humans and the evil that is often blamed on God, that is, seeing redeemed humanity in a wartime kingdom as an agent on God's side doing whatever can glorify Him - not merely concerned to recruit more people for a peacetime kingdom. This concept of the kingdom as being not a holding tank of saved souls but a wartime involvement of every believer is the concept we will pursue in the second and third lectures. ■

## **Part 2. Planetary Events: the New Beginning**

As we have already seen in the previous presentation, the origin of modern humans would seem to have been only 11 thousand years ago. That is, if we go by the first appearance of high intelligence—the first appearance of the intelligence it takes to genetically alter plants and animals by selective breeding. In any case, as I earlier explained, 11,000 years is an exceedingly short time in the light of a universe which is said to be about 13.7 billion years old, a planet 4.5 billion years old, the conjectured 4-billion-year earliest appearance of life, or even the last half billion years (the last 500 million years since the Cambrian Explosion).

You also will recall that, if we compare the human period to just the last 500 million years, the human period represents only the last two seconds in a 24-hour day.

However, our knowledge about the last 11 thousand years is perfectly enormous compared to what we know about earlier events. These last two seconds are the period of human existence. This is the period of human consciousness. This is the period we must try to understand. This is the period dealt with in the Bible.

I continue, as before, with the conjectural scenario which has the entire "old earth" falling before Genesis 1:1. That perspective makes relatively recent all of the events of Genesis. According to this scenario Genesis 1:1 in effect announces not "the beginning" but a very significant New Beginning.

It would be possible to suggest that Genesis 1:1 describes only one of many new beginnings, since each of the many major, previous asteroidal collisions occasioned new beginnings of life, often quite different forms of life. It is not necessary to understand those many extinction events as divine punishments to understand them at least as partial or almost complete new beginnings of life on earth.

Beyond chapter one in the book of Genesis there are other new beginnings. We read of the selectivity involved in the choice of Noah whose three sons formed a new lineage in at least one region of the earth. Then, we read of Abraham being selected, Isaac instead of Ishmael, and Jacob instead of Esau. We see Moses being chosen, and then Joshua. We see the Southern Kingdom emerging instead of "all Israel." We see just a partial remnant returning from Babylon, two thirds remaining in Babylon, only one third returning to the land of their fathers. We see selectivity in the case of Galilee-of-the-Gentiles rather than Jerusalem, Nazareth, of all places, the selection of Mary.

Such *selectivity* has sometimes been interpreted as exclusivity. Thus, we are surprised when Abraham is judged immoral by a man, Abimelech, who was completely outside of the Abrahamic Covenant. It would seem that the Bible certainly reports accurately and critically on a nation and its story, a story which is not altogether admirable. But, in reality, much of the Bible describes almost exaggeratedly-objectionable behavior. Thus, the British historian, Herbert Butterfield, remarked that the uniqueness of the story of the Jewish people is not their history but their historiography. Apparently selection has had as much or more to do with reporting to posterity and other nations as it has been a matter of special favor.

Furthermore, the Bible obviously does not contain all the things God has said and done among all of the nations of the world. We don't always remember that fact. It is common for Christians to assume that God's selectivity has really been intended to be exclusivity: that God spoke to and through the Jewish tradition and to and through none other. Thus, again, echoing Butterfield, we can, in the case of the Jewish people, and their Bible, understand that it is the *nature of the record* not the *content of the record* that is the most unique.

In other words, the amazing and unique *literary* record we have in the Bible, despite its admirable honesty and self-criticism, does not on every page talk about human events that were unique or universal. With surprising accuracy it does describes people and their experiences and their understanding of things in the situation in which they found themselves.

For example, the Biblical authors speak of the "ends of the earth"—which to them meant "to the ends of the flat earth plain of the Fertile Crescent as bounded by the mountains of Afghanistan and the mountains of Turkey"—which was their known world. It did not mean, as we might think, anachronistically, the far reaches of the planet. Similarly, when the early chapters of Genesis speak of "the whole earth" they are not very likely referring to the entire planet, which was a reality not yet understood.

When Genesis speaks of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the specific information about where they and their lineages lived is clearly in the middle east. The Biblical text apparently does not intend to refer to the Chinese. The entire reality of which Genesis speaks we would at least initially assume made sense to the authors of oral tradition and later to Moses, all of whom, however, were very likely unaware of the true extent of the planet in that era.

Thus, we gain from Gen 1:29-30 the idea that the Edenic New Beginning in its initial stage consisted of the emergence, in a single region, of animals and humans which were strikingly different from the past, being explicitly non-carnivorous. This kind of nonpredatory life, then, would seem be what had been intended earlier (even though consistently distorted) during the 500 million year period following the Cambrian Explosion.

This particular, Genesis "New Beginning," according to the text, did not last long. The story tells us that during Adam's lifetime it went down due to his yielding to the intervention of a counterforce to the intent of God, and both the new animals and these new human beings were created in the image of God, but after the breakdown of Eden reverted, interbreeding with the animals and humans living outside of the destroyed area spoken of in Genesis 1:1-2, beings already distorted.

At this point, what some call the Evangelistic Mandate became necessary, a mandate to reconcile estranged man to God. In addition, what some call the “Cultural Mandate”—in its original simplicity a mandate to care for life on earth—would now have had to be augmented in the face of the very hostile environment external to the area of Eden. We might think of the “Cultural Mandate” as being now necessarily incorporated into a new and distinctly larger “Wartime” or “Military” Mandate, which would include both the Cultural and the Evangelistic Mandate. The latter, would be a recruiting program, and have as its overall purpose that of redeeming human beings and not only putting them to work in caring for life on earth, but also, now, warring against the powers of evil and darkness.

The point of what I am saying would be the significant difference between 1) the idea that the Evangelistic Mandate is the total definition of mission, and, 2) the idea that a recruiting evangelistic enterprise is simply part of a larger wartime effort to defeat what Paul calls “the god of this world,” and to restore the whole creation to the glory of God.

There is, evidently, a very great difference between a mission to get people into heaven and a mission to recover the glory of God by defeating the powers of darkness and distortion. In this latter, larger mission evangelism is to be viewed as in part recruitment for war. Mere evangelism, or mere recruitment for the Kingdom is not the single Divine goal. The Kingdom is at war and is not merely recruiting in peacetime. In this perspective the distinction between evangelism and social action is highly artificial. But both evangelism and social concerns are misconceived if they are seen as a humanistic campaign for the betterment of the human race. They are essential features of a Kingdom at war where the very glory of God is at stake. This reality is described by John as being very different from mere evangelism, “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).”

In this light the major events of the Bible can be seen as the extension of God’s Rule: the sojourn in Egypt, the Exodus, the military occupation of what is called Palestine, the scattering of the northern tribes, the captivity of the Southern Kingdom in Babylon, the expansion of Hellenistic culture by Alexander, the “salting” of the Roman empire by thousands of Synagogues, and the expansion of the faith East, West, North, South in the past 2,000 years. All of this can be summed up not merely as a campaign for human betterment, but as evidence of the partial, gradual defeat of the powers of darkness, in the words of the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

In this light we can note the gradual defeat of “war and pestilence” across the centuries. The conquest of either war or disease is neither easy nor automatic. One somewhat crude measurement of that conquest is an increase in the rate of population growth. For example, when the Roman legions withdrew from the British Isles to defend the city of Rome itself, at about 440 AD, the population of the British Isles has been estimated at one million. After three centuries of literacy, war and pestilence became again so fierce, however, as to hold the population constant for the next 600 years. Not until after 1066 AD did the population of the British Isles begin to creep up.

Similarly, there were an estimated 27 million people on earth in Abraham’s day, but 2,000 years later in Jesus’ day there were only roughly seven times that many. That’s a growth rate of one-tenth of one percent per year. What if in Abraham’s day world



population had grown at 1.7%—the relatively modest rate of growth of world population today?

Note, first, that the Western, so-called “developed” countries of the world today contribute very little to world population growth. This fact forces down the average rate of world population growth to the relatively modest world average of 1.7% per year. Many countries, like Egypt are growing at 3.5% per year.

Thus, if world population in Abraham’s day had only grown at this 1.7% rate there would have been six billion people on earth in only 321 years. What actually happened, by comparison, was that the 27 million world population in Abraham’s day grew as we have seen above, at .1% per year, or at one seventeenth of the world growth rate today. That depressed rate, note, is obviously the result of unbounded war and pestilence. This stubborn fact makes both gruesome and obvious the ravages of war and pestilence.

In recent years war has diminished to the point that on a world level today the number of people killed in car accidents is now five times that of the number killed in war. Disease is a different story. Certainly great advances have been made against many diseases. Our increasing understanding of how we get diseased has greatly increased, but in this case, the extensive development of resistant strains counterbalances a great deal of the progress. Two ways to measure the impact of disease on humanity are 1) to ask how long do people live, and also 2) how many people die prematurely of disease. In this country, longevity is constantly increasing. Yet, it is still true that nine out of ten Americans die prematurely from disease alone.

Let’s stand back at this point. This second lecture is supposed to cover the period from Eden to the present. Clearly we cannot go into detail for all the major events of the last few thousand years. We have already remarked about the more or less continuous increase in population and what that means. We have already mentioned the major events of the Bible from the standpoint of an expanding Kingdom of God. Our knowledge bank for the last 2,000 years is filled if not clogged by the nearly infinite details we now have of those years. Those details are more voluminous than ever before both because of a growing world population - more and more people are doing things and saying things and also because of the zeal and discipline of modern scholars to retain that information.

Basically, however, we can note the amazing impact the Bible as a document has had upon a number of human traditions, the Greek, the Roman, the Celtic and the Armenian in the form of Christianity, the Semitic in the form of Islam, the Goths, the Ethiopians, the Anglo-Saxons, the Slavs and the Scandinavians in still other forms of Christianity, and so on into modern times where all the world is involved.

At the same time, often with glacial slowness along with many setbacks, we can note that both war and pestilence have steadily declined. It is conceivable that in view of the onslaught of the forces of darkness genetic changes were early made throughout nature in the form of elevated birth rates.

It was once a good question whether human life could even survive. Hundreds of human communities have not survived. One per month is blinking out. On the other hand, today it is more likely a question of how to quell or at least slow down the incredible growth rate of humanity. John Wesley was the 15th child of his mother, Susannah. His brother Charles was the 17th. However, there were never more than five children alive at any one time.

We do well to recognize that no greater enemy of animal life has ever existed than the human race. Virtually all large mammals have already been driven extinct. At the same time extreme measures are sometimes pursued today to protect animal and even insect life. (There would seem to be more zeal for this than for preserving human societies.) Interestingly, in terms of the entire sweep of earth history our paleontologists have made us aware of one thousand times as many now-extinct forms of life as are in existence today.

The question we must address, however, is the extent to which those who have treasured the Bible and sought to yield to its message have understood their mission. I am afraid the answer is not entirely a happy one.

Even our terminology is complex. If we go back as far as Joseph confronting his brothers in Egypt we see two strikingly different ways of looking at things. He says to them, pointedly, “You did not send me to Egypt, God did.” We already have seen how, in fact, Joseph got to Egypt very clearly because of the actions of his brothers.

In 2 Sam. 24:1-25 we read the story of David’s sinful counting of the people. In 1 Chron. 21:1-25, written centuries later, that story recurs, verbatim, except for one word. Earlier it is God who “incites” David to do wrong. Later, in Chronicles, it is Satan who “incites” David to do wrong. And, just in general, following the period of Babylonian Captivity—where contact was made with Zoroastrianism, which held the concept of two gods, one good and one evil—the Bible begins more often to talk about the existence of an intelligent enemy, giving an alternate explanation of the reason for evil, the kind of thing the Old Testament almost always describes as simply the direct initiative of God.

The words *satan* or *devil* occur 68 times in the New Testament in one English translation, but apart from Job only three times in the Old Testament. One fairly strong early Christian movement, Manichaeism, took over the Zoroastrian dualism of two gods. Augustine started out in that group. When he rejected it he tended to move over to a neo-Platonic view which did away with an evil counterforce and ascribed all events to the direct initiative of God. It is possible to see this influence in at least Western Christianity. Let me give three examples.

Anicius Boethius, a Christian and follower of Augustine, and an upright man at the right hand of one of the tribal Goths ruling Rome, was accused of disloyalty and was for “safety sake” condemned to death. While awaiting his execution with calm and equanimity, he wrote an essay entitled “The Consolations of Philosophy.” This document was so high minded and noble in attitude, facing death without fear or recrimination, that it was widely read in the middle ages, almost beyond the Bible itself. Boethius resigned himself to the wisdom of God in his situation. The queen of England was so impressed that she translated it from Latin into English.

A 13th Century Mother Superior awakened one morning to feel something moving under the skin in her forehead. She wondered what God was up to. In a few days it broke the skin and the worm became visible. From time to time, stooping over, it fell out. Being God’s worm, she replaced it. You can’t fight God.

Jonathan Edwards, exiled from his pulpit in Boston to an artificial missionary village at the outer extremities of western Massachusetts, noted during his seven years there, amidst doing some of his most advanced writing, that his Indian charges were horribly decimated again and again by smallpox. There is no more painful death. Hearing about the Turkish idea of what we today call a vaccine, he set out to try it. The pastors of

Massachusetts warned him that he was “interfering with Divine Providence.” He did not heed their warnings, tried it on himself and died very prematurely of that horrible death shortly after being appointed president of what is today Princeton University. It was thought that God killed him.

These three examples show how unlikely it is that anyone would take steps to fight evil if they think that God is the initiator of the evil in each case. Here are four contemporary examples of this perspective, this tendency to be resigned to evil rather than fighting it.

A few days ago I was given a brochure put out as a ministry by the International Bible Society. It was designed to help those who are grieving. It told of a young husband whose wife was suddenly taken in their second year of marriage. He almost went out of his mind. At one point it flashed through his head that he wanted to “punch God in the nose.” Obviously, in his mind, his theology allowed him to assume God was the one who took his wife. Instead of recognizing the existence of a hideous and cruel counterforce to God, and pledging himself to work with God to defeat the precise medical reason his wife died, he simply assumed that God must have done it. He now needed simply to resign Himself to the mysterious will of God.

Earlier I was referred to an article in an issue of Guideposts about a family of two boys, one of which in his teens was overcome by an unusual form of cancer. The distraught father created an organization to fight that form of cancer. He organized a 10K race to raise money for it. He himself participated in the runathon. But as he approached the finish line he collapsed and died of a heart attack. The surviving little boy asked his mother, “God wouldn’t do two bad things to us in one year would He?” His intuition was good. His theology was bad. Even children within our stream of Christianity get the idea that God is himself the author of all evil - just as the Old Testament describes things.

A famous, but I will allow unnamed Christian leader writing a book about the Christian life proudly tells how his daughter who had struggled for years with an autistic son finally reached the point where her family could handle the situation fairly well. She at this point told her father “I have come to believe that Alex is exactly the way God wants him to be.” Why God would want a boy to be brain damaged is one thing. The real question for me is whether this influential Christian leader is involved in trying to find out what it is that is brain damaging millions of children today. “Not expecting evil but resigning ourselves to it when it appears” has today replaced the New Testament’s perspective of “expecting evil and fighting it when it appears.”

When my first wife finally succumbed to cancer I was advised, “Don’t fret, God knows what He is doing.” Another said, “You need to thank God for cancer.” Hundreds said they would pray for her. No one ever said they were going to do anything to fight cancer, or even pray for those limited efforts which are attempting to understand the sources of cancer.

In Philip Yancey’s insightful book, *Where is God When It Hurts?*, he urges readers not to speculate about causes of evil but to focus on the purposes God may work out of evil. Satan is mentioned in passing (as one who some think of) as a cause, but nothing is said about fighting back

He brilliantly summarizes common approaches to evil in his first chapter where a formerly beautiful young woman married for only one year is flat on her back in a hospital room ravaged by Hodgkin’s disease. Five visitors come to see her. The first, a

deacon from her church talks to her for some time and before leaving says, “Surely something in your life must displease God ... these things don’t just happen. God uses circumstances to warn us and to punish us. What is He telling you?”

A second visitor is an ebullient, cheerful woman who pastes get-well cards all over her window and refuses to talk about or listen to Claudia’s problem. A third, also a woman, hearing what the deacon said, blurts out, “Sickness is never God’s will. Haven’t you read the Bible? The Devil stalks us like a roaring lion, but God will deliver you if you can muster up enough faith to believe you’ll be healed ... Simply name your promise, in faith, and claim the victory.”

A fourth visitor, patiently explains, “Claudia, you need to come to the place where you can say, ‘God, I love you for making me suffer like this. It is your will, and you know what’s best for me. And I praise you for loving me enough to allow me to experience this. In all things, including this, I give thanks.’”

Finally, her pastor visits and explains to Claudia that God must have chosen her to be a hero, whose stalwart faith in adversity will be a blessing to many others.

While Yancey’s five visitors do not include any who simply say that Claudia’s tortured situation is part of God’s mysterious will, nevertheless that is commonly said, and is essentially what these five visitors are saying. In no case, did any of these well-wishers recognize the necessity of believers taking steps to fight Hodgkin’s disease.

Yancey does go on to say that no other problem provokes so serious a response and that many college students give up their faith because of it.

James Dobson’s book, *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*, similarly emphasizes the mystery of God’s will attendant upon terrible and unexplainable happenings. The very title assumes God is the prime mover in all evil. He mentions Satan in passing as what some say is the cause of disease but he does not speak of the need to counter Satan’s works.

Does our Christian mission involve an obligation and challenge to fight disease at its source? Orthodox Jewish doctors are at the forefront of such activity. Shall we simply let them busy themselves with this task? Apparently, we must assume that their intuitive theology is superior to our formal Evangelical theology. If so, this is very strange since their part of our Bibles is precisely the part which does not usually give reason for discerning the active, evil presence of a Satan in disease, nor reason to set about to destroy evil. We have that in the New Testament but not in our theology. Not since Augustine.

We have talked about the past and the present. If our life in Christ is both a great blessing and also a call to arms, just how can the future, and must the future, be different from the present? That is the subject of the third lecture

### **Part 3. Planetary Events: the Future**

In this presentation I am not going to attempt to predict the future but rather to ponder what *ought to be the future*, that is, not guess at what will happen but propose *what should happen*.

The past, as portrayed in the earlier presentations, revolved around the basic stance of the redeemed human in regard to his earthly mission. It was alleged that seeking pardon for sin and becoming assured of heaven is by no means the whole picture. To the extent that that kind of reductionism is a product of the Reformation we do well to hold

much of such theology tentatively. Even the simplicity of what is called The Lord's Prayer goes far beyond that kind of truncated mission.

However, if there is any substantial truth to what I have been saying, there are in our future substantial obstacles to our response to the very first petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

It would seem clear that the "coming" of the Kingdom of God is related to how God can be glorified in a darkened and captive world.

One way to approach a fresh redefinition of Christian mission for the future, then, is to ask the basic question, What will it take to remove the stain of accusations against a supreme being which arise from the very existence of evil in this created world? This gets at the task of glorifying God, but in so doing it recognizes that the task of glorifying God must involve the removal of understandings of God that are contradictory to His nature and existence.

Not long ago it was widely suggested that "God is dead." The ongoing Christian cultural momentum mainly doomed that phrase, but the phrase died in part because the same phrase could imply that God once lived - and that, too, is unacceptable to many. Today, any thought of a supreme being who ever existed in any form whatever in the past or present is usually considered totally out of date or even antagonistic to our "sacred" science.

Thus, to approach contemporaries thinking in these terms it may not be necessary to prove that the Bible is a magical, superhuman book. However, if the Da Vinci Code's popularity has done any damage at all it would seem urgent in the defense of the Christian tradition to discover ways in which people may disregard the Bible simply due to misreadings thereof.

I have described one of those possible misunderstandings in suggesting that Genesis should not be forced to talk anachronistically of modern cosmological insights. When both Luther and Calvin assumed the Biblical authors were acquainted with the sphericity of the earth and that the Bible described the Sun as going around the Earth, they were not accused of misinterpreting the Bible. It was assumed that those two very intelligent men had been simply following a defective book.

Today, when a *TIME* Magazine cover story mentions that Christians believe the earth is 6,000 years old—due to what the Bible teaches—the journalist is not thinking that someone has misinterpreted the Bible, but is quite likely assuming that the Bible itself is faulty in this respect.

Far more damaging is the fact that Christian leaders today are writing whole books to explain suffering and egregious evil without taking into account the role of an intelligent counter being to God.

Today we are in the midst of a massive shift toward explaining all things in purely mechanistic and material terms. This trend forces the concept of unguided evolution into prominence, but it does not make the concept of unguided evolution more credible, just more widely accepted. However, those who believe "God did it" are just as hard pressed to explain how and in what timing the creation of life was accomplished. The Christians are most concerned to maintain belief in God, while many scientists are just as determined to believe there is no supreme being.

Phobias in both cases? When the now-accepted "Big Bang" theory was first proposed the editor of the world's most prestigious scientific journal, *Nature*, opposed it

on the grounds that it was smuggling in a religious concept. Although scientists are no longer saying that, the same phobia today is desperately levelled against those who insist on the possibility of “intelligent design” in nature. Meanwhile, no one complains that multimillion dollar radio telescopes in Florida are trained skyward on the thesis that all that is necessary to prove the existence of intelligent life would be some minimal evidence of coding in the electromagnetic radiation from outer space that is constantly raining down upon the Earth.

An equal panic seems to exist for some who would seem to fear the thought that there is any real evidence of an old earth. I have wondered if this fear arises from a subconscious assumption that given enough time randomly guided Darwinian selection might possibly work, and thus prove there is no God.

But, besides removing misunderstandings of the Bible, there are other obstacles to the task of glorifying God. Some of these obstacles are very substantial, in the sense of being tangible and concrete, others equally substantial involve intangibles of misunderstanding. It is fairly simple to illustrate, first, the tangibles.

We have earlier considered the physical suffering due to physical aggression on the part of man or beast. We know we must fight wartime aggressors, muggers, robbers, dangerous animals - things we can see with the naked eye.

Not so clear is a theological mandate to fight the physical onslaught of entities Calvin knew not of: the tiniest of all are deadly viruses, which though tiny are not simple, some of them being composed of as many as ten million atoms. Viruses are all dangerous and destructive. Much, much larger in size are bacteria which are both good and bad. Finally, still larger are parasites, many too small to see but still incredibly more complex than bacteria and dauntingly clever, such as the malarial “plasmodium” which kills four children every sixty seconds.

Some parasites are big enough to be seen in their adult life, like the Hair Worm which invades grasshoppers, eats out their insides just short of total demobilization (a process called “zombification”), then creates proteins that mimic the grasshopper’s brain cells inducing the grasshopper to drown itself in water, at which time the Hair Worm swims away to breed.

Certain parasites invading humans, called generically worms, are even larger, including round worms, tapeworms, and flukes. They range in length from a quarter of an inch to three feet. One kind, for example, the schistosome in its tadpole stage in any water contact can breach the skin in three to five minutes not needing any cut or crack. Invading the body each one can lay from 100 to 300 eggs a day, course through the bloodstream penetrate the liver, the lungs, and the brain. The Guinea Worm may grow to 32 inches inside the human body.

These things are incredibly powerful enemies, designed to destroy, but to my knowledge there is not one substantial Christian institution in the world that is seeking to eradicate them. The problem is deep. Our theology and missiology originated in an era when the existence of such enemies was not known, and there has been no update of our theology, apparently, in the last four hundred years.

Of course, even if the global Christian family does choose to fight newly discovered evils rather than be resigned to them, it is not necessarily true that all disease can be crushed by human enterprise alone. Guinea Worm has been reduced by the Carter Center from 3.5 million victims to 13,000, mainly in unreachable areas of Sudan. But the

Carter Center, although Jimmy Carter is a Sunday school teacher, is not funded by any Christian denomination or mission agency, and its modest goals of eradicating five major diseases is not the idea of any theologian or mission agency I know of.

It must be obvious that physical dangers of the kind we have just noted would seem in general to be more understandable and identifiable. The exception might be the ones too small to see with the naked eye. If our two-year-old daughter is playing in the backyard and we can see through the kitchen window that a mountain lion is creeping up toward her, or if a pit bull is about to break through the fence and get to her, or if a big black spider is crawling up the back of her dress, such a danger is both understandable and identifiable. We don't stop to pray in such cases. We both pray and act.

But if the enemy entity is too small to see we have for most of human history not known of its existence, or, as in fairly recent history, we have learned only vaguely what the problem is, we tend, as a church, as a people, as a mission, simply to pray, not act. If we act at all we care for the sick, the victims, and we may try to avoid the pathogens by some sort of "preventive" measures or healthy lifestyle.

Yet, this is all "defensive." We do not pay much attention at all to the appropriate search and destroy mission, only the victims. But, you can't win a war by merely caring for the wounded. Our theology does not lead us to eradicate the attacking pathogens, as was done in the case of smallpox and polio through initiatives outside the formal Christian mission. In this sense our theology is still appropriate to the First Century.

All this is to observe that the problem is far deeper than mustering efforts to eradicate pathogens. They are tangible enemies. They are bad enough if only we could think clearly about them. Unfortunately, in a way parallel to the Hair Worm injecting mind-altering proteins into the brain of the grasshopper, the enemies we face that are tangible are made much more difficult to defeat due to mind-altering cultural and intellectual forces. These forces are similarly mind-altering and might be called "Diabolical delusions." Thus, delusions not just physical enemies are foes.

Let me give some quick examples of deadly delusions of the kind we don't have to fight in the United States.

I have, actually, already mentioned the grotesque practices of foot-binding that used to be practiced in some parts of China. What kind of a delusion would lead to the idea that that would be an improvement? Obviously, it was not a defensive measure against physical danger.

Or, take the burning of widows in India, which still exists in some places. That delusion is more understandable: the widow, if she dutifully yields to that fiery death she will be reincarnated at a higher level, she is given to believe.

More common in India today, but quite different, is the practice of burning to death a young bride whose dowry has already been turned over to her husband's family. Once or twice a month such events occur in the city of New Delhi alone, being reported in the paper as accidental. But that kind of evil is different from widow burning in that, to my knowledge, it is not furthered by delusion but simple greed.

In Southern Africa it is widely believed that a man with AIDS can be cured by having intercourse with a virgin. That delusion certainly seems diabolical.

What, then, about delusions that must be fought in the United States? Why did we go on for 35 years ignoring the link of cancer to smoking? Why did we go on for 35 years

chopping off women's breasts when it was known that lumpectomy was equally effective in almost all cases?

For one thing, we must in the USA fight against delusions about the size and scope of out-of-sight, microbiological aggression. Consider these facts: less than one percent of Americans are victims of homicide. Twice as many die from suicide (1.4%). A full four percent die of accidents, mostly car accidents. Add it up. Almost all the rest, well over 90% die prematurely of *disease*. This, despite some significant progress over time. In Franklin D. Roosevelt's era, when they determined a reasonable retirement age - 65 - certain factors including disease were taken into account. It has been estimated that if that same reasoning were followed today the calculation of retirement age would come out 92. Yet, despite many gains, disease is still clawing down to premature death over 90% of Americans!

A specific illustration of how enormous is the onslaught disease upon us, note the fact that Americans are forced to pay \$1 billion per day simply in treating cardiovascular disease - heart and stroke patients. That is, we are paying as much per day for cardiovascular disease as we are paying for the Iraqi war. But, you say, in Iraq we are also paying in U.S. lives, averaging ten a day. Well, U.S. citizens are losing their lives in the cardiovascular war at 3,000 lives a day. Thus, for that one type of disease alone our country is losing as much money and as many lives as if we were fighting 300 Iraqi wars.

Yes, I believe we need to fight a delusion regarding the scope of the war against disease. We need to fight that delusion in order to fight that war.

I might add that delusions about disease are also extensive in the rest of the world. I think of a 300-page book entitled *International Development*. The African Oxford-educated Ph.D. who writes the book stresses in the introduction that the book is focused primarily on poverty. When four out of five family members are down with disease that family is bound to be poor. The major factor in poverty is disease. But there is not one line in the book about the disease factor in poverty.

This major delusion I have mentioned can be described as the amazing and dangerous underestimation of what some clear thinking authors have claimed is the "plague dimensions" of disease today.

Compounding the effect of this first major delusion is a second, related delusion we must fight. It is the widespread idea that the American medical/pharmaceutical complex with its multiple billions of income is seriously dealing with the sources of disease not just the treatment of sick people. Since there is already a chorus of voices protesting features of the medical/pharmaceutical industry, let me say in advance that I do not believe, and will not imply, that the people working in that enormous industry are any more or less ethical than those in any other basically wholesome industry.

However, major new and highly credible insight into the realities in this sphere have come from Dr. Marcia Angell, the Harvard Medical School professor and just-retired former editor in chief for 20 years of the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. Her book, *The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do About It*, is both eminently knowledgeable and fair minded. It is packed with actual cases and with detailed facts and figures to show how extensively the enormous inflow of money into the medical/pharmaceutical industry has allowed that industry to become a controlling influence in university testing, private testing, in medical journalism, advertising, education of doctors, the ostensibly autonomous Federal Drug



Administration, the government sponsored National Institutes of Health, and even Congress (where there are more drug lobbyists than congressmen). Here is one comment: “Legislators are now so beholden to the Pharmaceutical industry that it will be exceedingly difficult to break its lock on them.”

It would be impossible to go into even a tiny portion of the many examples described in this sane and sad book in which we again and again see truth surrendered to economic benefit. But economic goals easily explain why drug companies do not bother with the diseases of the poorer parts of the glob. Similarly, they do not see sufficient profit in the use of natural substances which cannot be patented were they to be expensively tested. This applies even to diseases that can be cured outright. There is more money in drugs for diseases that last on and on.

It is a revelation that FDA approval says nothing about the relative merits of a drug compared to others but only that it is better than nothing. This means that when a widely advertised and profitable drug goes out of patent it is very often replaced by a new one that is either no better or actually less helpful, but which now will get the big TV ads. Meanwhile, the previous drug that might be better is dropped from production in view of inevitable competition and lowered profits. Out of 415 new drugs approved by the FDA in five years, 77 percent were no better or were worse than earlier, earlier out-of-patent drugs. Most of the testing is either run by or controlled by the company that wants to sell the drug. When test results are negative they may be suppressed, or when they are submitted to journals, the company may submit only what happened in the first six months of testing and drop out the second six months which indicated a very different result.

These statements are only the tip of the iceberg. The reason for bringing this matter up, however, is that it illustrates well a widespread delusion about what the medical/ pharmaceutical industry does, working as it does almost exclusively subject to the gravitational pull of economic and market forces.

A specific illustration is the case of cardiovascular disease, the number one killer already mentioned. The perfectly enormous and expensive attention paid to treating those who have already suffered a heart attack or a stroke is explained by market forces. The victims are the ones who will pay anything to get well.

It is well known today that half of all who die of heart attacks lack the supposed symptoms of cardio-vascular disease. But heart bypass surgeons don't have time or training to look into primary causes. That is not what they are being paid to do. As for the pharmaceutical companies, even if there were the possibility of a drug that would strike at the cause rather than at the symptoms (such as high LDL cholesterol), such an outright cure would not render the same profit as the kind that requires, say, the long term administration of a drug to maintain lower cholesterol. Thus, institutionally, attention to root causes is almost non-existent by comparison to healing. It is a *delusion* to think otherwise. If Christian mission offers no help at the roots of disease then these delusions triumph even there.

The entire Bible expects us and exhorts us to do good works. We are not merely to wait for the next world. Paul put it this way to Titus:

We wait for the blessed hope —the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness

and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

Note the unspecific phrase, “to do what is good.” Whatever Paul had in mind, it was inevitably limited by his First Century understanding. He would not have thought about combatting cancer at the DNA level as a good thing to do. Our exegesis must explore all that he might have had in mind. That is, the first law of seminary exegesis is “What did it mean?”

But, we must go on to ask “What would Paul have said about good deeds had he known what we know today about what is dangerous in the microbiological world? What would he have said had he our understanding of the inherent limitations of a medical/pharmaceutical industry that is allowed and even expected to make decisions based on purely commercial factors? It is not enough for us to read Paul’s statement to Titus out loud in church and turn our people out into the parking lot with merely the phrase ringing in their ears, “eager to do what is good.”

The definition of mission is the difference between what is and what ought to be.

It is absurd to suppose that we cannot sit down and make a list of things that are wrong, unfair, ungodly, deadly dangerous, and then accept profound responsibility to do something about these evils, to work individually and jointly to identify every evil that could possibly be blamed upon God and confront it, as a church, in the name of Christ.

If a pastor was rumored to have been unfaithful, in a fit of anger to have broken the neck of a noisy two-year old, and to have cheated on his income tax, it would not be reasonable to schedule an evening of praise for him without first trying to clear up these rumors.

However, the concept of God is widely fowled with assumptions that God is busy inventing parasites that blind millions of people, of “taking the lives” of innocent and even godly people and doing all this for mysterious reasons. Yet we have no trouble going to church and singing, “The whole earth is full of His glory.”

It is not as though no Christian believer has noticed specific details of God’s creation. Brilliant individual scientists like John Kepler, James Clerk Maxwell, Michael Faraday and Isaac Newton were believers who paved the way for all of modern science.

For several centuries now, with such individual Christians taking the lead in the early years, science has churned up oceans of new evidence of God’s creativity, not only in outer space but within the world of the optical microscope and the electron microscope.

Seemingly, none of this new insight has been embraced by the church either for its theology or its hymnody. We don’t sing about the wonders of the microbiological world. Again, it is not as though Evangelicals know less about science than other Americans. Apparently those of us who have witnessed the incredible intelligence and creativity in nature have not made any connection to the never-never land of the Sunday morning service.

The future of rapidly expanding Christianity around the world is not very bright, beyond the initial explosion of numbers, if we cannot bridge the contemporary chasm between our outdated religion of mainly emotional conviction and the intellectual dimensions of updated science. We fail to understand that our religious version of our faith is extensively cultural. Thus, the real work going on today of the expanding

Kingdom is perhaps more outside of the church than within it where we continue on singing platitudinous hymns and choruses.

Right now there are in this world millions of scientists, none of which would get out of bed in the morning if they did not have the faith that nature is orderly, is beautiful, and is reliable. We cannot expect them to give up that faith. At the same time we have millions of Christian leaders who would not get up in the morning if they did not have faith in an all-wise and loving divine being. We cannot expect them to give up that faith.

The one group is studying the divine Book of Creation, the other is studying the divine Book of Scripture. Neither of them can win if they insist on denying the faith of the other. Both faiths reflect God's glory. I truly believe that both of them are in one way or another reflecting the expanding Kingdom of God. Again, I seriously wonder if much or not most of the work of the Kingdom is now being done by people Evangelicals consider nonbelievers.

The Bible itself says of the Book of Creation that there is no speech or language where its voice is not heard. We must take advantage of that fact. Ours is not just a world whose riches can be mined to create cell phones and computer chips. Ours is a world which, rightly understood, reflects at least in part the glory of God.

Clarifying the glory of God as a mission is an unacknowledged means as well as a goal of the Reformation emphasis on soul saving, the reason being that clarifying the glory of God is in fact the most sturdy basis for evangelism. Furthermore, clarifying the glory of God is the common ground between science and pure religion.

When Jesus spoke of His followers being salt and light in this world He went on to explain that they should "let their light shine in such a way that the world would see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven (Matt 5:16)." That is the common ground for the future. As St. Francis said, "Witness at all times, with words if necessary."

## What Are Mission Frontiers

(2005) (*IJFM* 22:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/22\\_4\\_PDFs/155-158%20RDWMissionFr.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/22_4_PDFs/155-158%20RDWMissionFr.pdf)

I appreciate very much the invitation to address this important body. I have been asked to talk about the nature and background of “frontier missions.” I will begin by quoting the unofficial definition of *mission frontiers* which has been used by the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*.

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.” (Acts 26:18)

### Background of Mission Frontiers

The World Missionary Conference of 1910 was held at the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. It has been one of the most influential forces in the history of missions. It formed a “Continuing Committee.” It left behind many volumes of speeches and research. It founded the *International Review of Missions* (now edited by the World Council of Churches and called the *International Review of Mission*). The Continuing Committee convened a meeting in 1921 which formed the International Missionary Council. Later meetings eventually led to the formation of the World Council of Churches. Finally, in 1961 the International Missionary Council was merged into the World Council of Churches. This resulted because the national-level councils which formed the membership of the International Missionary Council had for the most part become councils of churches rather than councils of mission agency representatives.

In 1910, however, the concept of “frontiers” was mainly envisioned in terms of the number of individuals to be won to Christ. World population was divided into groups of 100,000 people, for example, and Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, etc. were sup-posed to commit themselves to winning a certain number of *individuals*.

By the end of the 20th century numbers of individuals were still taken seriously but goals were much more likely to be defined in terms of the number of human societies yet to be penetrated. The phrase “Unreached Peoples” became the basic term. Lists of Unreached Peoples became the basis for defining the remaining task of frontier missions. The key point was that planting more churches where some already exist is a task that is relatively simple and easy compared to the much more difficult task of planting churches in a society where there are not yet any Christian churches.

It has gradually become clear, how-ever, that to plant churches among unbelieving people it is necessary to do far more than to convey to them a recipe for how to get to heaven.

In the past few years in our work we have encountered frontiers of various kinds. I have been making a list. These are simply things which we have perceived as frontiers. All of them relate directly or indirectly to glorifying God in all the earth, among all peoples.

I will list these “frontiers” roughly in the order of our encountering them. Originally a two-part article in IJFM 20:3/20:4, it is now Chapter 10 of my recent book, *Frontiers in Mission* (William Carey International University Press, 2005), which describes each one in greater detail.

1. *Unreached Peoples*—the idea that for some groups no one has ever conveyed the Gospel effectively in their language and culture. That is, there has not yet been a “missiological breakthrough” to these groups.

2. *The Great Commission and Abraham*—the idea that Genesis 12:1-3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4-5, and 28:14-15 actually constitute the Great Commission Jesus relayed in Matthew 28:18-20. The wording in the Greek OT for Genesis 28:15 is very close to that of Matthew 28:20.

3. *From the Unfinished Task to the Finishable Task*—the idea that the task of gaining a “missiological breakthrough” to every remaining Unreached People can be finished. This is no doubt only an intermediate goal but it is at least “finish-able.” The number of Christian congregations around the world is far more than 500 times as large as the number of remaining Unreached Peoples!

4. *Failure with the large groups and the off-setting trend to “radical contextualization”*—the idea that huge groups such as the Japanese have not yet gained a truly indigenous fast-growing church movement, and the need to rethink our approach along more radically contextualized lines.

5. *Reverse Contextualization, the Recontextualization of Our Own Tradition*—the idea that missionaries ought not only to “contextualize” their methods with unreached peoples but also to re-examine the extensive cultural adaptations which have been made historically in their own form of Christianity.

6. *The Reclaiming of the Gospel of the Kingdom*—the idea that for the Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth, much more must be done than simply get individuals saved.

7. *Beyond Christianity*—the idea that missionaries may start movements which will in turn create other movements which may be far less Western in their cultural orientation, and may not even use the word “Christian.” Today there are millions of such believers in Jesus Christ in Africa, India, and China.

8. *A Different Type of Recruitment*—the idea that it is unwise for mission agencies to wait until young people are college graduates to recruit them for the cause of missions. If they can be contacted years earlier they can be advised about the courses to take in college and the answers to intellectual problems they encounter. By the time they graduate from college, whether or not they feel led into missions, they will be far better missionaries or lay people.

9. *A Trojan Horse?*—the idea that school books in both Christian schools and secular schools are very misleading, but that there is a way to directly impact what is

taught. It would seem urgent for churches and missions to work together to develop supplemental booklets that will augment and contradict the books used in schools. Such supplementary booklets could then be employed 1) in Christian schools, 2) in home-school contexts, 3) by Christians teaching in public schools, 4) very importantly by Sunday Schools, 5) but most importantly by concerned parents (who may not be able to count on any of the first four).

10. *Needed: a Revolution in Pastoral Training*—the idea that young people are not the right ones to fill our pastoral training schools around the world. It is better if pastoral selection is made after people grow up and prove their maturity and leadership gifts. Only then is it more likely that the right people are being trained. Otherwise, those who become pastors are young people who may be smart and well trained but not gifted. The result is that the churches suffer from such pastors. As it is all around the world, our seminaries are training the wrong students, with the wrong curriculum (no science), and with the wrong degree names.

11. *The Religion of Science*—the idea that God has given us two “books” of revelation 1) the Bible which is His Book of Scripture, and 2) nature, which is His Book of Creation. He does not want us to slight either one. Yet the sad situation is that, in general, millions of intelligent people (the scientific community) are studying the second and despising the first, and millions of church and mission leaders are studying the first and ignoring or rejecting the second. We cannot win people to Christ whose own knowledge of nature is denied by the church.

12. *The Challenge of the Evil One*—the idea that our present theological tradition is more influenced by Augustine than by any other theologian. Augustine started out Manichaean and eventually reacted so violently against it that he essentially banished references to an Evil One. In his writings, as in Neo-Platonism in general, all things are to be seen in terms of God’s often mysterious purposes. For Augustine, facing tragedy and harm and disease is simply a case for us to trust God not only to work things out for good but to trust that God had some good reason to bring it to pass in the first place.

Much could be said about this, but for me the key point is that if God does everything and we do not employ both of the Biblical perspectives about the work of God and Satan we see in the Bible, we will find ourselves unable to fight against the causes of evil for, in that case, we would be fighting against God. John Calvin did not know about deadly germs. Even if he had known about them he might not have seen them as having been designed by Satan. Now that we know about deadly germs we have no theology to fight them and no mission to destroy them. We let people get sick and then try to make them well. As Christians we sense no mission mandate to glorify God by destroying the works of the Devil.

This is not a comprehensive list of mission frontiers but it can serve the purpose of illustrating the concept. All of these relate directly or indirectly to the winning of Unreached Peoples.

However, there are also certain strata of society which need special attention.

### **Special Unreached People Problems**

Some social units within all people groups, usually including leaders, present special problems. People within these spheres cannot readily be won by the evangelistic message we ordinarily use. Some strata in societies, some spheres of activity—such as

the realm of the scientists around the world, or that of business leaders—are environments in which people want to know more than a formula for getting to heaven. They are struggling with various questions our traditional evangelism is not answering.

These questions may be considered intellectual frontiers. They are just as important to the Christian Mission as geographical frontiers, cultural frontiers, or linguistic frontiers.

1. Some scientists, business leaders, and university professors are perhaps alarmed to hear reports that the Bible teaches that the world is only six thousand years old.

2. Such people may be concerned to hear that Christians don't believe in medical approaches to disease, just prayer. They may think Christians believe that first century knowledge about healing is all we need to know, on the basis of the Biblical statement that "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

3. Such people may be worried by the idea that the God of the Evangelical Christians does not care or isn't very eager to help in fighting disease despite the fact that diseases around the world cause both the suffering and premature death of almost all human beings even in the industrialized countries.

4. Worse still, such people may hear that the Bible teaches that God is the author of all bad things—but that He has mysterious reasons. For example, Evangelical proponents of seeing "intelligent design" in nature are now being faced with Harvard professors asking why God would design a para-site that blinds millions of people.

Such questions are frontier barriers for key leaders in all parts of the world today, keeping them from believing in Christ. Rural uneducated people we can still win. Rural people and poor people may still be willing to leave such questions unanswered. They may have nothing to lose if they accept an entirely new religious culture. But, such questions are constantly making young people, college students and thinking adults lose their faith. Thousands of American Evangelicals may have already lost their faith. They may still go to church and appear outwardly to be believers, but they now live in two separate worlds intellectually.

I personally have no such double mind in such matters for I have had many more years to think about these questions than people who are 20 or 30 or 60 years younger than I am at 80.

I can, in fact, briefly explain my own answers to these four intellectual frontiers.

1. As to the accusation that the Bible teaches that the world is only six thousand years old, I would point out that the very conservative Evangelical Bible scholar, Merrill Unger (taught at Dallas Seminary), and also the famous C. I. Scofield, have in their writings acknowledged or insisted on the same thing: the possibility of the great ages of the old earth preceding the events of Genesis 1, thus giving room for both the "Old Earth" and the "Young Earth" positions.

2. In regard to the Christian faith restricting itself to the healing methods of the first century, it may well be a widespread tendency but the Bible surely does not lend itself to this kind of an interpretation. The Bible, by contrast, urges us to know all we can about God's creation and to employ that knowledge to do His will.

3. Unfortunately, the accusation that Christians do not have a theology for fighting against evil in the form of deadly germs is true to some extent. Too many of us have assumed that commercial processes would deal with disease. But it is plain that the

huge global pharmaceutical industry is first concerned for profits. This does not lead them seriously to combat disease pathogens but mainly to produce medicines they can sell to people who are already sick.

However, if a substantial new Biblical vision among Evangelicals can be created, and if that new vision will go on to effectively promote the necessary efforts for the conquest of disease origins (not just sickness), Christians can set a much better example. We need to encourage young people not just to be “missionaries” but to accept the mission of Christ to “destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).”

4. In the fourth case I must admit that to whatever extent we teach a theology which ignores the ongoing power of Satan to destroy and distort God’s creation, that will inevitably expose us to the accusation that we worship a cruel God. It is not enough to explain suffering and tragedy as merely the result of “God’s mysterious purposes.” We must acknowledge that Augustine allowed Neo-Platonism to obscure his understanding of the on-going activity of Satan. And we must recognize that God expects Christians, not just secular scientists, to join forces in the war against “the works of Satan.”

This last frontier leads to two further considerations, two massive frontiers which are a much bigger subject than can be properly addressed at this time. I can at least point them out.

1. American churches usually sponsor “Sunday Schools,” and sometimes grade schools on their church property. But what they teach is often totally unrelated to what their youth from 1st grade through graduate school are learning. Students at any level are unable to find answers at church week by week. Children learn about Darwinism during the week and learn about David slaying Goliath on Sunday. College students no longer attend their home churches and even if they did there is no relationship between what they are taught and what the more balanced Christian perspective might be.

The future of missions is dangerously damaged as long as all our young people are raised without proper exposure to the Christian answer to the problems that come up almost every day in their school classrooms. Keeping them in Christian schools is not the answer. They need to know the problems and they also need to know the answers.

2. A second, equally serious frontier is the fact that all of our lay people who are now out of school are working at least 40 hours a week in many different jobs. We want them to be good people and to witness for Christ, but we do not, as a church or mission, assist them to see Christian meaning in the work they do. They may not realize that “getting saved” is just the beginning. God is not asking them to seek the highest paying job. He is asking them to do whatever is the most urgent contribution to the Kingdom.

Preachers may be happy for their lay people to earn lots of money and be generous in giving their time and money to the church. Do preachers ever tell their lay people that they ought to seek another job because the work they are doing is not an important contribution to the coming of God’s Kingdom on earth? The very famous book *Purpose Driven Life* makes not the slightest reference to the holiness of the 40-hour week.

For example, do we ordinarily discuss in church the work which Samsung does? Is the work that corporate giant does something which God approves? Can the many different tasks Samsung performs be for all its workers “a holy calling”?

Surely cell phones and TV sets are a helpful contribution to conquering evil on a global level. But huge TV screens in private homes may burn up the Lord’s money in



ways that subtract from more important uses of money. Many computer games are as harmful as addictive drugs and are destroying future generations of missionaries and mission leaders.

The theology of the Puritans evaluated every human endeavor to make sure it constituted “a warrantable calling.” For them, for all believers, our work must be our ministry and our ministry must be our work. It is not just a way of earning money to live. It is our main contribution. We live to work. We do not work to live. And the needs of the Kingdom must define the choices we can make in our work. I don’t see either pastors or missionaries emphasizing this truth.

The Bible tells us that “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).” Jesus also said, “In the way my Father has sent me, in that same way I send you (John 20:21).” This is the Biblical definition of our mission. Most believers have not yet discovered that they are all called of God to fight the works of darkness and thus to glorify God. “Let your light shine in this way: your good works will glorify your Father in heaven (Matt 5:16).”

I am not talking about individual good works. I am not referring merely to people of morality and integrity, as important as those things are. I am talking about teams of people working together, mission societies, mission agencies accepting responsibility for engaging major evils in the Name of Christ.

The tragedy is that, if fighting evil is a divine mandate, this mandate today is actually being carried out by many thousands of earnest and intelligent non-Christian people in the world, not by members of the church. This ought not to be.

## Darwin's Nemesis (Book Notes)

(2006) (*IJFM* 23:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/23\\_4\\_PDFs/Book%20Notes.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/23_4_PDFs/Book%20Notes.pdf)

***Darwin's Nemesis*, edited by William A. Dembski. (357 pp., ISBN 0-8308-2836-2, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006)—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter**

This book is a rather careful historical review of the entire “Intelligent Design” movement from its beginning. It contains a number of chapters written by different people, pointing out in great detail different aspects of that movement. In a sense it is a festschrift, that is, a book written to honor Phillip Johnson, who apparently was the main early proponent of what is now called Intelligent Design. A great deal is mentioned about his involvement. One of the most fascinating chapters is a chapter early in the book written by Michael J. Behe, a microbiologist at Lehigh University. Behe's book, *Darwin's Black Box*, is probably one of the most significant contributions to the Intelligent Design movement. Behe is a Catholic who, apparently, is totally convinced that Darwinian Evolution is simply not a possibility.

His chapter, entitled “From Muttering to Mayhem: How Phillip Johnson Got Me Moving,” is an amazing and fascinating story of how he himself grew up without the slightest question about evolution. Then he read the book *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Michael Denton, an Australian, and it drove him completely out of his rut. He began talking to his graduate students and other faculty members and they just listened politely, turned away and went about their business. Gradually he realized he was mainly muttering to himself, hence the name of the chapter.

Behe's conversion is a dramatic and significant thing, especially as he describes how, again and again in his “pre-conversion” days, that he and other lab workers were musing about many things, but it never entered their minds that there was any basic flaw in the evolutionary hypothesis.

This, of course, is directly counter-revolutionary. It is upstream and what he calls, mayhem, because it brought down the house on his head and he's probably one of the more criticized scientists in America today simply because of his particular change of perspective. This book, as much as any other, shows the power of culture over plain, rational thinking. Not only is it something we must take into account, but it is a major factor in all kinds of venues in which people's minds are closed due to “settled convictions.”

I was going to confine myself to Behe's chapter, but I must also comment on Chapter Nine, “Darwinism and the Problem of Evil,” by Michael Ruse. Ruse thinks of himself “as an agnostic or sceptic” (p. 148). He says,

My aim is not to defend Christianity, but to defend the integrity of the Darwinian who wants to be a Christian.

It is curious that someone who is not a Christian and who believes in evolution would be in a book honoring Phillip Johnson, whose final years have been totally devoted to debunking Darwinianism (which denies God) and promoting Intelligent Design (which undergirds theism). Note: Darwinism provides a wacky theory whose sole virtue is that it

absolves God of violence and suffering in nature (no Satan in this picture); it opposes the concept of an ogre God. Darwinianism, on the other hand, opposes the concept of any god at all.

However, the quote above is probably the reason for inclusion. Good. However, my comments on this chapter have more to do with the matter of evil. Ruse quotes the familiar passage in which Darwin says:

I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created [a certain wasp] with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play [toy] with [dying] mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed.

That is, if he did not want to believe that God designed wholly and harm-fully cruel life forms, he felt forced to conclude that God did not design the wholly helpful eye. If there is no Satan in the picture his reasoning is good

## Overview of the Mysteries

(2006) (Foundations Reader, 37-40)

### What Is a Mystery?

We have referred to “Seven Mysteries” in our materials, and it’s important for us to understand what a “mystery” is. The Bible actually speaks of the Great Commission as a mystery—something that was not understood properly or correctly. *But it was not supposed to have been a mystery.* The Jewish people, as with Gentile nations since, did not readily get the point that they were blessed by a God of love whose love sought—through them—to bless all the rest of the nations of the world. Paul did not even begin to understand this until his Damascus Road experience. For much of his life and for most of his hearers this commission was a “mystery.”

There are some mysteries, however, which we may never fully understand. Thus, for people of faith it is important to recognize that God does know more than we know, and that some things that He knows will always be, in this life, mysteries to us.

### The Mysteries Explained

Now just so you get these seven mysteries clear, the **first mystery** is simply the appearance of matter itself. The universe—where did it come from and where did matter itself come from? The latest theories are really quite spectacular. I know from my experience and my readings that some scientists, especially those who may not be eager to be accountable to a living God, have somewhat resisted the idea that there is any such a Person as a Creator. And it is true that in current scientific circles a professional does not have free reign to easily talk about God.

On the other hand, perhaps there are things that people might have found difficult to believe about the existence of God or of His creative intent. However, I am convinced that the most implausible proposition that has ever been made, that is the assertion which is unjustified and difficult to embrace, is the proposition made by some that there is no God. Or, as is current in scientific circles, take into consideration the bizarre idea that the whole universe simply exploded out of a tiny little particle. This particle was so tiny you couldn’t see it and yet all the vast billions of stars in our one galaxy, and the billions of galaxies within sight, all came out of this pinhead of matter. Surely, if you can believe that, then you can believe anything! And that is actually where scientific leaders really are today. They are realizing that it might be easier to believe that things are more complicated than they thought.

In an article published in *Time* magazine, entitled, “Science, God, and Man,” Robert Wright wrote,

One intriguing observation that has bubbled up from physics is that the universe seems calibrated for life’s existence. If the force of gravity were pushed upward a bit, stars would burn out faster, leaving little time for life to evolve in the planets circling them. If the relative masses of protons and neutrons were changed by a hair, stars might never be born, since the hydrogen they eat wouldn’t exist. If at

the ‘Big Bang,’ some basic numbers—the ‘initial conditions’—had been jiggled, matter and energy would never have coagulated into galaxies, stars, planets, *or any other platform stable enough for life as we know it.* (1992:40; italics added).

But who did the “calibration?”

There was a time when the emergence of life wasn’t thought too amazing. With Darwin having explained how specks of life became us, the question of where the specks came from seemed minor, such a small step compared with the ensuing big ones. Presumably, if you let simple molecules reshuffle themselves randomly for long enough, some complex ones would get formed, and further reshuffling would make them more complex, until you had something like DNA—a stable molecule that just happened to make copies of itself.

But more recently, more careful analysis suggests that even a mildly impressive living molecule is quite unlikely to form randomly (1992:40).

So the plot thickens.

And our final quote from Wright:

Deism is, in many ways well suited (as religions go) to an era as scientific as this one. But 20th century science sketches *a universe stranger than the one the deists imagined.* It is a universe that seems not to run as predictably as a clock, a universe *whose inmost workings may not be fathomable. The deeper our insight, the more baffling things become* (1992:43; italics added).

Remember that Deism is the idea that God created the universe and then walked off while we all watched it perk along by itself.

Now the quote we just encountered presents a rather awesome thought. Others have put it differently, that the diameter of our knowledge increases, and perforce, the circumference of our ignorance increases more than three times as fast as the diameter. So the more we know, the less we know. And this isn’t exactly what many scientists would like to believe.

One of the most sensible things that I have ever heard stated was first uttered by a well-known Muslim from Cairo.

“God, the Creator of the universe, can never be against our learning the laws of what He has created.”

How true this statement is. With this in mind, let’s explore the mysteries of this universe. We should take a look at the different mysteries here. First of all, there is the mystery of the origin of matter itself. And that so-called “small step” now is recognized to be a very, very massive and totally unfathomable step. The only explanation that modern science has presented is really a non-explanation: matter came out of nothing. It came out of a tiny little particle, which is essentially nothing. Now that’s as close to a non-explanation as anyone could propose.

However, the entire universe came into being, its mere existence would not necessarily imply the further incredibly complex event—**the appearance of life itself.** Now whether you’re talking about a plant, or an insect, or an animal—or a dinosaur—they all are born out of a DNA molecule. As you are probably aware, this DNA which is

within us all is an incredibly small object; and yet it is incredibly complex. One such molecule—found in every human cell and every cell of any kind of life—has two billion atoms in it. It is an organization together of incredible intricacy shaped in the framework of what is called a double helix. And there are billions of these DNA molecules in any given form of life. Is this not so complex as to boggle your imagination? Its origin is a real mystery.

John Templeton and Robert Herrmann, both noted scientists, have written works that describe the incredible complexity and mystery of the composition of organic matter. Take for instance the brain. It seems that even within a single human brain, more neural connections can be found than the number of stars that can be found in the entire universe. So, with the phenomenon of life, the tiny things are just as complicated as the big things. Thus the appearance of life is the **second** of the great and unfathomable mysteries.

Another mystery, which we'll just mention in passing, is the appearance of a special kind of life: thinking, feeling, sensible and reflecting life; namely, **the human species**. This also seems, like the other things that are so baffling, to have been very sudden in its appearance. The so-called discontinuities of earth's geologic record are as perplexing as the parts that are explainable. Suddenly, things happen! The evolutionary suppositions of gradual progress fall to the ground in the face of the evidence, and this is more and more troubling to all kinds of scientists, both people who are Christians and those who are not.

Now, let's move on to another form of complexity. Not the complexity that a human being represents, but the complexity of associations of human beings. Once again, in a sort of discontinuous, sudden appearance, all over the planet you have high civilizations. These were very complicated civilizations: civilizations that, in some instances, possessed scientific insights that rival those of today. For instance, some civilizations created calendars that are superior to our own. The amazing and perplexing and, really, infuriating thing is that these civilizations are everywhere noticed in their decline. They are always in a declining state. There does not seem to be any record of build-up.

Take Egypt for example. The most advanced architectural achievements of Egypt were made in the earliest appearances of Egyptian civilization—the pyramids, the Sphinx, and so forth. Nothing that followed involved anything equivalent to the complexity of accomplishments we see in the earlier period.

Or just take a single monument in England, the Stonehenge monument. Scientists are still very puzzled about this monument. Indications are that the earliest form of that astronomical observatory, if you wish to call it that, was more sophisticated than the later one when great huge stones were added to fix it up and to see if it could be made to work better. That would be like the designer of an automobile, who knew exactly how it worked, turning it over to some young person who took it apart and put it back together. The problem then would be that it did not work quite right so he tried to patch things up. But after that it never quite worked the way it was intended.

So here we have evidence of an earlier, more sophisticated peoples and later peoples who had forgotten what the earlier peoples had once known. Yet these people lived in the very same place, viewed the same monument, and yet could not understand how it worked. Thus, **civilization itself is a mystery**. Now that is mystery number four.

The Bible itself refers to a profound mystery. The Bible introduces the concept of evil, of things that have gone wrong because of some intentional opposition to the purposes of God. And this is where the Bible comes into the picture. All of a sudden, we know more about a man called Abraham than we know about any other man who ever lived that long ago. A sudden spotlight of detail!

In this abrupt, Biblical picture, we see a plan set in motion to correct the evil, to confront that evil, to push back the Prince of darkness and disorder on this planet. The fall of humanity is the entrance of that evil into the earthly situation. The fall of humanity, and then the confusion, the hopeless result, is the introduction to the Bible, Genesis 1–11. Then in Genesis 12, right at the beginning of the Bible (in fact, I like to think that Genesis 12 is the beginning), you have the introduction to the whole Bible and not just to the so-called “Book” of Genesis. Anyway, right there in Genesis 12, you have this plan presented, which is later in the Bible referred to as the Great Commission. While the Bible itself does not refer to it as the Great Commission, today we talk about it as the Great Commission. This commission that appears in Genesis 12 then reappears, as Jesus restates it with ultimate authority in the Gospels. However, this plan itself was obscured by the very forces which it was designed to counteract.

Remember the verse, “the gates of hell cannot defend themselves against the work of God,” the kingdom of God, the Church (Matthew 16:18). Yes, gates of hell will not be able to defend themselves against that outreaching, extending kingdom and power of God. Trying to understand this is itself battling with a mystery. This is the one mystery of the five which we can at least partially grasp. Maybe God did not intend for us to understand the other four so completely at this stage in our existence. But this fifth mystery is the mystery of the Bible itself. Most people do not understand the thrilling, single story of God’s re-conquering of what some have called “the dark planet”—a planet out of fellowship with God. The unfolding of this mystery begins to bring meaning into all else.

As you look back on these mysteries, one realization for today is that more than at any time in human history, more than at any time in my lifetime or in your lifetime, the scientific community could be referred to as the era of the dumbfounded scientist. We know so much that we did not know before, and as a result know so little. In fact, there is so much we do not know that scientists, if they are honest at all, are truly and profoundly dumbfounded.

Now, for a Christian, there is no problem in being dumbfounded at God’s greatness. That should not surprise us. We ought to welcome the realization that God is bigger than we are, and that many things that He knows, we do not know. It should be exciting and wonderful to us, even though we probably will not ever know in this life the answers to all these mysteries. For whether we or scientists look through telescopes or microscopes, look back in history or try to understand what is going on today, the reality faced is the baffling confusion of constantly increasing complexity.

One of the unique features of our generation is that there are more people on the earth. More studying is being done. For example, in recent years there has been an explosion of energy released in the area of the study of our planet, of our universe, of our past. In all fields, you see a profusion of new information boiling forth that both rewards and gratifies, and also mystifies profoundly.

For example, there are 20,000 sites today where dinosaurs have been dug up. In almost all cases, some new form of dinosaur life has been discovered. Other illustrations involve the cosmological wonders, where we are informed of new ideas that we now understand less—because of new things we have learned. This is a most amazing period. More scientists live today than have ever lived in all of human history, simply because of the exploding global population and relative peace which makes that possible. What the future could hold begs the imagination. Many processes of human life and association are racing so rapidly toward threatening conclusions that it is not even clear that anybody will be around in the future.

So we are in for great excitement, both in our studies together and in the world in which we live. As a result, we need to have our hearts open for whatever God wants to reward us and tell us.



## The Unfinished Epic

(2006) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 317-26)

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### Preface

I was a missionary to a people who thought a rainbow was an animal to be feared. I was able to spray water in the air on a dark night and shine a flashlight producing a rainbow. I told them that every time in the misty highlands of Guatemala they saw a rainbow they could know that the sun like a giant flashlight was right behind them. They might also have never conceived of the Earth being a planet hanging in space. I somehow never asked them. *It did not really matter.* My main purpose was to introduce them to the person of Christ and to the tasks of an obedient believer.

Today we face a very large number of scientists who believe that the universe is billions of years old. Is that true? Does it matter? *In this case, yes—because if the Bible is said to contradict what they feel they know for sure, it can destroy their confidence in the Bible.* Thus, we do well to ask, “Is it really true that the Bible teaches that the universe is only 6,000 years old?” The idea that the Bible does teach that was actually stated in *Time Magazine*.

*However, it so happens that the two most influential Bible expositors of the 20th Century both taught that the Bible teaches no such thing.*

Nevertheless, not all Evangelicals today can easily imagine how a widely accepted interpretation of Genesis 1:1 by a Dallas Theological Seminary professor (Dr. Merrill Unger) could possibly lead to a momentous reinterpretation of our conventional concepts of Christian mission. In any case, this paper actually has three different purposes.

1. This paper attempts to defend the trustworthiness of the Bible in the eyes of the average well-educated secular person by showing how the Bible does not necessarily conflict with the idea that the universe started with a bang and is immensely old, and that the Earth itself is very old and displays a steady progression of increasingly complex life forms. Even if that all were true, what would it do to the Bible? While this paper tries to describe accurately what most paleontologists believe for the sake of discussion, its conclusions do not depend on the validity of the views of contemporary paleontologists. And, for the record, it does not give an inch to either the idea of Darwinian random evolution or to an untrustworthy Bible.

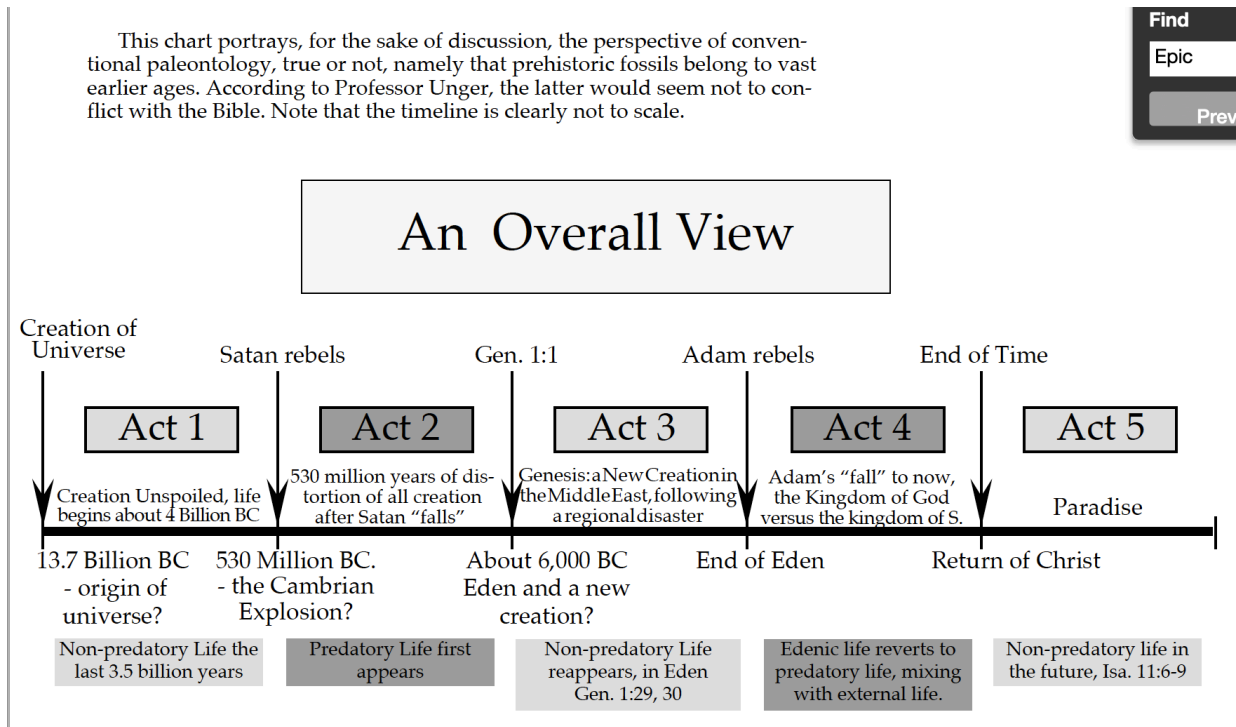
2. Secondly, it is a serious attempt to take the Bible literally and yet be able to believe in both “the young Earth” and “the old Earth” points of view. I feel sad when I hear that a famous Bible College *graduate* faculty believes in “the old Earth” while the *undergraduate* faculty believes in “the young Earth”—thinking they are contradictory. If they aren’t, let’s take this seriously.

3. Much more important, in a way, is the proposal that our current concepts of Christian mission work are good but incomplete, and, in fact, are much too narrow if we are really setting out to glorify God who is constantly blamed for evil. The novel element here is the idea that the full implications of the New Testament’s concept of Satan have

been largely lost in Western Christianity to the extent that we have been influenced by Augustine’s neo-platonic view of a God who, often with mysterious reasons, initiates both good and evil—with Satan only a “bystander.”

A larger interpretation of mission goes like this: we have been recruiting people all over the world into God’s eternal family, which is an activity as basic and as significant as you can get. But while our new “recruits” are now all dressed up in their new-life-in-Christ uniforms they do not realize these are military uniforms. Evangelicals may seem more often hoping to flee evil rather than fight it. Personal righteousness, both “attributed” and actual, would seem to be very thin if it does not turn around and fight evil.

Worse still—far worse—is the fact that if we just let the world fight disease, corruption and violence, God is generally blamed for “allowing” such evils. We are forced to puzzle over evil if we think God is “behind” all evil—instead of “in front”—working good out of evil. Such a theology requires books that help us to understand *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*.<sup>1</sup> However, suffering and violence *in a war* against an intelligent enemy *does make sense* and doesn’t need to be explained, and for the very same reason neither is an explanation necessary for the verse, “All that will live godly ... will suffer persecution.” We are in a war!



### Summary

Opening the AD 1611 King James Bible we read "In the beginning God created ...." During the following 400 years this interpretation was cemented in the minds of millions of people. It conveys the idea that the Bible begins by describing the beginning of the entire universe, not merely the new beginning of the human story.

However, not even in 1611 was the universe well understood. It was likely far less clear to the "holy men of God"<sup>2</sup> writing in the days of Genesis.

In fact, the "known world" of Moses would not have even included the idea of a planet, of a sphere hanging in space. Similarly, "The ends of the Earth" in Isa. 49:6 never referred to our planet but to the ends of the Earthen plain ending abruptly where the "fertile crescent" of the Middle East is bounded by the mountains rising in Turkey and Iran.

In other words, the common interpretation of Genesis today -- that the universe began 6,000 years ago -- may simply be the result of reading later understanding into an earlier text. Such errors are called *anachronisms*. The error is understandable. However, the very serious result is to force the Bible (unfairly?) to say that the world is only 6,000 years old, *and thereby to create the greatest single stumbling block to modern man's trust in the Bible.*

Curiously, as long ago as 1958 the chair of the Old Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Merrill Unger, taught that "the geologic ages" preceded Genesis 1:1 and that the events of Genesis 1 portray not THE beginning but "a *relative* beginning (*Unger's Bible Handbook*)."<sup>3</sup> His was not a new idea even then, but today it has become uncommon.

Our problem is that most of the world today assumes that both our

planet and the universe are much older than 6,000 years. The grim result, then, is that to everyone who believes that, the Bible appears dead wrong, when in fact the Bible may be giving us a very accurate description of things using terms that were understood in that day.

Thus, Unger's insight is what undergirds the tentative perspective of this paper, namely, that "the geologic ages" took place long before Genesis 1:1 I would add that perhaps Satan is the one who began distorting all of nature from the Cambrian Period on, continuing that type of genetic distortion after Adam's fall. Although he was decisively routed at the turning point of the Cross, he stalks the land to this day, *his works casting blame on "the God of Creation."*

**This then sets the stage for a radically expanded concept of Christian mission.**

This presentation is both hypothetical and conjectural. It lays out accurately I believe, the predominant secular interpretation of the history of the universe and more specifically the history of the Earth and life on Earth. In so doing, whenever the phrase "many scientists believe" is employed, I am not affirming my beliefs but describing theirs. It does not give any credence to random, unguided Darwinian evolution at all. But it does note that there is no necessary conflict with Genesis caused by the secular concept and time spans, if, that is, Genesis 1:1 does not describe the origin of the universe but rather a new creation of the era of "image of God" humans, as Professor Unger suggests.

The story is cast in narrative form for efficiency and digestible order. Credit is due to John Eldredge for the concept of "acts" in a story. He has four acts in his superb little book, *The Epic*.<sup>4</sup> I have split his third act into Act III, the Edenic period and Act IV, the period after the Fall of Adam. Thus, I have five "acts."

These pages are a condensation, in part, of the three Annual Mission Lectures I was invited to give in 2005 at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

### Act I: The Creation of The Universe

Thirteen and a half, or so, billion years ago, many scientists believe, a "Big Bang" occurred, *producing* the entire universe. (They don't like the word *creating*.)

- For various reasons mentioned below, such a creation event does not seem to be what Genesis 1:1 is describing.

Four and a half billion years ago, many scientists believe, planet Earth was formed. About four billion years ago, many scientists believe, very small forms of life appeared on Earth. For the next 3.5 billion years life forms were still very small.

- This astounding slowness of the formation of progressively more complex forms of life may in this case imply that God has for millions of years been doing that work through intelligent, but finite, intermediate beings who have been at work in an incredibly complex, and thus lengthy, learning curve. Perhaps some of them have been small enough to work directly with DNA.

It took a century with thousands of intelligent engineers at work to “evolve” the Model T Ford into a Lincoln Continental. That kind of “evolution” certainly did not happen without intelligent guidance at every point.

Prokaryotes were followed by Eukaryotes about two billion years ago, many scientists believe.<sup>5</sup> It would appear that none of the angels were in rebellion at this time.

Then, about 530 million years ago, the Ediacaron period displayed small animals with “radial symmetry” similar to starfish, as well as “bi-polar symmetry”—with a front and a back and four legs.

- Significantly this Ediacaron type of animal life revealed no predatory life nor even defenses against predation!<sup>6</sup> Still only good angels apparently.

## **Act II: The Fall of Satan**

Next, relatively suddenly, the “Cambrian Explosion” took place, perhaps the most puzzling event in Earth history. A wide variety of different types of animals now appeared abruptly, and, for the next 500 million years, all of them can be characterized *as horrifyingly cruel predators or prey or both*.

Note that this lengthy record of violent animal life does not seem to fit well into the first chapter of Genesis, even if the “days” spoken of there might be considered very long, since the animals described in Genesis 1 are explicitly declared (v. 29) to be *non-carnivorous*.

- Here is a thought: this new and radically different 500-million-year period might have begun when an intermediate being, an archangel, in turning against his Creator, in the “Fall of Satan,” carried perhaps millions of equally rebellious angels with him, becoming what C. S. Lewis called “a hideous strength” or what Paul called the “god of this world.”

- If the long story of the earlier, progressive, creation of non-predatory life had reflected God’s infinite wisdom and goodness, now the pervasive *distortion* of that life, if not that of a Satanic foe, would seem clearly to *reflect negatively on God’s character*. This negative reputation may be seen today in the very common attribution of tragedies not to Satan, but to “God’s mysterious will.” This absence of Satan in people’s minds is what allows a book by the title of *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*,<sup>7</sup> or a Harvard professor logically to remark that, “If the God of the Intelligent Design proponents exists, He must be a divine ‘sadist’ who creates parasites that blind millions of people.”<sup>8</sup> How can we reply to such thinking if we do not recognize (point out and fight) “the works of the devil” (1 John 3 : 8)?

Also, during the next 500 million years, many scientists believe, numerous asteroidal collisions blotted out life in various parts of the globe, as if in judgment—my thinking—of the prevailing violence and destructive nature of gruesomely distorted life forms.

- Forty-five of the resulting craters that have been found are 15 miles across or larger. The largest, in the Antarctic, is 300 miles in diameter. It is believed to have occurred 275 million years ago, and is estimated to have extinguished 97 percent of all life on Earth. Another large crater, at the north end of Mexico’s Yucatan

peninsula, is believed to have occurred 65 million years ago, and is 100 miles across. It is the one understood to have ended the one-hundred-million-year period of the characteristically violent dinosaurs. Many of these forty-five larger asteroids are understood to have been solid rock, miles in diameter, moving at the speed of a rifle bullet at the moment of impact.<sup>9</sup>

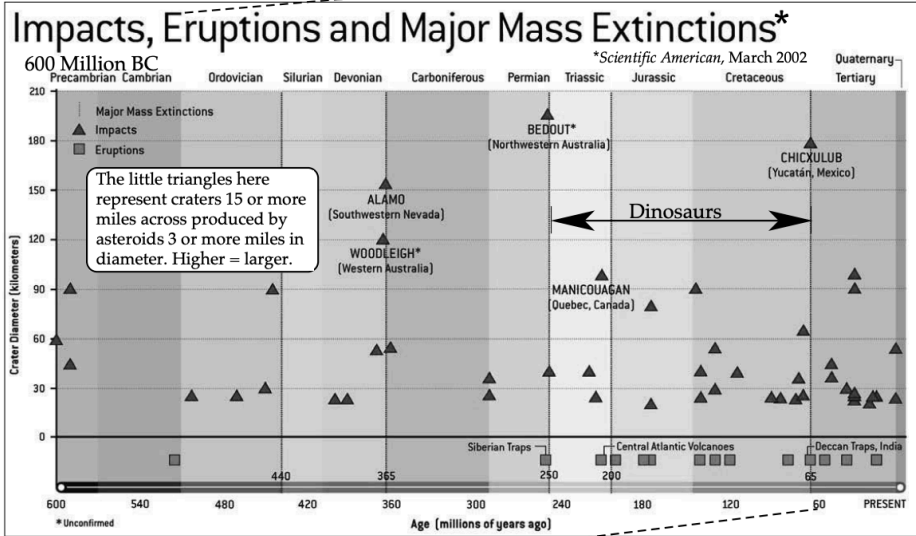
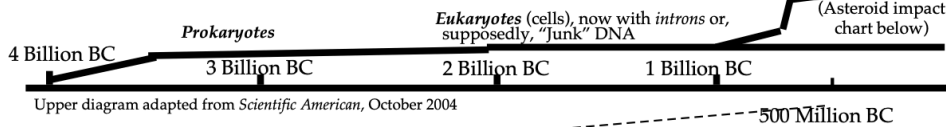
Following the extinction of the dinosaurs, many scientists believe, mammals came into their own, growing in size to tons of weight, existing virtually unchallenged until intelligent humans appeared and began to drive them into extinction.

Finally, evidence of distinctive and unprecedented intelligence appeared, reasonably (in my opinion) the first true humans (but still Satanically distorted, carnivorous, violent, cannibals, not the Genesis 1 type). The evidence in this case is not *fossil bones* but indications of highly intelligent *genetic breeding of both plants and animals*, that is, 1) the selective breeding of virtually inedible plants, deriving corn, wheat, rice, and potatoes, etc., and 2) the selective breeding of animal life, for example, dangerous wolves into friendly dogs. Both types of genetic engineering, many paleohistorians and paleontologists believe, took place 11,000 years ago<sup>10</sup> (about five thousand years before the Genesis new beginning).

# Cambrian Explosion

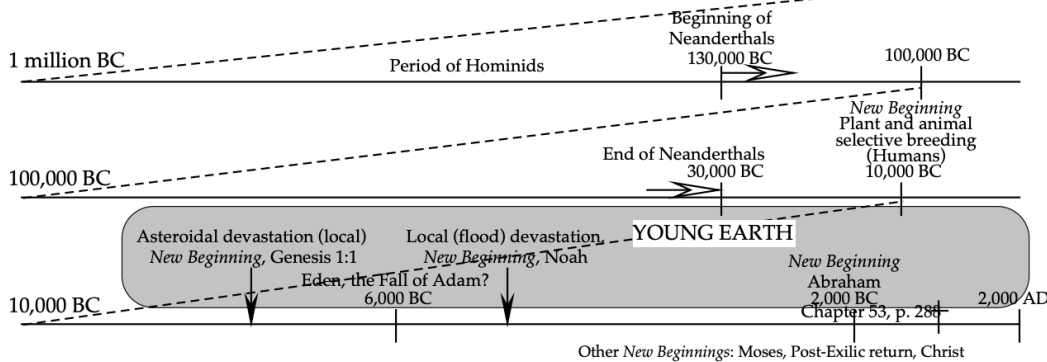
## The Enigma of Life

New Period of  
**Predatory Life**  
Fall of Satan?



New Beginning: Dinosaurs killed off by Yucatan, Mexico asteroid (100 mile wide crater)

5 Million BC      Now, large mammals      1 million BC



The chart on page four portrays the same conventional wisdom as the one on the second page. That this is conjecture is no doubt. But this is the widely held view not my conjecture. You will note that the diagram at the top of the chart shows only the 4 billion year era of *life* on Earth, not even the age of our 4.5 billion-year-old planet much less the age of the 13.7 billion-year-old universe - which is portrayed in the chart on the second

page. The middle section, the colored diagram, covers only the last 600 million years. The four lines in the bottom portion refer, respectively, to the last 65 million years, 1 million years, 100,000 years and finally 12,000 years. The last period includes what may be covered by the Genesis narrative. The basic idea is that, as Dr. Unger suggests, the geologic ages came *before* the events of Genesis 1.

However, despite this early evidence of sudden, unprecedented intelligence, all fossils of human life that far back clearly reflect cannibalism and violence, in other words, durable evidence of intentional, *evil distortion*.<sup>11</sup>

The cover story of *Newsweek*, March 19, 2007 reported some paleoneurologists believe that truly human beings require three genes first appearing as recently as 50,000, 37,000 and 5,800 years ago.

### **Act III: Genesis: A New Beginning and the Fall of Man**

About 6,000 years ago, at the very beginning of the Jewish/Christian Bible, we find what may be a series of events which could possibly be the aftermath of a fairly small asteroidal collision in the Middle East.

The idea of an asteroid wiping out all life in a local region of the Earth is conjectural but not unrealistic. However, the idea of Genesis describing a new beginning following a major catastrophe has been fairly widely thought of by people such as, arguably, the two most influential Bible scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: C. I. Scofield, editor of the most widely used reference Bible of all time, the *Scofield Reference Bible*, and Merrill Unger, as mentioned earlier, a Dallas Theological Seminary professor and editor of the 500,000-inprint *Unger's Bible Handbook*, published by Moody Press.

John Eldredge (*Wild at Heart*, and *The Epic*) speaks of events “prior to Genesis” on page 19. On page 18 he says, speaking of Genesis 1:1,

An important passage it is, to be sure. But to grasp this Epic, you cannot start there. That is way into the story. That is Act Three. It is a beginning, but it is the beginning of the human story, the story of life here on Earth. As Hebrew scholar Robert Alter says, a better rendering of the Hebrew goes “When God began to create heaven and Earth.” When God began to create the life we know. And before this? There are events that have preceded this chapter, events we must know.

If you want to look back into the once upon a time before all time, well, then you have to start with another passage, from the Gospel of John (1:1). (Underlining mine.)

Genesis 1:2 is the rest of the sentence, describing what God had to contend with in this particular new beginning. The English translation “formless and void” is today widely understood not to be a good translation of the Hebrew idiom, *tohu wabohu*, which more often in the Bible means “destroyed and desolate.”<sup>12</sup>

The result might then actually be “When God began to put things back together, to reclaim the heavens and the Earth, the (regional) situation appears to have been destroyed and desolate.”

The subsequent verses describe the initial total darkness surrounding the entire planet, but, then, with light peeking through as the dust settled.

- Note well that it is typical of even the smaller of these major asteroidal impacts to kick enough dust into the atmosphere to block out all light for a time around the entire planet. Gradually, however, as the dust settles, dim light becomes noticeable once a day. Eventually the direct rays of the Sun penetrate the remaining dust and the Sun becomes visible. Later, the Moon. Later, the stars.<sup>13</sup>

These verses thus seem to be a “restoration sequence” rather than a “creation sequence.” If they are viewed as a *creation* series of events many scholars have wondered how the dim light each morning would have been created before the Sun appeared. The word *creation* is not even used. The text simply says “Let there be light.”

- Obviously those humans wiped out in this regional impact would not have been able to report this sequence. On the other hand, surviving humans scattered elsewhere around the globe would certainly have been actual eye witnesses of the darkness and the gradual reappearance of light, the Sun, etc.. Egyptian scholars then could have retained a record of such observations so as to be the source of information Moses employed in Genesis.
- Many Bible expositors are either unaware of, or do not go along with, the fairly recent search for impact craters on the Earth’s surface. This search began in earnest only in 1970 after the first Moon landing unexpectedly revealed that the hundreds of pockmarks on the Moon were not, as had been assumed, volcanic craters but were *impact* craters.<sup>14</sup>
- Beginning in 1812, hundreds of thousands of fossil bones of violent animals have been dug up which belong to thousands of now-extinct forms of life. Since these animals cannot be the ones described in Genesis 1, where both animals and humans are clearly described as non-carnivorous,<sup>15</sup> they must have either come before Genesis or we must assume they were distorted into their violent and carnivorous nature after the Fall of man. The latter possibility would force enormous complexity into the last 6,000 years, including thousands of extinctions—bones have been discovered for a thousand times as many animal species as survive today.<sup>16</sup>

It would seem to be easier to believe, following Unger, that all of that violent life *preceded* Genesis, and that, then, Genesis is describing a new creation of non-distorted life in the “known world” of the writers. In fact, it may be unfair to the Bible to make it speak of a planet since at that time people did not know of such a thing. Indeed, most of the Old Testament is written by (KJV) “holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>17</sup> A key word here is “men.” Unlike the *Qur’an* and the *Book of Mormon* (which are said to have been *dictated* by God) the Bible normally contains what these holy writers, guided by God, understood and their hearers understood. Reading later knowledge into earlier documents is a common mistake called *anachronism*.

- Similarly, the later judgment of the flood would reasonably be in “the known world.” The table of nations in Genesis 11, the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are nations which Bible maps locate in the Middle East. There are no Incas or Eskimos in the picture. This would certainly be fair to the Bible. Some of the faculty at Wheaton College have believed and taught a regional flood for fifty years.
- Thus, Genesis may be an account of regional events, and, if so, the Edenic events would thus not be the first or only “new beginning.” The flood is another “new beginning.” The selection of Abraham is another “new beginning.” Isaac instead of Ishmael is another “new beginning.” The selection of Jacob/Israel instead of Esau is another “new beginning.” The Exodus is another “new



beginning.” The return from Babylon is another “new beginning.” The coming of Christ and the breakthrough to the Gentiles in the NT is another “new beginning.” So the Reformation, etc.

In any case, the vast majority of all scientists today, if we continue to tell them that the Bible teaches that all forms of life are no more than 6,000 years old, will continue to feel forced to believe that the Bible cannot be trusted.

Is this what happened with Luther and Calvin? They interpreted Psalm 19 to mean that the Sun revolved around the Earth, in contrast to Copernicus’ view that the Earth revolved around the Sun. Unfortunately, subsequent *critics did not say Luther and Calvin misinterpreted the Bible. They said the Bible must be wrong.* However, science in that case did not contradict the Bible. Science contradicted a misinterpretation of the Bible!

- Thus, it is not to criticize the Bible, but to defend it, if we recognize that the phrase “to the ends of the Earth” in Isa. 49:6 only refers to the flat plain of Earth leading up to the mountains of Eastern Iran and Turkey. Only fairly recently in European languages has the word Earth (soil) meant the Earth (a planet), and it still is not usually used that way.

Genesis 1 may then present the same non-carnivorous type of life, animal and human, which we see again at the end of time in Isaiah 6 and 11 (the lion lying down with a lamb). Once Adam and Eve are seduced by Satan and turned out of Eden, the “sons of God” (the new type of humans created in Eden in the image of God?) marry the “daughters of men” (previously distorted and depraved humans beginning 11,000 years ago?). In that case we can understand why the life spans of the Edenic humans gradually shorten. Further, it would seem reasonable that the Edenic type of non-carnivorous human and animal life, by interbreeding with the distorted, carnivorous life outside of Eden, would gradually revert to the life-destroying carnivorous behavior of the pre-Edenic, pre-Genesis 1:1, distorted life. Eventually the non-carnivorous Edenic version of human and animal life would have virtually disappeared into the genetically distorted earlier gene pools. This may be one way of understanding original sin as something we cannot wish away easily, it being inherited genetically—something illuminating Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” This also would enable us to understand why being “born again” does not change all our inborn wayward traits even though it allies us with our Father in Heaven against hardwired genetic evil within which we still must fight—the sort of conflict we read about in Romans 7.

#### **Act IV: Wartime**

Far more important is the fact that this scenario describes a great length of time Satan has been at work distorting God’s creation, producing the incredible vastness of his corrupting work *of which we are mostly unaware.* As one theologian put it, “The greatest achievement of Satan is to cover his tracks.” The crucial facts would thus be that 1) we underestimate what Satan has done and is doing, and 2) we do not consider it our mission to fight it, and for that reason 3) *we very often attribute the works of Satan to God.* Remember the Harvard professor mentioned earlier who quite logically remarked that “If the God of the Intelligent Design proponents exists He must be a divine ‘sadist’ who creates parasites that blind millions of people.” I cannot forget that damaging statement,

even though it is alarmingly misinformed. Unfortunately, in secular circles, the Intelligent Design people can't admit that some of what they see in nature is *evil* design, *not to be blamed on a supreme being*.

Few people refer to Satan these days, perhaps due to the mountain of strange guesses about his role. C. S. Lewis, in *Mere Christianity* did not have any trouble with the concept.

One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked about a Dark Power in the universe—a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death and disease, and sin. The difference is that Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees with Dualism [to this extent] that this universe is at war ... Enemy-occupied territory—that is what the world is.<sup>19</sup>

If Satan exists and opposes God in every way possible we might then expect two things to happen, 1) physical *distortions* and 2) intellectual *delusions*.

### **Diabolical Distortions**

Obviously, if the time of the Cambrian Explosion were to mark the point when Satan turned against God, it would mean that Satan began distorting the larger forms of life genetically a very long period of time before the events in Genesis even began. It also seems logical that Satan would have been not only rewiring animal life to be predatory, but twisting bacteria into dangerous germs, creating destructive viruses, and inventing extremely clever and deadly parasites like malaria.

Is this what Jesus meant when He taught us to pray “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in Earth as it is in heaven”?

Augustine and Calvin were unaware of germs, yet not even do our theologians or TV preachers today speak of deadly germs being *the work of Satan, to be destroyed as an intentional mission of Christ and of those who follow Him—not wanting to blame disease on God*. But if you identify and recognize the enormous global impact of disease-induced suffering as a sphere of diabolical distortion, then both the great violence introduced by the fall of Satan and the fall of Adam become a major reality. (One parasite alone, Malaria, subtracts from Africa annually 45 million man-years of effort.<sup>20</sup> In this perspective, Satan becomes the enemy and the Christian life and mission must be seen as part of an all-out war, a war to be fought not “*in addition* to winning souls to Christ” but as a *means* of glorifying God and thus *empowering our evangelism*. ***Disassociating God from the works of the devil becomes then both the means and the end of winning souls to Christ.***

### **Diabolical Delusions**

A second dimension of Satanic evil for us to become aware of, *and to be fought as a Christian mission*, is what could be called *diabolic delusions*. Millions of people suffer horribly and die prematurely not only because of disease, but because of misunderstandings about the origins of disease. The whole history of medicine has been, in one sense, the mysteriously delayed understanding of the real causes of disease. Just three of actually hundreds of examples of this mysterious delay are the fact that the common cold, tuberculosis, and duodenal ulcers were thought for many centuries not to

be the direct result of destructive germs but rather to be the result of, respectively, 1) getting cold, 2) sleeping in damp, cold places and 3) being subject to stress.

There are many other types of diabolical delusions. Here are merely four:

- Down through history in India thousands and thousands of widows have been burned on their husbands' funeral pyres because of the *delusion* that they would thereby be reincarnated at a higher level.

- Thousands of young women have contracted AIDS in South Africa due to the widespread delusion that a man with AIDS can be cured by having intercourse with a virgin.

- We are *deluded* if we think that the world's largest business—the American medical/ pharmaceutical industry—is tracking down the primary *sources* of disease. Why are we deluded? Because all of that industry's money comes from people who are already sick and are paying to be *healed*. However, treating the sick and eradicating pathogenic sources of illnesses are usually very different activities. For the latter the available money is almost non-existent by comparison

- In Africa, due to mistaken *delusions*, 140 million women have undergone “female genital mutilation,” which often leads to ruptured bladders (at the time of childbirth) and a resulting life of being social outcasts. These are some of the destructive delusions which need to be fought in the Name of Christ.

### **Evangelical Fatalism?**

However, Evangelicals, instead of fighting to destroy the “works of the devil” have gotten accustomed to a plainly fatalistic understanding of them as “the mysterious will of God.” This is the relentless message of the book already mentioned, *When God Doesn't Make Sense* (by no less than James Dobson). In other words, if there is no Satan, much of life really “does not make sense,” and our concept of the Christian life and mission becomes diabolically reduced.

### **What To Do?**

Many may think, “What can I as an individual do? What should I do differently? Isn't it still important to win people to the Lordship of Christ even if I can't explain to them how their lives can make a difference in the identification and destruction of the works of Satan?”

Yes, winning people to Christ is still bedrock. But two other things are also true

1. More and more people can't even be won to Christ because they are deeply confused by the “good news” of a loving God who would seem to have created a world of suffering, or to have at least been unwilling or unable, in general, to rescue us from Earthly horrors of evil and pain until the next world.

2. People who are won to Christ rarely understand that they have been recruited to become soldiers in an all-out war.

Of course we know that individuals on their own can't “win a war.” To win a war you need a whole lot of teamwork. The United States during the Second World War would be an example.

Swarms of “servicemen” (including women) swirled about on planes, trains, and buses, heading off to ports of departure for the various “theaters of war” around the

world. Eleven million were sprayed out across the globe in the Army, Air Corps, and the Navy. But 200 million “civilians” staying behind *were equally occupied by the war*.

As millions of men disappeared from their jobs women back home took their places. A largely women’s workforce (“Rosie the riveter”) built entire ships one every 14 days, medium bombers one every four hours. Nylon was needed for parachute cords—no more stockings. No more coffee: incoming ships had no room for such trivialities because more crucial goods took their place. Any idle moments or carelessly disposed materials were instantly challenged by “Don’t you know there is a war on?” You could get a huge fine for unnecessary driving—driving *unrelated to the war*, like, yes, a family outing on Sunday! Gasoline had other more crucial uses.

Today, when Evangelical believers get together, in general they don’t compare notes on how to win the war against the “works of the devil.” They compare prices on home furnishings, vacations, adult toys. Truly, *they don’t know there is a war on!* We act like we don’t live in a wartime economy but in a time of peace.

### **Organize, Organize, Organize.**

Obviously, individuals usually need to organize with others to be effective. Do we need dozens of new specialized mission agencies? Yes. Note that there is *not one Christian institution in the world dedicated to eradication of disease pathogens*. Our entire, mammoth medical/pharmaceutical industry, perhaps the largest industry in the world, is focused 99% on needs of people who are already sick, rather than on methods of eradicating the disease origins. This huge industry is mainly market driven and supported. It can do no other. What must be added are “mission” organizations that are donor supported. That is, if we are going to exterminate pathogens not just prevent or cure disease.

Our pastors tend to define “Christian service” as activity in and for and through the local church, not the labors of the 40-hour week. If, as Rick Warren says, he wants to transform his “audience into an army,” and other pastors joining him by the thousands would follow him, a veritable revolution might occur—*if they joined forces*. But his *Purpose Driven Life* book contains not a single line about the 40-hour week, much less does it recognize that the 40-hour week is exactly where, in a major way, we can best actually fight evil, corruption and disease—efforts crucial to restoring glory to God and credibility to our evangelism. (In a conversation about this, he told me he is going to write another book.) This sphere is nowadays being called “Public Theology.”

However, although we hear of pastors around the world *losing their lives* because of their faith, it is not often we hear of laymen in the USA even *losing their jobs* because of, say, being honest or opposing deception.

Basically, the incredible violence we must fight against *in the Name of Christ* constitutes an all-out war. Neither laity nor clergy are well aware of that war. Thus, all true believers, not just “fulltime workers,” must be willing to organize against evil, to be creative, and to measure every vocation not by its pay scale, but by its contribution to that war.

It seems very clear that we must recruit people for this war as well as for heaven. If we can’t do both *we will ultimately fail at both*. This is why the Christian mission is far more complex and demanding than we thought.

I would hope existing mission agencies could lead the way in the discovery and the defeat of both 1) Satanic *indirectly-inspired human* evil such as war, and the corruption that guts almost every secular type of humanitarian aid, and 2) *direct Satanic* evil such as genetic distortions of man and animal, the creation of disease germs and diabolical delusions. This means seeing mission in very much larger terms. It also gives a much larger role to laymen than check-book missions or “after hours Christianity” centering on work in and for the church. It is a mission to glorify God.

### End Notes

1. James Dobson, *When God Doesn't Make Sense* (Illinois: Tyndale House, Inc., 1997).
2. 2 Peter 1:21, KJV.
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4. John Eldredge, *The Epic* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2004).
5. Luann Becker, “Repeated Blows,” (*Scientific American*, March 2002: pp. 76-83).
6. Richard Fortey, *Life: A Natural History of the First 4 Billion Years of Life on Earth*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998, p. 82, 92-93).
7. James Dobson, *When God Doesn't Make Sense* (Illinois: Tyndale House, Inc., 1997).
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10. Melinda A. Zeder and Brian Hesse. “The Initial Domestication of Goats (*Capra hircus*) in the Zagros Mountains 10,000 Years Ago,” *Science* (24 March 2000).
11. “Once Were Cannibals,” by White, Tim D.. *Scientific American*, August 2001, Vol. 285 Issue 2, p58: “Clear evidence of cannibalism in the human fossil record has been [considered] rare, but it is now becoming apparent that the practice is deeply rooted in our history.” [Abstract from author]
12. Old Testament scholars translate *tohu wabohu* with such terms as “desolation and disorder” (John Gibson, 1981 Daily Study Bible Series: *Genesis*, Vol. 1. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press); “welter and waste” (Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., p. ix), “chaos and desolation” (Bernhard Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation: OT Perspectives*. Minneapolis: Fortress, p. 11).
13. Luann Becker, “Repeated Blows,” (*Scientific American*, March 2002: pp. 76-83).
14. See #13. Also, Walter Alvarez, *T. Rex & the Crater of Doom*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
15. Genesis 1:29-30.
16. This estimate has been mentioned often in many places. It is not a personal conjecture.
17. 2 Peter 1:21, KJV.
18. Pastor Gordon Kirk, Lake Avenue Church, Pasadena, CA.
19. John Eldredge, *The Epic* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2004), p. 40.
20. *The Times* (London), March 20, 2007.

## Editorial Reflections on Evolution, Intelligent Design

(2007) (*IJFM* 24:4)

[http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/24\\_4\\_PDFs/5\\_Editorial\\_Reflections.pdf](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/24_4_PDFs/5_Editorial_Reflections.pdf)

### A Depressing Television Special

The depressing PBS program to which I am referring was advertised as follows: Documentary Explores Key Case on Intelligent Design. This two-hour PBS special entitled “Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial” featured slanted re-creations of the 2005 Dover, PA court case.

The special was masterfully done but ominously and deceptively biased. For example, it asks star witness Lehigh University molecular biologist and intelligent design advocate Michael Behe (or rather a look-alike actor representing Behe) “Are you saying astrology is a scientific theory?” Behe, in the “documentary,” simply says “Yes.” However, after consulting the actual transcript I found that he did not simply say “Yes” but *in effect* was saying, “Yes, in its day, astrology was considered a scientific theory,” which is totally different.

One obvious omission from the PBS special was the lack of reference to Behe’s ponderous, very technical new book entitled *The Edge of Evolution*, which came out months before the documentary (see p. 223).

The most surprising thing to me was the fact that the trial intended to prove two things, one of which was the existence of *religious motivation* on the part of those who promoted Intelligent Design (ID). If you eliminated religious motivation as inimical to science the whole history of science would collapse.

Another thing was the insistence that the concept of ID could be negated by a single book claiming that ID promotes the belief in “abrupt” changes in the history of life when in fact, Behe again and again denied that the speed of change has anything to do with the perception of design. Yet the video went on and on about the increased numbers of findings of long missing “missing links.” In fact, the very *absence* of “missing links” in the history of the evolution of the American automobile does not remotely prove a random process of formation but quite obviously the presence of intelligent designers. Bring on the “missing links;” the more the better for ID.

Aside from all of the rabbit trails in the presentation I have to admit that as much as I am convinced that there is obvious evidence of design in nature, if we are not careful we are merely proving that God is the author all of predatory violence, suffering and pain in both the animal and human worlds. ID people are obviously afraid of ridicule if they discern *evil* design.

## **Twelve Mistakes of the West (“To the New Asian Society of Missiology”)**

(See # 11. “The Mistake of Assuming Science Is a Foe Not a Friend”)

(2007) (Foundations Reader, 247-51)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

In 1973, a third of a century ago, David Cho, Ph.D., invited several of us from the West to a meeting in Seoul, Korea which preceded the formation of the Asia Missions Association. On that occasion I presented a paper urging Asian mission leaders not to make the same mistake as Western leaders had made when the Foreign Mission Conference of North America shortly after 1900 had insisted that in God’s Kingdom only denominational mission boards were legitimate. My paper was entitled, “The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission,” which spoke favorably of both “modalities” and “sodalities.” By now, of course, there are many American as well as Asian structures that are interdenominational.

Later, I often pointed out in my classroom teaching the shocking failure of the Western missions to understand the possibility and importance of Non-Western believers to form their own mission agencies. By now, of course, Non-Western agencies are very numerous and enthusiastic.

It would seem clear that Asian mission leaders have potentially a great advantage in being able to learn from the mistakes of Western agencies. If not, Asian mission leaders face the danger of making some of the same mistakes. One problem is that Western leaders may not know what their mistakes are, and thus cannot warn Asian leaders of what Western leaders did wrong. It is also true that not all Westerners agree about the various issues in missiology. Thus, the twelve “mistakes” of Western churches and agencies, as described below, must be understood to be merely my own best understanding. Note that they are not problems of the distant past. They are all contemporary problems. In any case, Asians will have to judge their validity.

### **1. The Mistake of Starting Bible Schools, Not Universities**

The Student Volunteer Movement, in which John Mott was a leader, is noted for the number of universities that it established around the world. The missionaries who went to China made sure there was a university in every province of China. However, in later years Evangelicals, who had never been to college, went out across the world and established Bible Schools, Bible Institutes or theological schools that either replaced or ignored the university tradition. In the last 50 years the majority of American mission agencies have not founded a single university.

The curious thing is that, even though western missionaries cannot be given credit (except in the earlier period) for establishing universities, the hundreds of thousands of national leaders who have been a product of western mission agencies have been able to see what the missionaries could not see. They have recognized the great influence of the university pattern. As a result they have taken the initiative to found over forty

universities in the last forty years. I myself was, somewhat accidentally, part of the founding of an evangelical university in Guatemala which now after forty years has 37,000 students. No missionary can be given any credit for the founding of this university. In my case I merely stood up for a photograph of the founding board of directors two weeks before leaving the country to be a professor at Fuller Seminary.

Why is it that missionaries have not realized that Bible Schools, no matter how high the quality of instruction and curricula, simply do not represent the global mainstream of the university pattern? In the last 100 years in the United States 157 Bible Institutes eventually, after sixty or seventy years, have converted over to colleges and universities. Why haven't missionaries applied the same practical wisdom in their work overseas? This has been a serious strategic mistake. We can at least be glad that national leaders have taken the initiative to found universities without the help of western missionaries.

## **2. The Mistake of Only “Salvation in Heaven,” not “Kingdom on Earth”**

Earlier missionaries again were wiser than those in recent times. They realized that (as we see in the Lord's Prayer), Jesus told us to pray for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth. Yet we have mainly helped people escape this world. Unlike the 19th century, many missionaries in the 20th century, who have not been influential in the upper levels of society, have been content to talk about getting people into heaven but have no longer been concerned for transformation in this life. They have done many good things on the micro level of society—hospitals, clinics, schools, vocational training, agricultural developments—they even pioneered insights into leprosy and essentially conquered that malady. But there were many things on the macro level of society they couldn't do without greater social influence, such as stamping out Guinea Worm or malaria. Today, however, when Evangelicals have far greater influence than ever before, they are often asleep to the opportunities for transformation on the macro levels of society.

## **3. The Mistake of Congregations Sending Missionaries, Not Using Mission Agencies**

Today many congregations are large enough and strong enough to feel that they don't need a mission agency through which to send their missionaries. This is a new and widespread phenomenon which ignores the great value of the veteran mission agencies which can draw upon the insights of missiology and the vast field experience which are lacking in the average congregation. It may be true that some mission agencies are more experienced and wiser than others, but to my knowledge there is no example of a local congregation bypassing mission agencies with any great success.

## **4. The Mistake of Whole Congregations in Direct Involvement, Not Professional Missions**

A more recent phenomenon (which is characteristic of whole congregations which are highly excited about missions) is the idea of every family in a congregation briefly becoming a missionary family. In this plan, during, say, a four-year period, the intention is for every family in the church to go overseas to work on some sort of two-week project. This is a marvelous idea for the education of people in the church about foreign



lands. Yet, it is incredibly expensive and it is a very questionable contribution to the cause of missions.

### **5. The Mistake of Insisting that Devout Followers of Jesus Call Themselves “Christians” and Identify with the Western Church**

Congregations may find it easy to believe that their people can win converts to Christianity in a ten-day short-term mission. But what very few congregations in America are prepared to understand is that dragging people out of their culture and converting them to what they think a “Christian” should look like, is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible talks of our conveying a treasure in earthen vessels. The earthen vessels are not the important thing, but the treasure is. The new vessel will be another very different earthen vessel. This is what happened when the faith of the Bible was first conveyed to Greeks. In that case the treasure of Biblical faith in an earthen Jewish vessel became contained in a Greek earthen vessel. Later it went to Latin vessels and to Germanic vessels and to English vessels, and is now contained in Muslim vessels, Hindu vessels, and Buddhist vessels.

It is just as unreasonable for a Hindu to be dragged completely out of his culture in the process of becoming a follower of Christ as it would have been if Paul the Apostle had insisted that a Greek become a Jew in the process of following Christ. Amazingly, there may be more Muslims who are true, Bible-believing followers of Christ, than there are Muslims who have abandoned their cultural tradition in the process of becoming Christian. There are already more Hindus who are predominantly Hindu in their culture but who are Bible-reading believers in Jesus Christ, than there are “Christian.” In the New Testament there was no law against a Greek becoming a Jew. However, Paul was very insistent that that kind of a cultural conversion was not necessary in becoming a follower of Christ.

### **6. The Mistake of Sending Only Money, Not Missionaries**

This has been a problem for many years. It can rarely be a good thing to send money to a mission field with little accountability for its use. There are many examples where foreign funds are used to “buy” national leaders away from their churches or away from their denominations rather than strengthening the existing churches. Money can be very helpful but there is no example of harm to the cause of missions that is more extensive than the careless use of money. Money is more easily corrupted than missionaries. This is the reason that wise national leaders talk about trade, not aid. What poor people need is the ability to earn money. With earnings they can buy food and medicines and not have to rely upon uncertain gifts from a foreign country. Missionaries are often ill-trained to establish businesses.

### **7. The Mistake of Sending Short-Termers, Not Long-Termers**

This is not a case where one of these things is good and the other is bad. Neither should take the place of the other. However, there are now almost two million short-termers leaving the United States each year compared to 35,000 long-term missionaries. Note that the overall cost of short-termers is at least five times as much as the overall cost of long-term missionaries. This means that instead of doubling or tripling the number of long-term missionaries we’re investing at least five times as much money in short-

termers. Short-term trips are wonderful education, but a very small accomplishment in missions. Worse still, a short term is often scary enough or useless enough to turn a young person away from being a missionary at all.

### **8. The Mistake of Not Understanding Business in Mission and Mission in Business**

One of the latest explosions of interest in missions is the result of Christian businessmen in the United States recognizing the value of thoroughly Christian businesses in a foreign land. There is no question that one of the greatest needs of churches across the world is for their members to earn a living. It is pathetic when we think of sending food around the world instead of sending businesses that would enable believers to earn the money necessary to buy their own food. Businesses can often do things that are very essential. They can enable local people to sell their products in foreign lands. They can produce goods of great value to the people. Unfortunately, it is true that few missionaries have business experience and often ignore opportunities to establish businesses that would employ large numbers of needy people.

One thing is true, however, that businesses cannot be relied on as a source of profit for missionary work. In the long run, businesses that divert profits to other things will lose out to competitors who don't divert profits to other things. There is no great future in a plan to "milk" profits from a business to support ministry. It is equally true that micro loans may have a temporary value, but will also fall prey to competitors with larger capital resources employing inherently more efficient processes. In the early history of missions, Moravian missionaries started businesses and so did some Swiss and German missionaries. Sadly, American missionaries have not been as creative. However, the business process will never take the place of the mission process in situations where the people in need cannot pay for what is needed. Businesses have to recover their own expenses. The mission process is still essential in all situations where there is no realistic possibility of remuneration.

### **9. The Mistake of Healing the Sick, Not Eradicating Disease Germs**

The activity of healing the sick is one of the most genuine means of portraying God's love and His concern for hurting people. It is a perfect example of the importance of the essential relationship of word and deed. On the other hand with our increased scientific knowledge of microbiology God can expect us to go beyond healing the sick to the eradication of the germs that make millions sick. Missionaries have done well in establishing a thousand hospitals but very few of them are big enough or are properly structured to be able to drive out of existence the evil pathogens that cause millions of people to be sick.

Malaria is an example of a tiny parasite that drags 45 million Africans out of the workplace every day of the year. It is imperative that the malarial parasite be eradicated. Malaria is virtually as large a threat in Africa as the AIDS epidemic. We don't yet know how to eradicate the AIDS virus, but we do know how to rid this planet of malaria. That would be a significant transformation. Why then is there no Christian mission agency that is involved in the eradication of malaria rather than merely the healing of those who are attacked by malaria? It is very embarrassing to have to admit that the church of Jesus Christ is expecting billionaires like Bill Gates to do that job for them. Worse still,

Christians are misrepresenting the love of God in Christ if they do not become noted for their relentless efforts in such a cause.

### **10. The Mistake of Thinking “Peace” Not “War”**

Missionaries have for centuries moved out across the world with the idea that the Gospel is merely a message to be communicated rather than a “call to arms.” I grew up with the idea that the main problem the Bible talked about was how human beings can become reconciled to God. That is certainly a glorious part of the story! But the main problem the Bible is really talking about goes beyond man’s reconciliation to God and is more precisely a war in which God-plus-man is fighting against Satan and his evil works. As a result our God is being blamed widely for rampant disease, poverty, injustice and corruption—since we as Christians are not fighting these works of Satan. People are asking what kind of a God would sponsor a world like this? They say this because they are unaware of the existence of Satan and his intelligent opposition to God. Thus, instead of God being glorified, He is being blamed for the work of Satan.

When things go wrong Evangelicals commonly say, “Why would God do that?” instead of blaming Satan. They do not realize that we are in a war and that casualties are to be expected because of the hideous strength of our opponent. We are lulled into inaction by the widespread belief that Satan was “defeated” at the Cross. In fact, the Cross was the turning point beyond which there have been centuries of ongoing conflict with a Satan yet to be completely defeated. Long after the Cross Paul told Agrippa his mission was delivering people from “the dominion of Satan.” Satan was still around. Peter talked about Satan seeking to destroy. Christians today, with modern understanding of microbiology, for example, as well as the endemic corruption in business and government, now possess far greater responsibility than we have ever had before. Are mission agencies part of that war against Satan? Is it necessary for Christ’s followers to be counted at the front lines of that war whether it be eradication of disease or the conquest of corruption in business and government? Do we misrepresent God if we are missing in action? I feel sure we do.

### **11. The Mistake of Assuming Science Is a Foe Not a Friend**

When I was a young person missionaries were showing science films 2,000 times per day in the non-Western world. The Moody Institute of Science films were shown even more widely in America. Many times in history Christian scholars have recognized that God has revealed Himself in “Two Books,” the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture. As Psalm 19 indicates, the Book of Nature does not even need to be translated into the world’s languages. Every missionary must take with him to the mission field both a microscope and a telescope if we are to properly glorify God. Even more important is the need to take to the field a true reverence for the glory of God in Creation. This requires a substantial knowledge of nature. Science is the study of God’s creativity. Art is the study of man’s creativity. We cannot truly expect educated people to accept Christ if our hymns in church reflect no awareness of anything discovered in nature in the last 400 years, or if our young people are being led astray by recent and superficial theories that the world is only 6,000 years old. That is an improper reading of Genesis 1:1, as well as a reckless ignoring of thousands of honest Evangelicals who are outstanding scientists.

## **12. The Mistake of an Evangelism That Is Not Validated and Empowered by Social Transformation**

Several times in the points I have already made above have I contrasted the 19th Century Western missionaries and 20th Century Western missionaries. This is because a radical change in the perspective of American Evangelicals took place between the 1800s and the 1900s. In the 19th Century we were singing about the glorification of God as His will is fulfilled “on earth.” Here is the final stanza and chorus of “America the Beautiful”:

*O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears.*

*America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea.*

In the 20th Century we have been singing mainly about heaven:

*This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through.  
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.  
The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

In the 1800s great revivals swept the country and Evangelicals in high places conceived and promoted equally sweeping reforms. Then, immigration of non-Evangelical people quadrupled the population and Evangelicals lost influence. Millions of non-college people were converted by D. L. Moody and others, but their 157 Bible Institutes did not feed the professions nor congress. Only recently, as Evangelicals have more and more been going to universities, are there sufficient numbers of American Evangelicals to begin to think seriously about social transformation either in the USA or elsewhere in the world.

## **Conclusion**

I hope it is clear that I have not wanted to do more than point out what in my estimation are failings and shortcomings in the history of Western mission thinkers. My perspectives may be faulty. At least I have raised certain issues that Asian missiologists may also confront in their work. Furthermore, this must not be a one-way street. I hope that we in the West can learn from members of the Asian Society of Missiology as they share with us their own perspectives.

In 1972 I helped to start the ASM (American Society of Missiology, [www.asmweb.org](http://www.asmweb.org)) and its journal, *Missiology: An International Review*. A few years later I helped start the ISFM (International Society of Frontier Missiology, [www.ijfm.org](http://www.ijfm.org)) and the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*. I have edited the latter for the last six years. It will be strategically helpful as Asian counterparts such as the Asian Society of Missiology arise and global sharing increases.

We of the West have already learned a great deal from you. We expect to learn a great deal more in the future. Thank you for this invitation to greet you in Christ's name!

## The Collapse of Colonialism, The Rise of Globalization

(2008) (Foundations Lecture #15)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035f239f92865859c06885/1594056486339/Foundations%2BLectures.pdf>

Our topic leans heavily on the book, *The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years*. There is certainly no value in my just repeating what is in those chapters. Rather, I would like to build up a larger context for that phenomenon—the phenomenon of the retreat of the West.

The West, of course, is a rather silly word, for what is west of what on the globe? Everything is west of something. We are talking about Western culture. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, there is what is called Western culture. Western culture is predominantly a Christianized phenomenon. It doesn't mean that Westerners are Christians, except in culture. It does mean that a Westerner is a person whose ethical judgments and philosophical, cosmological, worldview thinking, and so forth, have been predominantly the result, whether he knows it or not, of the Hellenistic tradition, which is non-Christian, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Western European Christian experience.

Eastern Christians are also Western in the larger sense of Western culture. In other words, Russians are part of the Western cultural tradition. When the Russians cross over into China, they are Westerners, even if they are living in Siberia or going into China. China is non-Western, because China in thinking and culture, at least prior to Mao Tse-tung, was for the most part unaffected by the West. Communism, however, is a Western phenomenon. Westernization has taken place not only through missionary penetration of the provinces of China, but because every single card-carrying communist is a Westernizer. His materialism derives from Christianity.

Christianity is the most materialistic of all known world religions. In fact, it has to be, because as some great theologian said, "God was the first materialist." He created the atoms, those shining, brilliant, unfathomable beauties that go together with the subatomic particles; and all this unbelievable complexity that is beyond our comprehension in its ultimate reality— God created all this!

All of this is based on God's wisdom, and it is the Christian who understands and is awed. The Christian does not worship it, but respects it and sees the glory of God in the handiwork which He has displayed for us: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Thus, the created world we have in common with communism. Many other things we have in common with communism. The ravages of communism across the world, as an atheistic, anti-religious system, are to a great extent just bizarre perversions of a Christian inheritance. The Bible itself is anti-religious! Read chapter 1 of Isaiah. Read chapter 23 of Matthew. Christianity is not even really a religion, according to some theologians, and when it becomes a religion, it may no longer be a faith.

Now, that is an overstatement. I do believe there are many religious people who are also profoundly Christian. But it is Christianity alone—Evangelicalism in particular—which allows for the acceptance of people who do not go through fancy

rituals, and who are not beholden to any observable patterns. Even Evangelicals eventually fall into patterns, so that if you walk into the most highly unstructured Evangelical service, the people there can tell exactly what is coming next. So don't let people in non-liturgical traditions claim that they are non-liturgical in the ultimate sense. But despite habit structures being what they are, the fact of the matter is that Christianity in a certain sense really isn't a religion. It is a faith, it is a life. It is, in this sense, the only candidate for a world faith. All other religions are religions. Even Christianity becomes a religion all too easily.

But Christianity is the only world religion in another sense. When people speak of world religions, they often only mean long-lasting religious systems. Any long-lasting religious system with lots of followers in any place is sometimes called a world religion. That's nonsense! To be a world religion you have to have, in some sense, an affinity with all the cultures of the world. There is no other good candidate for that description except Christianity and its extensive cultural diversity. Christianity is the religion (if you wish to call it that) which has been most willing to take upon itself the cultural clothes of every tradition.

Islam, by comparison, although in some ways a heretical variety of Christianity, is much more of a religion, in that it requires the Arabic language in its holy book. It requires facing towards Mecca when you pray. It requires many things to be the same wherever it goes. It is what the communists in Indonesia once called an imperialistic religion. The communists, before they fell from power in Indonesia some years ago, claimed that the Indonesians were dupes to accept a foreign religion. But they were unable to pin that criticism on the Christians. The Christians had churches that were built in Indonesian architectural styles; their Bible was in Indonesian languages; their hymns and music partook, at least to some extent, of the Indonesian cultural tradition. In that sense, Christianity was nowhere near as foreign an invasion as Islam. And, by the way, Christianity got to Indonesia before Islam did! That is a very interesting thing. Islam is a relatively recent in Indonesia.

The Bahai religion is much too small a movement to be called a world religion, but it does to some extent follow Christianity in a multi-cultural approach. Their problem is their scriptures. Bahai people will tell you about their ineffable, ethereal scriptures, but they cannot be translated! I think that it is true: they are un-translatable! For when you translate them, no modern person with any sensitivity would go along with their bizarre and rather crude character. They have the same problem at that point as Islam. However, Muslims refuse to translate their scripture for the additional reason that they envision a global single language.

The point is that somehow there are many children of the Westernization process: communism is one of the children. It reflects faithfully many of the ethical concerns of Christianity. The ethical system which the communist society espouses, but which it does not have the power to live up to, is for the most part Christian. Their emphasis on the equality of all people was borrowed directly from Christianity. Their cell structure, their emphasis on confession, all this was borrowed directly from Christianity. Their sense of history comes directly from Christianity. Communism is a bizarre, heretical, and virulent evil, but to a great extent it has been a part of Western Christianized civilization. The process of Westernization produced an immense fertility of mind and industry, of political and demographic power. There is no example in human history, in the annals

of mankind in any part of the world, of any other human movement gaining momentum so rapidly, building up population and wealth and power so rapidly, as you see in Western Europe. And that is precisely where the Bible was unleashed.

That power spilled over in many ugly ways, tragic ways, and also beneficial ways, all across the world. What earlier parallel is there of a vast muscular spill-over of population into another part of the world, as the modern colonial movement? What about the Crusades? The colonial movement was, in fact similar in some ways to the Crusades. It was far less holy, far less Christian in most ways. But for most of its early history, under the Portuguese, Spanish, and French—before the Bible-pounding Protestants got into the act—colonization was definitely a Christian Crusade. All ships carried priests: missionaries with the intent to convert people to Christ as King.

When the Protestants got into the act, their first large-scale presence on the open seas was the pirates. That's right, the pirates were Protestants, and you can imagine how easily this fitted into the Catholic stereotype of Protestantism. Father Baegert, a missionary priest, in his book, *Observations in Lower California*, pointed out that Protestants actually ruled the Caribbean, meaning that pirates ruled the Caribbean, and why didn't they evangelize? Some of these pirates actually did have chapels in their outposts, in their hideaways. Some were religious men. With all their cut-throat piracy, they may have thought they were doing God's will.

However, in general, when Protestants got into the act, colonization no longer had a Christian dimension to it. For example, the Dutch were allowed into the ports of Japan even after Japan totally sealed itself off from all other ships. The reason was that no one would have ever suspected the Dutch Protestants of bringing Christian missionaries. That is not quite true, however. The Dutch actually did bring chaplains with them to Taiwan. At one time there even was a fairly promising movement there. They also eventually did bring chaplains into Indonesia, the so-called Dutch East Indies. But, as I say, Protestants in general were less religious by far than other colonizing powers.

Notice that all this immense muscular outburst, whether you call it a crusade or not, to a great extent was a result of the explosion of a community produced by the limited tincture of Christian faith in Europe. When I read books written by secular scholars about the rise of Western civilization I just have to shake myself to realize that these authors are systematically omitting all of the Christian dimensions. I would read in Latourette about the Evangelical Awakening and its impact on the English parliament and everything else; and then I read a secular book with no reference of any kind to anything of that sort! It is just as if you're reading about two different worlds.

In fact, there was a great deal of vitality, of Christian devotion, of high-mindedness, of social reform, political reform in Western civilization and colonialism. The ending of slavery is one of the most obvious results of Christianity. Slavery was not something invented by Christians. In fact, to this date in history, there have been far more white people enslaved by white people, than black people enslaved by white people. Who are the Slavs? They are the quarry from which human slaves were gained for centuries and centuries, for over a millennium, the greatest source of human slaves sold into Africa. Slavery, therefore, was not caused by Christianity; slavery was there before Christianity ever arrived.

Christianity was what eventually percolated into the higher circles and, through John Wesley and the Evangelical Awakening, into the lives of Wilberforce and the



Clapham Sect. Clapham was a district of London where these Evangelicals lived. They were called a sect, although they were really only a subordinate party in Parliament. They were the ones who led the anti-slavery movement. The impact of Christianity on the rise of Western civilization, virtually unknown and undetectable in secular books, also accounted for the vitality and the military power of the West. It is a strange thing that the very muscle wielded by the Crusaders in cutting off people's heads was muscle produced by Christianity.

Christianity makes people healthy. It turns "the hearts of the fathers to the children." There is a lower infant mortality instantly when a population becomes Christian. There are all kinds of good things that happen: orphanages and hospitals, insane asylums. All kinds of problems are ameliorated because of Christianity. All that produces power, even for those who do not acknowledge it, and eventually spills over across all the world.

But the impact can either be called colonialism (with an adverse twang to the word), or it can be called a blessing. I don't know of any clear-thinking member of a former colonial country who will not be able to tell you how ambivalent their people are about the former colonial presence. Many people in India today, if they had their choice, would ask the British back. Of course, they would probably have to think twice! There would be lots of people who would be opposed to it. And there would probably be a lot of violence.

It is incredible that any one country would rule another country. Allan Moorehead wrote a book on the South Pacific called *The Fatal Impact*, and describes it as literally fatal to thousands of people, as slave ships and European diseases captured or killed off those people. It was fatal in other ways, since their cultures were largely destroyed. The point is that, at some point in history, the vast, massive and, for most observers, utterly irreversible movement out across the world all of a sudden began to crumble and retreat—after four hundred years of massive, muscular, irreversible outreach, controlling every square foot of the world!

So we have this amazing and unexpected collapse of colonial power. I will not say that I don't think that there is the slightest intrinsic virtue or superiority in Western man. I really do think that there is a great deal of superiority in Western culture insofar as it has been affected by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I will give not one millimeter of credit to any other source! It is Christ. Western nations can say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I!"

But I was sitting in a hotel room years ago talking to a Christian leader, John Gatu, from East Africa. He and I in a few minutes were to debate, before cameras, his widely criticized proposal for a moratorium on all mission work. He came up to my room in the hotel. It was his initiative to talk to me, hoping somehow that we could avoid unnecessary conflict in our discussions. I'm sure after the debate he was completely satisfied with what I said, because I agreed that in his situation in Kenya a withdrawal of missionaries from authority was quite reasonable.

But there I was, talking to a man whose own people a few months earlier were involved in the Mau Mau uprising. If I were John Gatu, I would be very embarrassed at the thought that my people, the Kikuyu, were involved in the orgies and unbelievable atrocities of those satanically-driven people. What I tried to tell him—yet what I couldn't

easily convey—is that I was just as aware as he was of the orgies of brutality and bestiality among the tribal people of my own past.

Consider the Irish. They were originally headhunters. In their little boats they would go up the Irish Sea and suddenly besiege a little village thirty miles away and kill every man, woman and child. They would pile all the heads into their boats and return, almost sinking, hollow out those skulls, process them and drink out of those skulls. Irishmen were drinking out of skulls as late as the sixteenth century!

Who are we kidding? Satan is the god of this world. All peoples come from a background of satanically controlled cultures. There is no intrinsic merit in Western society apart from the direct and indirect impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Science itself is a result of the cosmology which is uniquely found in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

You cannot be a scientist if you do not believe in the orderliness of nature. You cannot be a scientist if you are merely a Hellenistic philosopher. Plato believed in a pantheon of quarreling gods, whose quarrels decided whether it rained or didn't rain. You couldn't possibly have been a scientific observer of weather if you were a Plato. There is nothing about the Hellenistic tradition that would ever have allowed science to develop. The so-called Greek science, about which many books are written, is in a totally different category from Western science. The roots of the latter are the godly reflections of Christian people upon the orderliness and beauty of a creation which God designed.

However, there came a time when God obviously said “time's up” for Western political power. The crumbling of that vast world-wide empire is the story of the “Retreat of the West.” However, the retreat of the West is actually only the retreat of political and military power. It is not a retreat of the cultural or economic power, or the retreat of the religious influence of the West.

Many people assumed, and maybe many hoped, that with the withdrawal of the troops and the colonial offices of the Western powers, they would have taken with them all other influences. But, as you'll see in the chapters of my book, in many cases the cultural impact of the West actually escalated in the absence of the often stuffy, censorious, and condescending colonial rulers.

The other important thing in this whole story is that in most cases the gospel of Jesus Christ actually was given freer reign with the Retreat of the West. It was not the gospel that retreated! *The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years* book is simply the story of the unbelievable fact that the church of Jesus Christ emerged from this twenty-five-year period of Western retreat more powerful, stronger, more rooted, more indigenous than ever before!

At this point our dual topic, from colonialism to globalization, can be seen not as two different eras but as a very long and gradual transition in which both are present at all times. The end of the “25 Unbelievable Years” is described in that book as the end of only certain externalities, the outward clothing. The inner dynamic of the impact of the West did not decline at all, and is now the major driving force in the entire globe.

Globalization also is not new, except in its extent and rapidity. For thousands of years, goods from one part of the world have been traded for goods from other parts. All that has happened is, seemingly, that the process has been astoundingly speeded up. Interdependence has increased to the point that some are suggesting that the main reason China will not literally conquer the USA is due to the industrial and commercial

interdependence of the two countries. Frankly, that may be the opposite. When the Gothic tribal peoples had learned the art of war by mustering in and out of the Roman legions, it simply made them both willing as well as able to overrun the Western Roman capital of the city of Rome itself. The Empire never again regained it.

A recent book proclaims that the world is now “flat.” That is, there is a level playing field and small businesses in one place must contend with huge industries thousands of miles away. (On that score it is just as much a smaller world as a flat world). The book gives an example of workers in Egypt losing their jobs. The work they used to do is now suddenly taken away from them by more efficient processes in China. Lantern makers of Cairo used to work months in advance to pile up stock for the moment when the Islamic year made carrying around hand lanterns the thing to do. Now those millions of lanterns are made in China and shipped to Egypt at a lower cost.

The thousands of Egyptians left without work are not less willing or less able to work. They simply cannot compete with Chinese efficiency. They have been made poor through no fault of their own but because of sweeping improvements in global communication and manufacturing. Neither is it due to people in China trying to harm them. The Chinese workers are simply trying to make things that the world will buy, so they then can buy things other countries of the world make. Another example is that after the 9/11 travesty in New York, the first two million miniature American flags sold in the USA were made in China!

For centuries, but more gradually, what is called technological unemployment has been taking place as hand looms gave way to textile mills, and subsistence farming gave way to mechanized farming. Today the transitions are blindingly swift and millions upon millions of people in the so-called Two-thirds World are suddenly without work. At the same time smaller numbers do in fact have jobs as part of the global economy due to distant outsourcing—jobs that never existed before where they live. Advanced globalization has obviously injected a new ingredient into the necessary strategy of Christian missions. That will have to await another lesson.

## **The Future of Evangelicals: Will We Regain the Kingdom Vision of Our Forefathers in the Faith?**

(2008) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 327-43)

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A flood of light on the future of the Evangelical movement and its mission vision can be deduced by looking closely at its roots. Evangelicals happen to have a rich heritage of faith and works, extensively forgotten, that can once again inspire and instruct us as we seek to bring a complete gospel to every tribe and tongue.

### **Evangelicals? Who Are They?**

The word *evangelical* in the Catholic tradition refers to those people who take the four Evangelical gospels very seriously—specifically, members of Catholic orders. Later, in the Protestant tradition, the word *evangelical* came to refer to a political party where the *evangelici*, adhering to the authority of the Bible, were opposed to the *pontifici* who supported the authority of the Pope.

However, at the time of the Reformation other things were going on besides tension between two parties. There were the Anabaptists and later on Pietists and still later a still different kind of “Evangelical,” namely Quakers, and eventually, the Methodists, who became a global force.

As a broad generalization, all of these additional “third force” movements came to understand the word *Evangelical* to mean more than correct belief. The word began to refer to those individuals who had had a personal “evangelical experience,” by which was meant something real had happened in a person’s heart and life not just purely mental assent to a prescribed intellectual creed.

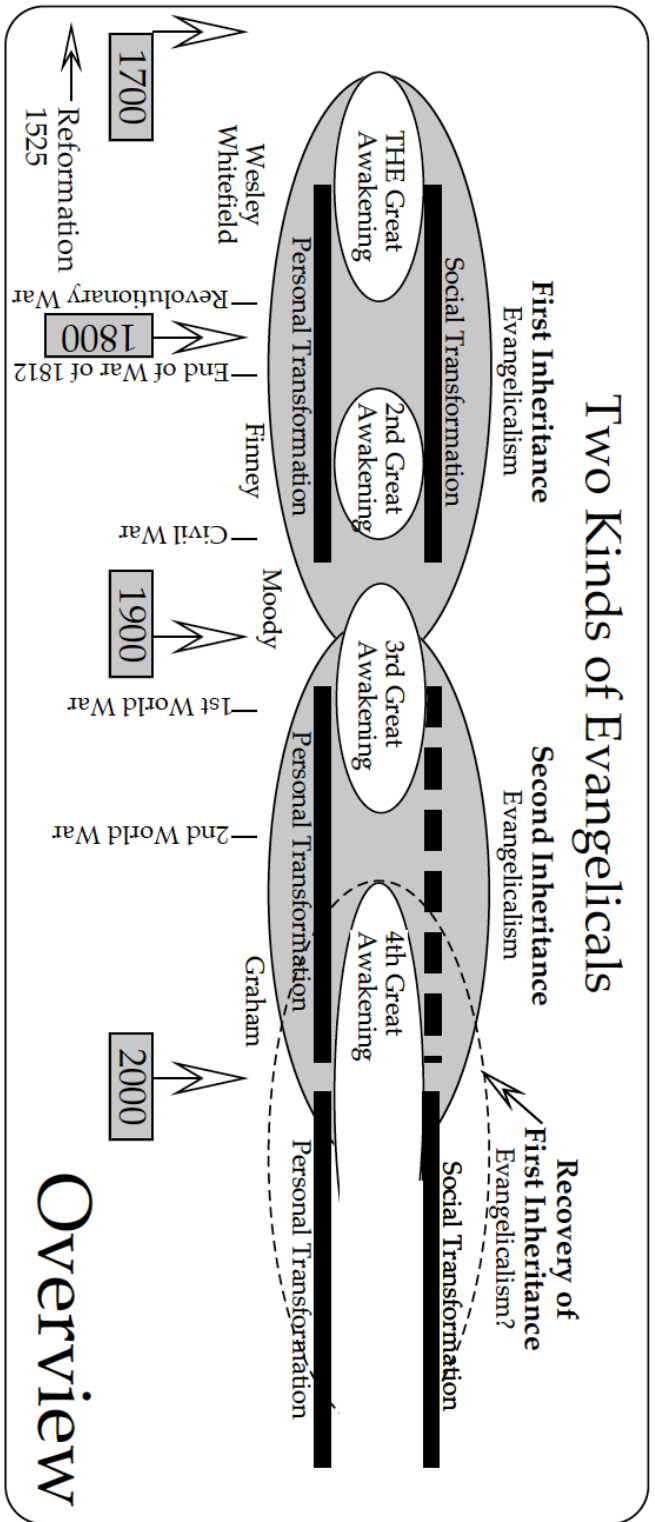
At the time of the Reformation the concept of a “born again” experience was almost entirely unknown. Much later it came into its own, in a sense, when a university trained Anglican, John Wesley, in 1738, in a little Moravian chapel on a street in London called Aldersgate, sensed the *warming of his heart* as he listened to a verse being read out loud from Paul’s letter to the Romans in a commentary by Luther. The verse spoke of people being “saved by faith.”

A little later the idea of a need for an initial, personal heart-warming “faith” *experience* was followed by a concept of an even deeper work of grace, “a second blessing,” “entire sanctification,” “an infilling of the Spirit,” or “a baptism of the Spirit.”

### **An Overview: Two Kinds of Evangelicals**

What even later ensued is a complex picture. In examining that picture it would seem helpful to distinguish between *First-Inheritance Evangelicalism* and *Second-Inheritance Evangelicalism* (my terms). For this article we can define—as does the diagram on the next page—the First as that which was characterized by a broad dual

social/personal spectrum of concern, typified in John Wesley's ministry, ranging from foreign missions to changing the legal structure of society and even the waging of war. The *Second Inheritance* reduced most of that to the level of personal salvation.



The three-century diagram above begins at 1700 but follows almost two centuries beginning in about 1525 when, in the Reformation, the Catholic uniformity of Latin Mediterranean culture began to give way to different "flavors" of the faith—Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, Slavic and "Anabaptist." This sort of indigenization is what usually happens eventually in every mission field.

The Anabaptist was the *one movement led by common people*. All the others were pursued by civic leaders in their respective territorial spheres. Unlike the others the Anabaptist was in a sense a non-territorial type of faith that to a great extent lived uneasily "underground"—thousands killed on the Continent, Quakers in England were jailed by the hundreds, etc. Two centuries later this Anabap-

tist stream became a bit more visible when Zinzendorf, *an aristocrat*, befriended the Moravian believers. An even more significant and sudden visibility, of a far more sweeping sort, occurred, to be called "Evangelicalism," when an Oxford graduate (Wesley) caught the experiential dynamic of the Anabaptists and due, in part, to a failed marriage, faithfully lived on the road for the next 50 years, blanketing England with cells of faith, thus becoming the major spark plug for both the Industrial Revolution and the Evangelical Awakening in England, which surged from Wesley's "conversion" in 1738 to nearly 1800, and with profound social influence even in the *hipper levels of society*.

A related and parallel movement called The Great Awakening occurred in the American colonies leading to lots of amazing transformations including the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War and the end of slavery.

Especially in what later became the U.S.A., this awakening was led by *critic leaders* and greatly influenced the founding, the direction, and the moral/cultural flavor of the United States.

The Revolutionary War, while a product of the Great Awakening, distracted everyone to the extent that the revival was essentially snuffed out for 20 years until various new revivals broke out. Masses moved west once it was clear, after 1815, that the colonies were really owners of their part of the New World. Then, the Evangelical, or revival type of Christianity leaped across the Adirondacks and the Great Smoky Mountains, thorough-

ly permeating society and achieving monumental social transformations up until the Civil War, which (like the Revolutionary War) was so massive a distraction that major spiritual movements did not begin again until after 1875 and then with D. L. Moody as a key factor.

Now also U.S. population quadrupled. Evangelicals lost influence at the top. Non-college millions founded Bible schools yielding local good deeds and an emphasis on the next world—a new, different "Second Inheritance" Evangelicalism.

Would "First Inheritance" Evangelicalism rise again? Yes, after 60 years Bible schools became colleges and universities. Evangelicals are now in universities, professions, Congress, the White House. New challenges abound, the earlier definition of mission is returning!

The Evangelical Awakening in England as related to Wesley certainly displays a heady, dual emphasis on *earthly and heavenly, social and personal*. This dual emphasis is seen in America where in the 1700s an awakening occurred called the Great Awakening of the Middle Colonies, which both exploded church membership and led to the Declaration of Independence. Then, later in the 1800s a Second Great Awakening brought thousands more into the churches, drastically overhauled society, believing the Millennium was near, and led to the Civil War which then seriously damaged that optimism. These major “awakenings” are far more significant in American history than secularized schoolbooks reveal. An exception is the remarkable book of a secular Nobel Prize winner, Robert Fogel, *The Fourth Great Awakening*, which recognizes the foundational importance of four spiritual awakenings in American history.

To generalize, what I am calling *First Inheritance Evangelicalism* ran from, say, the earliest glimmers of the Great Awakening with Theodore Frelinghuysen in 1721 in the Raritan Valley in New Jersey, to the onset of D. L. Moody’s enormous influence in, say, 1875. This period was significantly characterized by Evangelicals *in a position of civil leadership*. This role in national mood, I conclude, is the main reason they could readily believe not only in a profound transformation of individuals, but also in a wide range of different aspects of social transformation and God-glorification, indeed the coming of the millennium.

However, this *First Inheritance*, after, say, 1875, gradually branched into two “reductions,” each concentrating on one of the two elements in the former unified concept of a Biblical Christian service which was an emphasis on both personal holiness and social transformation—heaven and earth, spiritual and material.

One of these “reductions” after 1875 continued to be even larger than social concern, that is, God’s will *on earth*. It had a reduced emphasis on personal faith, and was, accordingly, less likely to call itself Evangelical. The other “reduction” continued the emphasis on sin and salvation, and, specifically, on the necessity (and assumed sufficiency) of a *personal experience* coupled with an otherworldly focus, *on heaven*. Jesus coming before the Millennium.

First Inheritance people had commanded the upper levels of society. They had found it quite possible to tackle widespread evils and change social structure as well as believe in the conversion of the heart. However, eventually many of these upscale college people (when only 2% of Americans went to college), followed a social gospel reduction, a relatively small stream *outnumbered greatly by a surge of people*—both immigrants and non-college converts. The latter, the followers of the personal reduction, became the main stream I am calling *Second Inheritance Evangelicals*. They were mainly non-college masses swept into faith by popular evangelists—D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and many others. This, to me, is a very key point: *not being in a position of social influence* they tended to turn away from the very idea of transforming society at a macro level, the Millennium being out of the question before Jesus returned.

This *Second Inheritance Evangelicalism* soon became the Evangelical main stream due to four forces. One was the lingering horror of the Civil War which for many demolished all hope of bettering this world (one out of 20 Americans died compared to one of 800 in the First World War). Another, was the impact of massive immigration from the Catholic parts of Europe. U. S. population jumped 240% from 44 million to 106

million between 1875 and 1920. As a result leading First Inheritance families lost influence and gradually slipped in both faith and political standing. Thirdly, the first and second World Wars seemed to shatter all optimism for a new world order prior to the coming of Christ. Fourthly, D. L. Moody and others impacted millions of non-college Americans who, even after conversion, were extensively isolated from both civic leadership and college education but became the majority in the Evangelical stream.

Thus, this new Evangelicalism-of-the-masses, characterized the Second Inheritance, significantly boosted church attendance in the United States, and also created Bible Institutes, new denominations and non-denominational churches. However, it had little stake in politics or social action and tended to suspect as being “liberal” (which by then was often the case) the smaller number of continuing, socially upscale college-educated Evangelicals from the First Inheritance (who then became the dwindling social reduction). Post-Moody Evangelicals in the non-college stratum tended to react against social schemes and even to banish the word “kingdom” from their vocabulary, thus tending to undergo the second type of reduction, this time, to a primarily “personal” Christianity emphasizing a theology reflected in the wording of a Gospel song, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.” This produced an opposite pole from the other reduction to primarily social action.

### **Thesis: A Recovery of First-Inheritance Evangelicalism**

My prediction in this article is based on the fact that the non-college groundswell, has gradually gained social prominence throughout the 20th century as the mainstream of Evangelicalism in the USA (and of Evangelical missions in particular). I predict therefore that we will recover an electrifyingly broader perspective of mission, so significant that it can be called The Fourth Era of Protestant Mission, or The Kingdom Era. This new vision will mean moving beyond from what has long been dominantly a heaven-and-individually focused Second Inheritance to a rediscovery of the earlier full-spectrum of the “First Inheritance” tradition, which possessed a theology combining both personal “salvation” and vast social responsibility. This will increasingly mean a concern for the glorification of God in both individual and social transformation. Note that the First Inheritance perspective did not even see evangelism and social action as two entirely different things. Words and deeds for them were as inseparable as faith and works. Wordless deeds and deedless words were both unthinkable.

We can actually see this kind of integrated strategy in the very character of all truly effective mission history. We can see that unity in the Bible itself where Jesus validated, illuminated and empowered His words by His deeds. This type of virile wide-spectrum faith, without very often being given much credit in either secular or religious circles, contributed enormously to the development of America. Hopefully it may become the new mainstream of global Evangelicalism with the same effect.

Undoubtedly not everyone will embrace the healed polarization. Two dangers can be anticipated. One danger will be that a “Second Inheritance” avoidance of social transformation may endure in some circles—because there are still quite a few disenfranchised, non-college masses in America to be won, not to mention the apparently vast readership of “Left behind” books, which perpetuate the assumption that we don’t need to bother with fixing up this world since we will soon be raptured out of it.

The opposite danger will be a renewed focus on social transformation stripped of an adequate emphasis on the individual transformation that is, ironically, so very essential to any significant social transformation. All the recent books on International Development acknowledge the truly major problem of corruption—books like *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* by William Easterly, and *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* by Paul Collier. Both Easterly and Collier are eminently qualified to assess corruption as perhaps the biggest roadblock to the success of practically project or program. The mission/Christian community abroad has almost a monopoly on people of honesty and integrity, and that morality comes mainly from a vertical awareness of the living God. Otherwise good deeds easily become good business. Indeed, the enormous sums floating around the world in the form of financial aid have created an equally enormous “aid-industry” which soaks up most of the money before it ever gets where it is supposed to go or to what it is supposed to do.

Hopefully, the full spectrum of recovered First Inheritance Evangelicalism I am talking about will go beyond a “holism” that often merely does many good things but leaves a “hole” where evangelism should be. Holism at times may risk the assumption that our “battle” is merely to benefit humans, a suspiciously humanistic angle of view.

By contrast, in Heaven’s war against Satan our priority is to recruit soldiers, freeing people from “the dominion of Satan,” (Acts 26:18), by winning their allegiance to a supreme deity whose attributes are portrayed definitively in Jesus Christ. But even that is then a priority which is merely “prior” if we are going to accumulate active, *effective* soldiers. Obviously, recruitment before battle is a priority, but merely a priority. As these new soldiers, with their transformed lives, then seek along with Christ and by the empowering grace of God to “destroy the works of the Devil” (1 Jn. 3:8), their good deeds will, as in Matt. 5:16 “glorify their Father in heaven.” These “communicating” deeds will then validate and empower further evangelism that will be able to gain still more recruits for the battle of the kingdom. But note: ***merely recruiting and not offensive action does not win wars.***

Intriguingly, this perspective is no longer primarily a tension between God and Man, as our Reformation heritage tends to portray it, but is a much larger war of the Kingdom of God-plus-His-people against the Kingdom of darkness. However, seeking to destroy the “dominion” of Satan must not be confused with the idea of seeking the “dominion” of society by the saints through worldly power, an idea sometimes called “Dominion” theology.

Let’s go back and look more closely at the earlier synthesis.

## **PART I: First Inheritance Evangelicals**

### ***The Great Awakening***

In the United States in the early 1700s, Jonathan Edwards in Boston, and Theodore Frelinghuysen in the Raritan Valley in northern New Jersey—the latter bringing over some Pietism from the old country—are given credit for being precursors to the widespread and powerful “Great Awakening of the Middle Colonies.” That profound movement was then stirred up further by George Whitefield, a friend of John Wesley who came from England to do powerful outdoor preaching. His major impact



from Boston to Charleston built upon those earlier events. Whitefield had emerged alongside the Wesleyan movement in England as part of the larger “Evangelical Awakening” which transformed English society more than any other movement in English history.

This new form of personal-experience Christianity was so significantly different that, in the colonies, long before the North/South divisions during the Civil War, it split the majority group, the Presbyterians, right down the middle for many years. One side reflected the more intellectual Reformation requirements. The other side emphasized an experiential and identifiable “work of grace.”

As surprising as it may be to most Evangelicals of the Second Inheritance (since 1900), the key point of this article is that the earlier “First Inheritance” Evangelicalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was by no means oriented only to personal experience and the next world. In contrast to the almost exclusively personal-salvation oriented Evangelicalism of the Second Inheritance, the First Inheritance engaged in a mountain of social reforms parallel to Wesley’s profound social impact in England. The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was a powerful movement that actually forged a democratically governed church structure ranging from Boston to Charleston and, with this pattern of rule in the context, gave crucial impetus to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitutional Convention and the idea of a single government over all the colonies. Without this democratically governed inter-colonial model the birth of the new nation wouldn’t have occurred in the way it did. The crafting of the U. S. Constitution was done one block away from meetings redrafting the Presbyterian Constitution. Many of the same men were involved in both meetings. Many of the same phrases occur in both documents.

Just as Evangelicalism today is becoming more politically aware and active, so in addition to the spiritual fervor of the Great Awakening, the whole idea of breaking away from England was also associated, pulling into the scene many people, such as Tom Paine, who had no formal connection to the church at all.

Among America’s leaders the initially Christian vision for wholesale social change became so widespread that it was easy for many (whether, as with Tom Paine, spiritually alive or not) to be enthused by a this-world cause. Thus, by the time of the American Revolution, the spiritual roots of the Great Awakening became paradoxically overshadowed in public life—virtually snuffed out—by the political and military events going on between the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the conclusion of the War of 1812 in 1815.

### ***The Second Great Awakening***

Many scholars refer to certain events of roughly 1815–1840 as the Second Great Awakening, which was at least a renewal of the earlier Great Awakening. In this second awakening we see the contribution of Charles Finney, an attorney who found Christ, and who very definitely believed in a “second work of grace.” Much of the USA saw the impact of his ministry as well as that of the “camp meeting” phenomenon, plus other itinerant preachers and many local revivals. It is significant that these spiritual events did not ignore social transformation but fueled it, providing, incidentally, the moral outrage which underlay many of the events leading to the Civil War.

In many respects the most prominent event of the early 1800s in America was the outcome of the War of 1812. Unexpectedly for the Americans, when the war was not lost but went to a draw in 1815, this amazing turn of events popped the balloon of a longstanding fear of inexorable British reprisal. This euphoria of freedom, this sense of ownership for the first time of a vast land of their own (never mind the Indians), gave life to all kinds of radical experiments—social, political and religious—and it very dynamically sparked the imagination, vision and even the rethinking of the Christian religion itself. One author calls the period of 1815 to 1848 “The Transformation of America.”

Oberlin College could be a case study. Established with the encouragement of Charles Finney and the financial resources of the wealthy Tappan brothers, it was both a fruit of the spiritual revival and also socially upscale. Oberlin was the first interracial school, the first co-educational school, the first vocational school, the first school to teach music, the first anti-slavery school, first temperance school, and so forth. No holy reform was outside its purview. For example, students believed that God would help them improve the efficiency of the Franklin Stove, and so was invented the Oberlin Stove. The entire period represented incredible ingenuity, innovation, and—most specifically—attention to what today we would call *social transformation*. In this mix Evangelicals were the main leaders—not the reluctant followers of secular initiatives.

It would be impossible to overstate the significant changes of direction of both the Christian movement and our nation between 1815 and 1850. By 1850, for example, virtually all of the states had banned alcoholic beverages. It was even true that vast numbers would not drink tea or coffee, so extensive was the counter-cultural application of Christian faith to everyday life. Dozens and dozens of reform movements sprang into life—ranging from the temperance movement, and the movement for the abolition of slavery, to a movement urging use of the whole grain in wheat flour (Graham flour—preached by a minister named Sylvester Graham), etc.

Both the Mormon and Adventist groups peeled off at this time. They differ greatly in theology but today equally represent museum pieces of the typical revival concerns about food and health, which had become part and parcel of the mood of that revival period. If the Mormons and Adventists could not change society in general they could at least invent new societies!

If applied to today it would suggest that for globally-minded people, good works must go beyond just personal good deeds to *organized* good deeds, beyond micro good deeds to macro good works, which will include, for example, the deliberate discovery and exposition of the glories of God’s creation (Ps 19:1-4) as well as serious concern for global slavery, corruption, oppression, poverty and disease. Otherwise Evangelicals will misrepresent the character of God and its proclamation activity will lack both credibility and authenticity. That was the mood and temper of First Inheritance Evangelicalism. What went wrong?

## **PART II: Second Inheritance Evangelicalism**

Remember that, as defined, the period of the First Inheritance can be seen as a period in which Evangelical leaders at levels of national influence (as well as common

people who followed them) uniquely worked within a window of awareness which made the transformation of society feasible—*something which was within their grasp*.

Of all unlikely people, Moody—from the back woods of Massachusetts—won millions of non-college people (as well as key college students). Thus, due more to Moody than any other, Evangelicalism for the first time became, in America, predominantly a lower-class movement. The families of the leading citizens of the earlier Second Awakening were now a tiny minority. Yet, the Evangelical movement as a whole had burgeoned amazingly both within the ranks of the immigrants, and also the uneducated stratum of society. But, *it was no longer true that people of faith ran the country*.

It was somewhat a lingering anomaly that 100,000 up-scale college students could be caught up in the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions and provide leadership to the famous World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Very few of these college-level “student volunteers” came from the mainstream of Moody’s converts even though Moody himself, somewhat accidentally, had significantly helped to spark both the upper-class “Cambridge Seven” in England and the Student Volunteer Movement in America.

### ***The Evangelical Divide and the Emergence of the Second Inheritance***

The last fling of the wide-spectrum First Inheritance Evangelicals was arguably the Prohibition era and the Student Volunteer Movement, but the cleavage between college people and Bible Institute people, already emerging by 1900, had by the 1920s, for better or worse, already become a major polarization, a veritable culture war within Evangelicalism. Upper-class people who were still thinking in terms of social reform were more and more often labeled liberal due to their social reform intuitions, whether or not they were liberal in their theology.

Meanwhile, the newer, less-educated Evangelicals had never had a chance to elect one of their own as a mayor. Their Bible Institute graduates did not nourish the professions or the universities. They were for the most part not college people at all. To these non-college people (as with slaves and their “negro spirituals” that focused purely on heaven) the very idea of reforming society seemed utterly impossible, theologically unexpected, and therefore evangelistically objectionable. Out of date by the time it was written, just after 1900, a school teacher would write the words to “America the Beautiful” still speaking of the earlier vision of a Gospel reflected in the words “alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears” and “Crown thy good with brotherhood,” in short, an approaching millennium after which Christ would come (“Postmillennialism”).

From its gradual beginning after the Civil War this Second Inheritance Evangelicalism, facing the total breakdown of that ghastly war, lost faith in reforming society and began to believe in a world getting worse and worse leading to a coming tribulation preceded by a pre-tribulation rapture, that is, Christ coming before the millennium not after (“Premillennialism”). The goal of reforming individuals, while properly considered basic, was often improperly considered all that was needed. At the same time there was to be seen commendable but merely “intuitive” (and relatively modest) good works lacking theological rationale. The tradition highlighted by the Moody Bible Institute, developed 157 Bible Institutes all following in this new

perspective, to a great extent typifying the Second Inheritance type of Christianity that was generally antagonistic to the earlier First Inheritance brand of Evangelicalism. The dwindling socially influential remnants of the First Inheritance soon became regarded simply and objectionably “liberal.”

Thus, the dominant force of Second Inheritance Evangelicalism essentially went socially “underground” for 60 or 70 years while those Bible Institutes, one by one, became Bible colleges, then Christian colleges and the majority eventually Christian universities. For example, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) took from 1908 to 1981 to become Biola University. The Training School for Christian Workers of 1900 became Azusa Pacific University in 1981. Then, as a result of this gradual reemergence of culturally standard educational patterns, people of Evangelical convictions once more populated Congress and the White House. However, this increased social influence was unaccompanied by a theology corresponding to such new opportunities.

The Bible School and Bible Institute stream constituted the backbone of the Evangelical movement for a lengthy period. Its eventual remarriage with the ethos of the college/university cultural stream would be a long time in coming. The simultaneous delay in recovering the wide-spectrum sense of mission of the First Inheritance was not so much because 20th century Evangelicals couldn't think, but because they were thinking different things. They may not have continued to think of major reforms in society, as did their socially upscale forebears. But, despite intuitive good works as mentioned, they did develop all kinds of new and creative ideas about the Bible.

Typical was their emphasis on eschatology, the Rapture, and the Second Coming of Christ, a heavenly optimism replacing earthly dreams. Such ideas for many years characterized this Second Inheritance brand of Evangelicalism, to some extent following J. N. Darby, Lewis Sperry Chafer and reflected in the Scofield Reference Bible (perhaps the most widely used study Bible of all time). The Moody Bible Institute may have led the way but virtually all Bible Institutes took part. Prophecy Conferences abounded. Social reform seemed illogical if only because the world was expected to get worse and worse until true believers were raptured out of it. Any kind of “social gospel” became anathema.

On the other hand, to its credit, within this non-college stream in the first half of the 1900s there was for a time a substantial science-and-the-Bible movement which understood science to be preeminently the friend of faith, issuing eventually in Irwin Moon's spectacular “Sermons from Science” films under the auspices of the Moody Institute of Science. (Moon was a Bible institute graduate who had gone on for a Ph.D. in Physics at UCLA.) At their peak missionaries were showing his films 2,000 times a day. By contrast today a reversion within a good deal of the Evangelical tradition has posed science not as the great friend of faith but as the great foe of faith.

### **PART III: The Recovery of First Inheritance Evangelicalism**

As Evangelicals today work their way into social and even political influence, many other changes will take place in the context of mission. But mission theology will lead and follow the growth of the civil stature of the Evangelical movement, forcing into existence a recovery of older interpretations of the Bible in regard to the use of that vastly increased influence.

The future of Evangelicalism and Evangelical missions is thus likely to involve a difficult and painful shift away from decades of polarization between “social action” and a “spiritual gospel.” This shift, which is already taking place, has brought new opportunity and responsibility, but shares the dangers to which the children of the First Inheritance Evangelicals eventually fell prey. As the 20th century wore on, many outstanding evangelicals ranging from John Stott and others in the Lausanne Movement tried very hard to point out that there can be no real dichotomy between faith and good works, despite a continuing Reformation-triggered bias in that realm.

One example of this, already mentioned, is the simple fact that the word *kingdom* was almost totally banned from Evangelical literature for at least 50 years. Only fairly recently has this word, so prominent in the NT, been recovered as some expositors have written whole books about the Kingdom of God and tried to bring it back into the fold (for instance, *Announcing the Kingdom*, by Arthur Glasser). But the phrase continues to be suspect in many Evangelical circles.

In the sphere of missions the polarization is reflected by the fact that on the social action side there is one entire association of over 50 agencies, the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO), which includes a number of very strong Evangelical mission agencies, such as World Vision, World Concern, the World Relief Department of the National Association of Evangelicals, Food For The Hungry, and so on. Their social activities have gained quite a following, or it wouldn't be possible for World Vision to achieve an annual \$700 million-dollar budget.

Yet until recently (in Bryant Myers' books) World Vision has not vigorously advanced a *theological* basis for what it is doing. Fortunately, many Evangelical donors have obviously felt drawn *intuitively* to what World Vision is trying to do. This is in some ways a non-theological recovering of one aspect of First Inheritance Evangelicalism, focused primarily on helping individual human beings even though it is not, as yet, as concerned for social transformation in general (e.g. eradicating disease, fighting global slavery, rehabilitating science as a domain of God's glory, etc.).

Meanwhile, in the first five years after the Second World War, when 150 new mission agencies jumped into being, most of the new agencies were characterized as “service agencies” adding technological muscle—like airplanes, radio, or literature—to existing missions in the already existing mission movement. This meant that all of this new vigor merely emphasized what was already going on, and its limitations, that is, the preaching of an intellectual and emotional individual gospel plus an emphasis on a restoration of individual fellowship with God. If, in the world of overseas missions, it had not been for the informal theological *intuition* of thousands of sensitive, loving missionaries we would not see in that sphere such extensive “good works” but merely the evangelism of still others mainly oriented toward the next world—“an emphasis on the eternal not the temporal.”

In other words, the reason Second Inheritance Evangelicalism is a complicated phenomenon is that, confusingly, the most extensive and the most influential social transformation-as-mission activity even in the 20th Century has been actually accomplished (much of it not adequately reported to donors) across the world by the older Evangelical mission agencies founded before 1900. This was true because of First Inheritance momentum in the mainline denominational missions and the great

interdenominational mission agencies like Sudan Interior Mission or the Africa Inland Mission, as well as the work of the smaller Evangelical denominational missions. Most of this, however, *employed an intuition not undergirded by formal theology*.

These forces, nevertheless, have made tremendous contributions to the entire educational framework of whole countries like China and Nigeria. The western hemisphere's largest technical university was founded by missionaries in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Asia's largest agricultural university was founded by missionaries in North India. The university system itself was taken to the field explicitly by Evangelical missionaries in the first half of the 20th century, especially the well-heeled college students of the Student Volunteer Movement. We think of projects like "Yale in China." However, this was in part the residual momentum of the First Inheritance, some of it carrying over into the 20th century, lasting longer in the realm of missions than in the home churches. However, outside the mainline denominational missions it existed mainly due to the keen intuition of sensitive missionaries.

It was understood back in the 19th Century and within these major missions that there was no rift whatsoever between learning and gospel, or good works and gospel, or schools, hospitals, vocational schools, universities, and the planting of churches. Nevertheless, today, as far as donors are concerned, the enormous impact of social transformation arising (intuitively) in the work of standard church planting mission agencies is widely little known, under estimated or even opposed. Indeed, the scope of this influence is virtually unknown in certain spheres, in part due to an intentional downplaying of this effort in reports to donors who want to hear only of spiritual conversions. This may for some be incorrectly rationalized as merely a tension between liberal and conservative perspectives. In fact, it is largely due to the increasing social influence of some Evangelicals and the continuing lack of influence among most Evangelicals in the earlier 20th century. Increasingly, numerous exceptions like Charles Colson, an influential civil leader, have no trouble envisioning sweeping changes in the whole world's prison systems, nor any hesitance in helping to resurrect the powerful social/political example of the distinctly upper class William Wilberforce. Wilberforce's *Real Christianity* has now been reprinted by four different Evangelical publishers. He is now again a followable hero.

### ***Empowered Evangelism***

Obviously there is a theological problem here. Without taking sides in the Postmillennial Premillennial issue, we, of course, need to take seriously the fact that Jesus was concerned with handicapped people, sick people, children, women, Samaritans, Greeks, etc. and that His ministry embraced and encompassed those things. When He responded to John the Baptist, who wondered if He was "the one to come," He sent back *descriptions of what He did*, not the *text* of what He said—it was simply a report of the good works He was doing. This He did, not only as an authentication of His divinity, but also as a demonstration of God's character and thus the nature of God's Kingdom. His ministry was congruent with His own statement, "Let your light shine among men in this way—that they will glorify God when they see your good works (Matt 5:16)." In the Synagogue in Nazareth Jesus quoted Isa. 61:1-2:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”

Do His words and deeds apply to 27 million men, women and children held as slaves in the world today? That number, right now, is more than twice the total bartered *during the four centuries* before slavery was (supposedly) “abolished” by Wilberforce. Does His perspective apply to the lifting of the burden of 45 million man-years of labor annually destroyed in Africa alone due just to the malarial parasite?

It has been said that *precisely because the gospel is a message of hope, the poorest must see some concrete reason for hope before they can understand the gospel.* Speaking linguistically, words themselves have no power if they do not refer to reality. Jesus’ words were constantly accompanied and informed by the actions to which His words referred. Thus, just as faith without works is dead, so evangelism without works is dead. Unless words refer to works and to reality, they are worth nothing. Just as it is a Reformation myth that faith can be separated from works, so it is meaningless if words are separated from the reality to which they were meant to refer.

It would seem, then, that just as we believe that works ought to *follow* faith in the sequence of salvation in the life of believing individuals, it is equally true that in our outreach to unbelievers those very works displaying God’s glory better *precede*. We see this clearly when we recognize that the usual way in which individuals come to faith is primarily by viewing the good works of those who already have faith—that is, by *seeing good works* that reflect the power and character of God. It was immediately after speaking of His followers being salt and light in the world that Jesus spoke this very key verse we have already quoted, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16).” *That is how people can see God’s glory and be drawn to Him.* Those who may be drawn by mere desires to be blessed personally will have trouble with Jesus’ plain statement that “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35).” Evangelicals today often ignore this.

Thus, in order for people to hear and respond to an offer of personal salvation, personal fulfillment, or a ticket to heaven, it is paramount for them to witness the glory of God in believers’ lives—seeing the love and goodness in their lives and deeds, and their changed motives and new intentions. That is the reality which gives them reason to turn away *from* all evil and *against* all evil as they seek to be closer to that kind of God and His will in this world.

It is of course perfectly true that personal salvation alone can still be a glorious transformation of people who may never arise from a sickbed or escape from poverty, simply knowing that God loves them and wants them to love Him—if they can understand what love is. At the same time, many believers are not poor, and have time and energy to do things other than simply talk to people about the next world or how they can be personally benefited. For them, a concept that is very hard to avoid (because it is happening throughout the whole Bible) is the concept that works are necessary to authenticate and demonstrate the true character of God. That is the true basis for an *empowered* evangelism.

This potent continuum of word and deed is, furthermore, the mainstream of mission history. It may not have been so large a factor among up-and-out people in, say, Japan, but in much of the world, the stunning achievements of medicine and healing have demonstrated to potential converts not only the love of God for them, but also the power of God that is on their side against the forces of darkness.

Paul the apostle spoke of delivering people from *the dominion of Satan* (Acts 26:18). Peter summed up Jesus' ministry by speaking of "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were *under the power of the devil* because God was with him. (Acts 10:38)." This kind of demonstration of the person and the power of God certainly should not be considered alien or antagonistic to evangelism. In most cases it is, again, the very basis of an empowerment of evangelism.

However, by taking a quick glance at the current record of our global "missions of good works" it is perfectly obvious that thus far no great dents in world poverty have been achieved by missionaries of Jesus Christ, even though their intentions and even their record is highly respectable. Recently, more and more high-minded young people have shown themselves willing to go and live among people in extreme poverty. This, too, is praiseworthy. But most desperately poor people need more than another apparently poor and powerless person to come and live among them.

It is nevertheless true that once individuals find faith, they have often pulled themselves up by their bootstraps—through their honesty, abandonment of liquor and drugs, and their ability and integrity to build businesses of good will that succeed. This has gradually lifted them up out of the poverty category into the middle class category, not just in England in the 18th century, but also in America and in many parts of the world. This kind of individual "salvation" is the primary focus of Evangelical missions today even though it is not be the whole picture.

However, without even studying the past, it is apparent that there is a crescendo of concern for the serious problems of our world. The AIDS crisis has thrown us into a lot of confusion, but also into serious contemplation about what now can be done or should be done. It would seem embarrassing that Jimmy Carter, a Sunday School teacher, not a theologian, nor a mission executive, nor a missiologist, has actually done more than anyone else in arousing world opinion to the need to *eradicate* diseases, not just extend *health care* after people get sick.

But it is saddening that Carter has not been able to get substantial backing from Christian churches and missions for this activity. Apparently that kind of vision is not, at this stage of history, something that can be credited either to Christian theology or to missiology, but rather to the energy and *intuitive* theology of a past president of the USA who happened to be well known on a world level. Missions and churches have vitally helped but they cannot claim the initiative.

Thus, in all of our commendable haste to get to the ends of the earth and to the last group which has never heard the gospel, we may be overlooking the fact that the vast bulk of the Western world no longer believes in the Bible and no longer follows our faith—partly because people have not noticed believers at the forefront of efforts to defeat the evils of this present world. Does that mean our immense overseas



achievements are going to be only temporary? Are we preaching a “relapsing” Christianity?

#### **PART IV: The Future of Evangelicals in Mission**

##### **“Teaching them to OBEY everything that I commanded you”**

So what is the future of the Evangelical movement? I believe that the mission movement—more than the church movement and considerably more than the secular world—holds the key to a great new burst of credibility which could win new millions, not just the poor and uneducated. An unexpected trend of current philanthropy clearly indicates the potential assistance of people in high places who have grown up in a highly Christianized society, even if they haven’t regularly gone to church. But what is crucially true is that these secular forces need to understand that their efforts will ultimately be dismayingly ineffective without a certain minimum of transformed individuals whose character and integrity is essential to their major efforts. They need to realize that missions and the Christian movement have a virtual monopoly on transformed individuals who can be trusted.

I yearn to see Evangelical missions be able to give more direct, credible credit to Jesus Christ for the impetus behind the social transformation that they have been doing, are doing and should be doing. Practically none of the major religions, by comparison, has a similar contribution to good works, small or large. Islam has the giving of alms as one of its five pillars, but there is very little in the entire mammoth global Islamic movement that compares even remotely to the hundreds of major Christian mission agencies, or the thousands of ways in which the Christian movement has reached out with love and tenderness to those who are suffering. Islam also has a near vacuum of “non-government agencies,” although both in Pakistan and Bangladesh are some outstanding exceptions. But in general the West has thousands of NGOs which are not explicitly Christian. Islam has only a few.

The work of Christ in the gospels, Christ’s references to the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and the present outworking in this world of the phrase “Thy will be done” in the Lord’s Prayer are actually echoed by the Great Commission itself. Looking closely at Matt. 28:20, it isn’t just the passing on of His *teachings* to which Jesus commissions His disciples. It is the actual enforcing, so to speak, of *obedience* to those teachings, “teaching them *to obey* everything I have commanded you.” This implies the conquest of evil when the Lord’s Prayer is read in this light: “Thy will be done *on earth.*”

We hear later in the New Testament about people who do not “obey” the gospel. In contrast to the common Evangelical perspective in the Second Inheritance period, the Gospel is not just mere information in the way of good advice. We see both authority and commands from God in the real Biblical Gospel. This is the clear meaning of the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Since Jesus sent his disciples out to bring about obedience to the things He had taught, the last two thousand years has brought about a massive, global campaign against evil.

As I have suggested, the older missions with roots in the 19th Century have in actual fact been doing exactly what Jesus did, both demonstrate the love of God and invite into eternal life all who yield to that love and that authority. The trouble is that the fact of this breadth of mission has not been as clearly theologized to the point where we

would be urged exegetically or theologically to tackle some of the macro problems such as the wiping out of Guinea worm or malaria, problems which have existed under the very nose of missionaries for over a century. Nevertheless, *such extra breadth must not be seen to be a divergence from the preaching of eternal life, but rather an empowerment of the message of a gospel of a kingdom, a reality that is both here and hereafter.*

That is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It *is* the gospel of the kingdom. It is the announcement of a “rule and reign of God” which must be extended to the whole world and all of creation. We must stand up and be counted as active Christian foes of the world’s worst evils. This is the biblical way, the way more than any other, in which missions, beyond what they have done in the past, can now in the future more powerfully and extensively than ever demonstrate who God is and what His purposes are. This is, for example, what the superb Transform World movement is envisioning.

This more extensive influence will come if agencies will simply take the practical conclusions of their missionaries’ magnificent local *intuition* up into national levels and into international campaigns to drive out those things that not only cut their own lives short but also causes hundreds of millions of people to go to bed at night in severe suffering and pain. *Otherwise all such unaddressed evil is blamed on God and His “mysterious purposes.”* This new, expanded influence of Evangelicals may thus measurably help us re-win the West to “a faith that works,” and to a God Who is not doing bad things for mysterious reasons, but a God Who concretely opposes the Evil One and all his works— and asks us to assist Him in that campaign.

Evangelicals are increasingly again in the position of social influence. Yet, are still mainly in the business of merely giving people a personal faith, a faith that does not include much of a mission beyond the idea of converts fulfilling their own lives and converting still others to personal fulfillment. However, a return to a full-spectrum Gospel could mean an enormous change. Doors will open. Attitudes about missionaries will change. It will no longer be the case of missionaries thinking that they have to use adroit language to cover up the “real purpose” of their work. Their real purpose will include the identification and destruction of all forms of evil, both human and microbiological and will thus be explainable in plain English without religious jargon. This can provide very solid common ground in almost any community in any country.

Widely understood is the fact that Protestant mission efforts can be classified in three eras marked off in each case by a certain definition of a more extensive awareness of mission. The first era began about 1800 and until 1910 focused on the coastlands of the Non-Western world. The second era began in 1865 (overlapping the first) and extended to 1980 focusing on going inland. The third era began in 1935, (overlapping the second) focusing on by-passed peoples (Unreached Peoples) and will continue until perhaps 2050. The urgent emphasis of this paper would predict the need for a fourth era of new and radically wider awareness, becoming widely known in 2010 at the Global conference of mission agencies in Tokyo, May 11-15, 2010. This new awareness might be called the Kingdom Era, when far more serious attention is paid to the transformation of both society and nature, recognizing that the demonstration of God’s concerns is an achievement which will both vitally support, and as well as depend upon, the need for transformation on a personal level.

In that event there is no doubt in my mind that the future of the Evangelical movement and its mission will be very bright indeed. As Adoniram Judson said, “The future is as bright as the promises of God.” We must not forget that God is the one who asked us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, *Thy will be done on earth* as it is in heaven.”

## Indicators of the Future

(2008) (Foundations Lecture #18)

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Our lesson today speaks of the future and of various “indicators” which can help us anticipate the future—the future of “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In our last lesson we actually talked about one of the major new features of the future, namely the spectacular and unexpected growth of those new types of Christianity which don’t readily classify as Christianity, if in fact we understand Christianity, by now, to be simply one of several cultural traditions imbued with Biblical values.

In this lesson, we will touch on some additional “indicators” of the future, such as science and faith, global agency networks, leadership development, university education, the unfinished task, new church planting movements, and the increasingly important concept of international development.

### Science and Faith

In my perspective, the most serious of all features of the new future is the seemingly unresolvable polarization between science and faith. Our global situation is this: it is as if millions of sincere and intelligent and believing scientists are genuinely awed into some sort of spirituality by the sheer wonder and infinite complexity of the nature they behold. Meanwhile, millions of sincere, intelligent believing people are similarly awed by the never ending riches and unexpected spiritual challenges they find in the Bible.

Modern man has gained such breathtaking new insights into nature that you might think there is nothing major left to be understood. However, the more we have learned about nature, the more we yet seem to need to find out. It is as though when the diameter of our knowledge increases, the circumference of our ignorance increases more than three times as fast.

Even the simplest things are still unfathomable. Take the attraction of a magnet to a screwdriver. What could possibly be going on between those two objects - each pulling toward each other? There is absolutely no human being alive, or who has ever lived, who has even the faintest idea of what’s going on. All we can do is predict the power of magnetism mathematically and describe its behavior minutely. We have not the faintest idea what it is.

It is equally confounding that there is a top and bottom to our world. Discovering that we live on a huge ball hanging in space held into a gravitational orbit by a sun 80 million miles away is common knowledge, and once again, we can calculate very accurately how gravitational attraction functions. But its very nature, while quite different from magnetic attraction in obvious ways, is just as totally inscrutable. No one has the faintest idea how it actually works.

Whether it is in the realm of enormously large things like our own galaxy, which to fly across would require a spaceship going at the speed of light for a hundred thousand

years, or the billions of other galaxies both larger and smaller, or whether it is the tiniest things which we can only see with an electron microscope rather than a telescope, once again, our knowledge is in many ways quite superficial.

Consider bacteria, of which there are 30 million different types. Upon invading the human body, they are intelligent enough to bide their time until their number can be multiplied sufficiently to do significant damage. At that key point scientists say, they have achieved a “quorum” and they attack simultaneously. If they attacked before a quorum was reached, the human body would be more easily able to defend itself. Now, that is a lot of intelligence for so small a creature as a bacterium. Until recently, no microbiologist ever dreamed that bacteria could communicate with each other, count noses and attack in force.

Thus, it is easy to see how awestruck many scientists can be. It is equally easy to understand the earnestness and the awe of those who pursue the pages of Holy Writ, where we find inklings of understanding of things that science can't say anything about, where we can find challenges to our morality and our very purposes for existence, where we can find sensitivities of love and compassion and the willingness to sacrifice, where we can understand how profoundly different humans are from animals, and where we can seek illumination in regard to our own personal existence and role in life.

### **The Polarization**

How could these two sources of awe—science and religion—be polarized, be in opposition? I believe the fault is on both sides. Religious people have rightly been disturbed when science has been employed as a military weapon, when wild science fiction portrays totally horrifying futures, or when scientists have boasted, so often, of certain knowledge, only to be confounded by later insights which question their earlier audacities.

No wonder some Bible believing Christians insist that science is the enemy of the Christian faith. However, in my youth, science was considered a friend of faith and the Moody Bible Institute put out an incredible series of avant-garde color motion pictures probing the wonders of science and demonstrating thereby the glory of God.

If I type “Hugh Ross” into Google practically everything on the screen beyond his home page denounces his work. On the other hand, many who write from a religious background denounce Hugh Ross for seeking to glorify God through the wonders of science. One of these religious web addresses actually insists that science is both dangerous and even useless because it says that while the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth demonstrates His handiwork, “there is no speech or language where their voice is heard.” Of course the Bible says, “there is no speech or language where their voice is NOT heard.” Do we need to twist the Bible to defend it? Misquote scripture to prove our points?

On the other hand, some scientists collect stories from history when scientists were actually opposed by religious leaders even though the Church, for example, has much more often promoted science than it has opposed it, even providing a theological basis for it! But, some scientists only remember the opposition and develop a sort of righteous indignation towards religion.

Furthermore, many scientists are simply unwilling to allow any divine authority to tamper with their lives.

However, other scientists are genuinely concerned over the fact that religious leaders like John Calvin and Martin Luther stated emphatically that the Bible teaches that the sun goes around the earth and that the Copernican theory of a heliocentric solar system is refuted by the Bible. These scientists don't stop to think that Calvin and Luther misunderstood the Bible. They assume Calvin and Luther were intelligently explaining what the Bible teaches, and that therefore the Bible cannot be trusted.

A similar situation exists today for all of those people who believe the earth is very old. Often, they oppose religion, because of course all religious people insist the earth is just 6,000 years old based upon the teaching of scripture. As I see it, the issue really isn't whether the earth is old or young, but whether the Bible is not to be trusted.

Many evangelicals today have somehow lost track of the background of the Evangelical movement in which it was widely taught that the geological ages preceded Genesis 1:1 and that the creation account in Genesis is a new creation, explaining the origin of human beings and non-carnivorous animal life of the kind that would be achieved at the end of time, when (in Isaiah 11) a lion will lie down with a lamb and the 24/7 violence we see in nature will have ceased. This "pre-Genesis" view was clearly explained in *Unger's Bible Handbook* published by Moody Press in 24 editions over decades amounting to over 500,000 copies. A revision of it is still in print. Unger was the chair of the Old Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Note that if this view were correct—and I am not saying it is—there would be no conflict whatsoever between modern paleontology and the Biblical text. However, everybody, from *Time* magazine to the kindergarten teacher has been persuaded by earnest Christians that the Bible certainly teaches that the universe is no older than 6,000 years.

Obviously, huge obstacles exist for anyone who would seriously attempt to evangelize in a scientifically-oriented society. Christianity has clearly succeeded among rural populations and among uneducated people all over the world, but in its own backyard it is facing increasing opposition because of religious teachings which may have no foundation in the Bible whatsoever.

We probably need to go back to the days when the Moody Bible Institute promoted its now-closed Moody Institute of Science, and try to understand science anew so that it does not oppose but actually upholds the Christian faith.

Nothing we have said thus far prevents the continued expansion of the Christian faith for the present. It can expand in areas where science is not well understood, or is not considered an obstacle to faith. There are new church planting movements described by David Garrison all over the world, especially among rural people. The Unfinished Task is very nearly finished, if in fact we measure that task by geographical or even sociological penetration of the Christian faith in one form or another.

### **Where We Are Gaining... and Where We Are Losing...**

But all such gains are temporary where a population will soon become educated by the dominant form of education today which is highly secularized both in science and history, and where poverty is not taken seriously by all mission agencies. We already see The William Carey International University adopting International Development as its theme, as of 1977, and the Fuller Theological Seminary adding a course in International Development in 2005.

But, as long as scientists, who are genuinely awed, denounce Christian leaders who are genuinely awed, the Christian leaders will tend to reject the source of awe of the scientists. It is equally, and even more importantly true, that when Christian leaders (who are awed by the Bible) denounce scientists (who are awed by the works of God), the scientists will tend to deny the legitimacy of the source of awe of the Christian leaders.

Neither side will win unless both sources of awe are understood, both the Book of Nature as a revelation of God and the Book of Scripture as a revelation of God.

We, as Christian leaders, must take the initiative of knowing both books. The Christian leadership development pattern around the world and in the USA normally omits science from its curriculum altogether. Our curriculum does not lean at all, as the Bible itself would urge it to, upon this important additional source of awe and revelation—the works of God in nature.

This leads us to another future indicator.

### **Christian Leadership Education**

Indeed, our leadership education is flawed in several different ways. I have often spoken of three levels of failure: *wrong students, wrong curriculum, and wrong packaging*.

We have already spoken of the *wrong curriculum* when it leaves out the earliest book of revelation, namely the Book of Nature, whose voice is heard in all languages. An almost more serious problem of global leadership development within the Christian tradition is our overwhelming emphasis on book learning and other training programs instead of on selection. By and large, the students at Bible schools and seminaries around the world are not gifted as pastors or missionaries no matter how many A's they earn in school. They were well trained but not well chosen. Selection is the problem.

It is a simple fact, grim as it may seem, that every church movement that depends on residentially trained pastoral leaders ends up foisting off on the church all kinds of highly trained, but ungifted people. This produces non-growth, or actual decline in membership, as can eminently be seen in the United States where every denomination depending on residential training for pastoral ordination is declining.

Meanwhile, around the world, every rapidly growing church movement depends on an entirely different system of selection—not who goes to seminary, but who is gifted. Training people who are gifted is remarkably different from trying to develop gifts in those who are already trained.

The third flaw in leadership development is rather simple. Wrong students, wrong curriculum. How about *wrong packaging*? While missionaries are expected to speak the language of the native, our ecclesiastical structures mindlessly continue to ignore the accepted university pattern of education and continue to call their schools “Bible Schools” or “Seminaries” and continue to wound the future of their graduates with nondescript degrees, such as M.Div.s or D.Min.s, degrees that mean nothing in the everyday world and thus impede graduate studies.

Another indicator to note is the extensive birth of new evangelical universities around the world. Joel Carpenter, Dean of Calvin College, did a quick internet survey and found at least 41 new evangelical universities in the mission lands. These universities, curiously, have not been the result of missionary initiative. Their existence proves the importance, in the eyes of the national believers, of the university pattern over the

seminary pattern. But since these schools are not the result of missionary initiative and are not linked to mission agencies, they are, in many cases, wandering in the world of secularized curricula and are not directly contributing to leadership development in the Christian sphere. We must come to terms with the University pattern of education.

### **Networks of Mission Agencies**

Speaking as we are, of globally-true phenomena, another important indicator of the future is the emergence of a new and unprecedented network of mission agencies on the global level.

This was founded in April of 2005 and is called the Global Network of Mission Structures. There are already associations of mission agencies at the national level and, in some cases, at the regional level, but until the establishment of the GNMS, there has never been, on the global level, an association of Evangelical mission agencies. The closest thing to it is the Third World Mission Association, but you can tell by its name that it is not a global association.

The GNMS now faces the challenge of networking on the global level in an age of absolutely unprecedented population interchange. A recent study indicates that the number of migrant workers in the world today is so large that the financial remittances that they send back to their families amount to something like 380 billion dollars a year, which is greater than all foreign aid and foreign investment put together.

Very specifically, the GNMS will be able to track the migration of individual people groups. It may find 10,000 in London or Los Angeles from a group which in the new situation is open to assistance and friendship, compared to the relatively closed attitude of its own people in the foreign situations from which they come.

This is not to say that migration is necessarily a good thing. Probably there is no single phenomenon in world history that has torn apart more families. The evangelization of migrant workers is not an entire solution, but leading people to Christ is certainly an essential foundation for whatever further solutions may appear on the horizon. But that horizon is not simple. An even more important factor in the future will come up in the next lesson.



## Origins of Life: Mysteries and Certainties

(2008) (Foundations Lecture #2)

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By now you know that this course is attempting what may seem impossible. You may have never in your life been confronted with anything as presumptuous as the idea of finding overall meaning in the latest scientific information about our planet and finding that it does not clash with the Bible.

Of course, this is all in the realm not of absolute faith but of sanctified interpretation. But the exciting thing is that it just might be true. Meanwhile, if we are interpreting the Bible wrongly there is no value in defending that misunderstanding. Suppose the Bible does not really say a certain thing. But we think it does. To defend the Bible well, are we being fair to it, if we insist that it says things which are contrary to what would appear to be scientific fact? If, say, there are two possible meanings and one accords with widely accepted science, why choose to defend the one that clashes?

The most recent estimate I have heard—rehearsing what was said in the last lesson—is that the universe burst into existence 13.6 billion years ago, and that after expanding for 9.1 billion years, the planet earth came into existence 4.5 billion years ago. Less certain is the idea that the first glimmers of life appeared on earth exactly 4 billion years ago, since tiny forms of life do not leave behind bones or shells.

### Mystery 1: Matter

In any case, science presents us with a deep mystery: how did the universe, our galaxy (one of billions of others), our solar system, and our planet come into existence? All of this, which existed previous to the appearance of life, is a huge mysterious bundle of fathomless complexity that includes matter, forces, and radiation.

What has been called *matter* is made up of what are called molecules which in turn are structured composites of smaller entities called atoms, which in turn appear to be something like tiny little solar systems, that is, each with a nucleus whirled about by a number of electrons corresponding to the number of protons in the nucleus. But even the nucleus of an atom contains almost unimaginably complex realities with protons and neutrons passing quarks between them, etc. These atoms themselves have been arranged in a number of different ways, each called a Periodic Table of the Elements, in an orderly manner from the very smallest, hydrogen with one whirling electron, Helium with two, Lithium with three, Aluminum with 13, Oxygen, for example, has 16 in now more than one orbit layer, Lead has 82, Uranium has 92, etc.

Most of these atoms don't exist in isolation but, as I say, in structured clusters, thousands of them forming rocks, crystals, snowflakes, water, air, etc. This entire reality is called the inorganic universe. It is astoundingly intricate. Its tiny structures constitute Mystery Number One.

## **Mystery 2: Life**

Even more puzzling is a second mysterious reality called life, which has thus far been discovered only on our planet. This entire equally complex phenomenon is actually a play on a single atom, carbon. That is, all forms of life consist of elaborations and combinations which include the atom carbon.

Size is important. If a virus were the size of a baseball, a bacterium would be the size of the pitcher's mound, a cell would be the size of the entire baseball diamond and a parasite might be as large as the entire city. However, even the smallest of these four, the virus, is sometimes built out of as many as ten million atoms.

The comparatively large and enormously more complex cell is still so small that you could put 200,000 cells on top of the period at the end of a sentence and still not quite cover it up.

As small as cells are (200,000 on top of a period), each contains in its nucleus a DNA molecule that consists of a double helix structure that is both complex and beautiful and both long and thin. Every cell on top of that period contains deep down in its nucleus a DNA molecule that if stretched out would be five feet long, and yet is so slender that it can be folded, coiled up and compacted into the nucleus of a cell. Yet even a very small virus still may contain strands of DNA which it injects after attacking a cell.

Viruses, note, are cleverly destructive. They are something like bombs which attach themselves to cells, jamming pieces of DNA inside which mass produce more viruses of the same type until the cell bursts and dies. As for the much larger bacteria, some are destructive but most are not. Parasites are by definition destructive and are so large that by comparison their intelligence is enormous. The Hair Worm, for example, burrows into a grasshopper, devours everything but the minimum necessary ability to hop. At the end it creates proteins that mimic the grasshopper's brain cells, which in turn induce the grasshopper to jump into water where it dies and the Hair Worm swims away to breed. It is very hard to believe anything as intelligent as this could have fallen together as the result of random mutations. It is equally clear that we are dealing with intelligence that is evil not just good intelligence.

## **Mystery 3: Human Life**

While life is thought to have been under development for a total of four billion years, the vast majority of all fossil discoveries, as mentioned, derive from just the last 500 million years, following the Cambrian Explosion. Note that if the whole 4 billion year period of the development of life is compared to a 24-hour day, the last 500 million years since the Cambrian Explosion is one eighth, or a three-hour period beginning at 9 PM, while the human period is roughly the last quarter of a second. Even if the last 500 million years is compared to 24 hours, the human period is still only the last 2 seconds.

Interestingly, far more bones and shells have been uncovered in the past 20 years than perhaps in all previous history. In fact, digging up bones and ancient artifacts has become a global activity of thousands of scholars, accompanied by looters and falsifiers.

Cave drawings and arrowheads tell us a great deal about how very intelligent some earlier forms of life were. We are well acquainted, for example, with the capabilities of the Neanderthals, who are nevertheless today confirmed as pre-human due to recent DNA testing.

## **The Appearance of Humans**

However, nothing accomplished by earlier forms of life is as impressive as evidences beginning about 11,000 years ago of deliberate, determined, patient, intelligent selective breeding of both plants and animals.

Worldwide, today, what we usually eat without appropriate gratitude—rice, corn, wheat, potatoes, etc.—are plants which give mute witness to the fact that thousands of years ago some highly intelligent forms of life—apparently of unique intelligence—worked for lengthy periods of time to achieve very extensive genetic modification of plants that were virtually inedible to begin with, but which are now quite friendly to humans.

Also about 11,000 years ago, these same uniquely intelligent forms of life began carefully and skillfully breeding wolves into the 235 different species of dogs which today in multiple ways are close friends and benefactors of human beings.

It must be added that all of the most ancient evidences of human-like creatures are, along with the rest of nature, shockingly violent and vicious—in fact, cannibals.

Some paleo-historians today feel that the appearance of this kind of radically superior *intelligence* even if violent and carnivorous is more significant in determining the first appearance of true humans than the study of fossil bones. Thus, I want to suggest for discussion two ideas: 1) that the time when humans first appeared can be detected from the first evidence of the intelligence necessary for the genetic alteration of plants and animals, and 2) that all of this may all have occurred before Adam.

Adam, we are told, is a human distinctively created in the image of God which could at least mean as God intended, that is, for example, non-carnivorous. It is not until later in Genesis that Adam's lineage is described as reverting to carnivorous behavior, following his fall and the breakdown of the Edenic New Beginning.

In any case, the clear implication is that the rampant, destructive violence observable all throughout nature was a perversion of God's original intent and design. Eden, in that light, would then have been a New Beginning which was a re-creation of that revealed original intent, just as Isaiah 11 describes the lion lying down with the lamb in the ultimate triumph of God's intent—once again in the form of non-carnivorous and non-violent life.

## **Mystery 4: An Intelligent Counterforce**

It is important to recognize the full extent of the distortion of nature by an active, intelligent counterforce, and the need for those defending God's glory today to deal seriously with the continuous and now contemporary worldwide assault by the microbiological world on both animal and human life.

This kind of recognition, this apparently belated insight, would seem to be essential to any truly serious mobilization of believers to fight back against the origins of disease. This defines a larger concept of mission and is my primary concern.

Unless and until that recognition is more widespread, we are confined and restricted to a gospel which concentrates almost solely on individuals gaining assurance about getting into the next world and merely staying out of trouble until then. In this common understanding of the Christian life there is no war going on. Worse still, many thinking people are honestly wondering how a loving and all-powerful God can both

create, and put up with or condone the pervasive violence and suffering and sickness in this world. Is God expecting our help?

In any case, the puzzle which both theologians and scientists face regarding the specific process of the creation of life is made drastically more complicated, as I say, by this additional and strange factor, namely, the evidence of a counterforce to whatever might seem to be beautiful and good. One of the least mentioned and yet unavoidable characteristics of nature is the absolutely pervasive evidence of a counterforce distorting, degrading, and destroying all that is good, pitting animal against animal and human against human, and in addition pulling down all forms of animal and human life by means of deadly viruses, bacteria, and ominously clever parasites.

Curiously, those who commendably urge the recognition of Intelligent Design in nature do not seem to notice that such recognition creates a new problem: that of people assuming that violence in nature is due to the work of God rather than Satan. By contrast, Darwin pondered the strangeness of an omnipotent God of love and the apparently gratuitous death of his little niece, the premature death of his father, and the rampant violence and suffering throughout nature. God's resulting proposal of a purely natural, and random evolution was in one sense his method of absolving God of blame for the evident evil in nature. It might have been easier had he seriously considered the existence of the factor of intelligent evil opposition to God. Intelligent Design people need to recognize the existence of both good and evil design, or they malign God the Creator.

We can plainly see this virulent evil in the earliest remains of hominids, humanoids, or modern humans who perversely and pervasively portray homicidal behavior—the sort of thing bluntly described in Genesis. We also see evil in the omnipresent evidence of destructive disease. If divine intent is reflected in the recreation that may be described in Genesis, as well as the final situation described in Isa. 6 and 11 (in which the lion will lie down with the lamb), we can readily recognize that nature-as-we-know-it is clearly not the way a loving, powerful divine being would have intended it.

However, if dangerous wolves can be altered genetically through selective breeding over a lengthy period of time, so, you would think, could man-eating tigers. That procedure would seem to be better than either of the two main alternatives we have at present—either to kill or cage. I have read that there are only 5,000 tigers remaining in the wild, while in the U.S. as temporary pets there are another 10,000. I say temporary because treating wolves or tigers in a friendly way does not change their DNA. Nor, apparently, can either animals or humans become herbivorous just by being fed plant life.

The often overlooked genetic distortion that has already happened would seem clearly to be a more serious problem than can be coped with either through behavioral or nutritional modification. Patient, multi-generational selective breeding can make a difference but is a process which is clumsy compared to gene splicing. Original sin in this light could be what resulted from genetic distortion. This may be why despite the power of the Gospel to transform lives humans still have seemingly indelible inclinations to sin, as Paul testifies in Romans 7.

## **Mysteries 5 and 6**

In later lessons we will take up the curious emergence of high civilizations which seem to be succeeded by less sophisticated civilizations, which is Mystery 5, and the most significant mystery of all, Mystery 6, which is what Paul called a mystery, the

Abrahamic plan for the re-conquest of all creation. That is essentially the story of the rest of the Bible and history beyond the Bible.

## Random Quotes from Ralph Winter Seminars

(various dates through 2008)

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6-15-00

- Our contribution to the fulfillment of the Lord's Prayer is most likely to be accomplished by an effort intended to enhance the impact of the mission societies of the world. ... Our destiny then is to be a mission society among mission societies working to enhance the impact of those societies, not just being one more mission society that sends out pioneer missionaries.

10-30-01

- The Intelligent Design movement isn't as sensitive as Darwin was to violence in nature. Darwin at least has an explanation for why God can't be blamed. Intelligent Design people don't have an explanation for that. ... Right now, only evolution has an answer to the problem of evil, but their theory is the shakiest there ever was. The most fundamental problem in Western Civilization is that even Christians are unwilling to even look at the problem of evil. We have no explanation for this.
- God works all things for good out of whatever evil deed Satan performs, but this is not the same as saying God works by sending evil.
- There is a massive fight going on and we are called to fight in it. The Son of God appeared for purpose to destroy the works of the devil. "As father sent me, so send I you." WE have authority in physical realm to take authority, just as in the spiritual world (no dichotomy between spiritual and physical).

1-4-02

- What is God asking us to do? What ARE the works of the devil?
- God has called for a war but no one has gone. Missions is a fumbling attempt to prosecute that war. Missions should encompass all things to do with God's glory.
- We need to de-contextualize the gospel in our own inheritance before we can contextualize it for others.
- Summary: We need to understand reality as best we can to be faithful to the purposes of God.

1-14-02

- Adjusting our lives and our thinking to the Bible is the name of the game.
- Our understanding of what the Bible is about and our understanding of theology is humanistic.
- McGavran said, "all evangelism is heresy."
- RDW: People need the Word of God to grow past their initial understanding of Christianity
- Matthew 24: This gospel OF THE KINGDOM will be preached. ... It is about people yielding to the authority of the Lord of the Kingdom.

2-02

- Education that does not interrupt the productive relationship of the student to society: This is the purpose of distance education and a goal WCF was designed to help achieve.

2-1-02

- If we are convinced the will of God always involves serene circumstances, there is no hope of going forward.

2-7-02

- The current major approach to mobilization is at the root of our mission problem.
- The future of missions depends on the quality of the people going into it.
- We need secular supplements to show the influence of the Gospel on history.
- Mission training has to begin before college graduation. Otherwise we'll have the re-amateurization of missions as with the Student Volunteer Movement which set missions back 40 years: eager, dedicated people, but unprepared for what they faced.

4-19-02

- Awareness of God's handwork enhances our sense of God's presence.
- The deepness and richness of our walk with God depends on the deepness and richness of our knowledge [of God's world].

6-10-02

- The key to unlocking many separate peoples to be addressed adequately with the gospel may be an over-arching affinity characteristic (such as ancestor worship) which needs to be addressed.
- Counterpoint to emphasis on individual peoples: instead of moving ahead with small minority peoples, turn instead to large majority groups where we haven't achieved a viable Christian faith tradition within these major cultures.
- All groups of Muslims have same problem, but those working with individual groups can't quite see it.
- Maybe 90% of the future of missions will be radically different from what we've seen.

8-2-02

- What would missions look like on earth if there were no human beings?
- The purpose of missions is to destroy the works of the devil.
- Human beings are not the goal of evangelism but the means of mission to help God vanquish the devil.

8-15-02

- "A person who can draw on wisdom from insights down through history can make better decisions today."

9-5-02 4

- Man was created to participate in a battle already going on, to re-take Christ's dominion over Satan.

9-6-02

- Are human beings here on earth to watch God win the battle or here on earth to HELP God win the battle?

9-13-02

- Re Business and Missions: Major problem: There is no normal meeting that brings together proponents of both types of ministry: business and traditional missions.
- A new “gap” identified by Dr. Winter in his seminar: The unsolved chasm between business and mission needs healing, with business being defined as ministry that is remunerative and pays for itself.

9-25-02

- Transform the mission industry to an earlier recruitment pattern. That could be launched at an ISFM seminar next Fall.
- Series of supplemental booklets to track with the public schools of America and get it into the Sunday Schools.
- Give the Bible in a language a people can understand: let them dig out what it means in their culture.
- Colossians 1:13: Christian life is a war. What does it mean to rescue people from the dominion of darkness? I have pondered this long and hard the last few years.

10-11-02

- Evangelicals need to reclaim science, the other book God wrote.
- The God of creation and the God of the Bible are the same person.
- All over the world people are studying God’s works through microscopes and telescopes.
- The most unifying phenomenon in the world is science.

10-16-02

- We’re not attracting the right kind of people by dangling the free gift of salvation in front of them.
- We deflect people from God to their own salvation. We attract people concerned about themselves.
- The missionary’s job is to glorify God (reflect the glory of God). It is God’s job to take care of people’s salvation and destiny in heaven or not.
- If people expect the wrong thing, they don’t recognize the right thing when they see it.
- The Book of Creation is being studied by thousands of devout, awed scientists who don’t know it is God’s book.
- We need to maximize the dazzling of the glory of God to people.
- The Bible itself is distance education

10-18-02

- A missions minded pastor can be ten times more strategic than a missionary. Pastors create missionaries.



12-2-02

- God brought human beings into the fight to assist Him against Satan.
- When missions from a human point of view succeeds, humans who are rescued don't become soldiers (as intended) but often sit down and take their ease.

2-1-03

- We are not just disseminating information but are involved in the conquest of evil. Are we soldiers conquering evil or expecting God to do something for us? We are spectators, not soldiers.

2-4-03

- Someone has to mine the Bible for wisdom. Take a good look at the church in the world. What is needed is not U.S. culture.

3-30-03

- Our gospel is vitiated by our lack of awareness of God's glory in creation.
- The true glory of God is rescued only if you postulate the existence of a spiritual adversary.

4-9-03

- Nothing that is not done daily will dominate your life

4-29-03 • Forming a permanent community of believers ready for any good work, in a commitment beyond church membership, is probably the most important thing I have ever attempted to do. I am open to advice from every side.

6-12-03

- Re conventional attitudes to disease: It is not true that "the most important thing is prayer. God is still in charge." If a baby was drowning in a bath tub this would not be true. The church has the audacity to be content to pray and let the world do the hard work in the lab. They want someone else who doesn't love Christ to do the work.

11-16-03

- In the spiritual formation movement: how big is the component of military preparation?
- There needs to be a gearing up for battle: destroying the works of the devil.

11-22-03

- Re WCF overarching theme of the glory of God: I really don't think God so much SEEKS glory (except in Calvin's thinking). He HAS glory. He possesses glory. We obviously must want to seek to understand more and more of His glory (not by singing repetitive songs), but we must also glorify God in great part as a means of setting the record straight in dealing with people deceived by Satan—as in the case of the father whose wife drowned their five children, he said, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." It is perverted theology like that which stands in the way of rescuing people out of the hands of Satan. We must be able to blame the right person! Doing that requires removing a twisted-lens view of God's glory as a "means." In this vein I see most "worship" as possibly very superficial if not almost totally sterile. You would think that

true worship would involve discovering more and more of His glory not repeating platitudes. A church service could in my mind be redeemed if only for two minutes someone said something that revealed more of His glory. Much of that we wall off as secular “science.” This itself is because of diabolic deception.

8-7-04

- Complaining is the most creative force in history.

9-18-04

- Use the term “restoration” instead of transformation.
- Three stages in God’s plan: Good (creation) Corruption Restoration (see Isaiah where lion eats straw, the earth is full of 7 God’s glory)

10-29-04

- Statement by RDW to Beth: The best way to explain Ralph Winter’s life is his increasing understanding of the Bible.

12-10-04

- On spiritual formation: Living with ambiguity and the willingness to postpone the gratification of desires are aspects of maturity. Spiritual maturity doesn’t come by trying to be more holy. “He who seeks to save his life will lose it.” Spiritual growth comes from hundreds of little hammer blows that are responded to with acts of obedience.

2-1-08

- Poverty is not people with an absence of food, it is people with enemies.
- It is the impossibility of earning money beyond barely enough to survive.
- Social action is the empowerment of the gospel.
- There are hardly any evangelicals on the front lines of world problems.
- Jim Wallis: Social action without personal experience with Christ is useless.
- RWI: We need to broaden the scope of what missions is doing—the Kingdom Era/ the Fourth Era.

3-28-08

- We’re trying to enlist people to get INTO trouble, not keep them out of trouble.
- Go after evil in an organized way, not as individuals.

6-27-08

- I can’t think of anything more important than understanding what the Bible is really saying.

## OIL Address (One in Love Conference)

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There is a book called *Maps of Time* and the subtitle has to do with the words “Big History.” Your theme is the story of redemption—this is a big story. And this book is the first serious secular book written on what is now being called “Big History”. Now, history has been around for a long time. Some historians, all they have ever written is the definition of history. But they do not make any guesses; they only tell you what they see. There are no interpretations there. That is, generally speaking, they shy away from interpretations, because they are the guardians of the facts. But you know, nobody has ever put into book form the whole story of what we think we know of human history. Now I am talking about the big bang.

How many of you know what I mean by the big bang? That’s the theory that the whole universe popped out of a tiny little particle. It seems very likely right? Believing the resurrection is difficult but believing the whole universe popped out of a little particle is simple? Now, to go from there to here is “Big History”. (Most of what I say in the next few minutes has to do with what the secular understanding world thinks is true.) Is there any question interpretation of that that enables this big picture to be a Christian interpretation. This is the theme of the conference—the story of redemption.

This book points out that in the big bang things very rapidly sprang into being. Do you suppose they sprang into life at the speed of light? You could see the results of a vast display of millions of stars that are connected with one galaxy, our own home galaxy. Now probably, most of you have never visited another galaxy, but anyways that’s our home galaxy. Now if you travel in a spaceship let’s say, and you speed up to the speed of light, it would take you one hundred thousand years just to cross our one galaxy. That’s pretty big. But there are three trillion such galaxies. Anyone know the word trillion? It’s a million billion. So, here you’ve got one million billion galaxies, some bigger than our galaxy. Ours is *about* the biggest galaxy, wouldn’t it be neat if we could say that ours is the biggest galaxy though? Now, the reason we are talking about galaxies is not because I want to go into astronomy or anything like that. According to the latest theories, can you believe it, this little particle extended within a fraction of a second to the size of our galaxy. It takes a little more to believe that. So this is the standard understanding: thirteen billion years ago this big bang took place. Does anyone here know who was watching that? The theory is that everything we know just “happened”. So that’s the first page in “Big History.” That’s what I call mystery number one, and it is truly a mystery.

Now, along the line of that theory of time of 14 billion years there came a time when our own planet was formed 4 and a half billion years ago. A billion years ago? That’s a long time ago. That’s part of the whole expanse of the universe. So far as we know, this did not happen in any other planet. There must be billions and billions of planets if there are billions of galaxies. All we know is that on our planet something happened that was very unique. The appearance of life itself.

Any of you guys who are chemists know that the table of elements describes a vast, complex, incredible system of basic building blocks called atoms. And you know, parasites are really huge, bacteria are not quite as big, and viruses are the smallest form of

life. A virus has maybe 10 million atoms in it. So, life, in its very smallest form, is still an incredible combination of what was already there before and what is all throughout the universe. Never has any meteorite ever come in that has anything different from what we already expected from this table. The second mystery in this “Big History” is this story of redemption. Life began to appear long ago in forms so small that there are no fossils. Now, I’m telling you what our society has settled on. These are the people we have to talk to about Jesus Christ.

So the first mystery is the forming of atoms and the second mystery is taking those complex building blocks and putting them together by the thousands of millions and producing something that moves, lives and re-produces. Now they are looking at what they call string theory. It turns out that the tiniest particles that you can’t see...don’t actually exist. See, that’s easy to believe, the tiniest particles you can’t see don’t exist.

In this series of events life itself, in the early period, appeared finally: the cell. In the year 1900 the cell was a little glob of jello. It was pretty hard to know what was in the cell. You could take the period at the end of a sentence and you could put 200 thousand cells on that period and not cover it up completely. So cells are pretty small. But if you take a cell and extend it to the size of Pennsylvania it would be more complex than the state itself. Cells have unimaginable internal complexity. This is really something, when cells first appear.

By the way, let me just quickly assure you, I don’t believe in evolution. I could even believe the big bang before I believe evolution. In fact I don’t know any reason to not believe the big bang...except common sense. But in the case of evolution there are very good reasons not to believe that life evolved without any guidance of intelligence. And more recently we were talking about intelligent design being evident in nature, and the scientists are all kind of, they don’t talk about that because if you get God in the picture you have to cover it up. They don’t want anything to do with intelligent design.

Now, in the story which our people today believe, mystery three is kind of a combined mystery, first of all, it’s the pain, it’s the suffering, it’s the horror, the nightmare of the evolutionist. Evolutionists believe everything evolved over time, very gradually. Just give it enough millions of years and it will get fancier and fancier and pretty soon you will have an ape and then you will have a human being. I mean this is evolution. But, instead of things happening that way, even the evolutionists can’t deny the Cambrian explosion. Now just before the Cambrian explosion there was a period called the Ediacaran period, where there are fossils, some of the oldest forms of life that we have ever found. These little animals that lived before the Cambrian explosion, they didn’t eat or fight each other, they didn’t have any protection (like a crustacean in the ocean has), they didn’t have sharp teeth to tear each other apart. This is a very interesting period that developed, but then the next thing that happens is you have an explosion. Almost all the forms of life we know today exploded into being about 500 million years ago according to this theory. It’s the worst nightmare of evolution that anything happened suddenly. Within a very short time an absolute explosion of larger animals appeared, of all sorts.

Now that explosion coincides with the first appearance of predatory life. From this point on, according to this theory which is generally accepted by secular, all of the sudden now every form of life is either prey or predator or both. Now I’m going to ask you something, if we’re going to explain this in terms of God’s glory, is it reasonable to

suppose that all of a sudden on a Saturday afternoon God said, “you know, what I want a little more excitement around here, I want them to eat each other, fight each other”? In all of nature tooth and claw you have nothing but what we call homicide, the killing and killing and killing. I remember years and years ago seeing a television screen with a little brown line coming across and then suddenly, I’m closer and closer and there is this half a ton wilderbeast and all of the sudden it comes across the middle of the screen and these five wild African dogs come across and get hold of this wilderbeast and tear it apart. I don’t believe God loves to see this happen. I believe there is a Satan. And if you talk to secular people one of the great mysteries is why all of the sudden there is predation in nature. And they say “Well, you know survival of the fittest, you know, that’s the way it is.” Let me ask you an honest question. Have any of you ever stopped to think why in all nature is there so much absolute violence and killing? Why? Is this the way God wants things to be? Well, he doesn’t want humans to fight but he is perfectly fine with animals fighting? So then this third mystery is the sudden appearance of predatory forms of life.

Then of course there ensued a huge period, 500 million years of all kinds of life appearing including dinosaurs. Anybody heard of dinosaurs? Well anyways they suddenly disappeared and all of a sudden humans appeared. Humans are absolutely different from every other form of life. For example, DNA tests have proved that Neanderthals have no connection with humans. Human beings just don’t fit the pattern. The main difference between human beings and other animals is that human beings worry about themselves and all kind of other people and think about the stars etc. We don’t have a lot of apes that are specialists in cosmology. So, these human beings, you’d think, would be smart enough to alter genetically forms of life that were inexistent at that time of life.

Now, there are two major types of life that they could deal with at that time. About 11,000 years ago is the first evidence of genetic selection in the form of plant life. Now, how many of you have ever eaten rice? How many have ever eaten corn, wheat, potatoes? Every single one of those forms of plant life are artificially engineered. They didn’t start out that way. Corn originally was just a weed. There were some very intelligent animals, I’m just joking, human beings who about 11,000 years ago began to monkey with artificial selection. They didn’t insert any gene slips into the cells, we are just beginning to do that.

The same thing happened in the realm of animal life. The latest understanding is that the first evidence of genetic selection of animal life was about 11,000 years ago. There are two different groups of scientists. Plant scientists and animal scientists. They both have evidence that only 11,000 years ago were there really intelligent humans on this planet. Human beings are young earth. All human experience falls in the last 11,000 years, according to these theories. This is the fourth mystery. I wish I could tell you about how this all happened, the scientists themselves don’t know how this happened. Let’s talk about the first appearance of really intelligent animals. According to these studies, every dog was bred out of wolves, the Chinese began to select wolves and they eventually found tamer wolves. Dogs are very important in many societies, you talk about sheep herders. They are very, very bright animals. This is the enigma, when did they first appear? And how in the world did they suddenly gain all this intelligence? I mean the Neanderthals, the cave men, their pictures don’t look like Leonardo Da Vinci’s. The truly intelligent evidences are only 11,000 years ago. Once human beings appeared there was a

second great tragic event when animal life began to flourish in the Cambrian explosion—there was this first entrance of violence.

Now again, in the history of human beings and what we call the fall of Adam, human beings began to be corrupted and distorted and they developed sharp teeth and digestive system to handle meat: other human beings and animals. In genesis chapter one it talks about God creating animals and human beings and he gave them plants to eat. Their digestive systems were designed for plant life. Something came in, and all of the sudden they became carnivorous. That means vicious. So now, not only the rest of creation but even the human being is corrupted. This early period, when animal life became corrupted, I would say that was the fall of Satan.

So you have two falls. The fall of Satan, and the fall of Man. When Satan was tempting Adam, he had a crime record. Did you ever stop and think about that? I think that if you believe in intelligent design, you must believe in intelligent evil design. There is evidence of an intelligent nature. But if there is any evidence of intelligent nature, there is also evidence of a huge amount of evil intelligence. Destructive, distorted intelligence.

The creation, which we see in Genesis 1:27-28, is a creation of animal life that don't eat each other, don't fight each other, don't kill each other. What is God going to do about this? And so, in this story that we are trying to follow, one of the major events is this new beginning which we see in Genesis where God creates all over again animals that don't eat each other and human beings at the same time. And yet even in this new beginning there are evidences that Satan got into that picture and found it. Now let me back up for a second. How many of you have ever seen Arizona meteor crater? It's a huge mile across hole in the middle of Arizona. It's about a 1/3rd of a mile deep. And I'm telling you, talk about a hole. Let's talk about craters that are 15 miles across. Imagine a rock a mile or two or three in diameter traveling at the speed of a bullet producing a crater 15 miles across. Now, what I'm getting at is that God is not just interested in rescuing human beings. See this is a much bigger picture.

All creation groans and strains according to Romans 8 waiting for the redemption. But if we talk about redemption we have to talk about restoration of creation, you can't just talk about the ticket to heaven in the pocket of human beings. Getting human beings redeemed is not the end, it's the beginning.

I grew up during the Second World War. I was pretty young but I got in there in the last 2 and 3 years. I could see with my eyes two different worlds. I could see the incredible change in American society. In Japan they were tearing up the rails and putting up the hard wood. They tore down the banisters and you couldn't buy shoes made out of leather. There has never been another war the scope of the Second World War. Our country has never really been jeopardized since the Second World War. Every human being, every citizen became captured by that war.

OK now, I was at Cal Tech already in the second year. And the Army and the Navy said they needed some of these college students. And that they would pay their tuition until they graduated and then make them officers. And this was a pretty good deal. It wasn't an option, you either do that, you go in the Army, or you get drafted. And so, we were being prepared for the Navy. Your whole life was scheduled. They didn't care about you, they cared about winning the war. The thing I do recall is, the clothes we were issued were high quality stuff. The shoes, the pants the other garments we were given were absolutely quality stuff. Now, my family was never really a poor family, but we

never bought stuff like that. The navy took very good care of you; you didn't have to say, "I need to go get my teeth cleaned", it was on a schedule.

There are lots of Christians trying to live in the millennium when there is not a war going on. Up until now, maybe in your church or whatever you got the impression that you get the missionary call and WHEE EEEE! you go and you lose all your possibilities of being a rich business man or a great computer programmer and now God is going to waste your life. That doesn't happen. I don't believe there is such a thing as a missionary call. Is there anybody here who has accepted Christ but not accepted his commission? If you have not accepted his commission you have not accepted Christ! You can't divide between Christ and the work he is doing and the purposes he has. You can't say, "Oh Jesus is such a wonderful person." Hey, he is busy. He's not even listening to you.

The Bible more than any other thing in my life has really stopped and stunned and changed my life. And it's something that you can't laugh off. I want to refer you to 2 Corinthians 5:15. He died for all so that they might have nice uniforms and a place to stay and food to eat and just get along wonderfully? "He died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again." Do you know what that means? That means you have no options. You cannot say God has not called me. God has called you. You're all part of the war effort. Let me read it again. "He died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again."

Some people talk about the two books of God, the book of nature and the book of scripture in which he reveals himself. Now, what is he trying to do? Some people say he is trying to restore his glory. Now, if the son of God appeared to destroy the works of the Devil obviously destroying the works of the devil brings glory to God. Now, how do we get there? We're either going to be part of the problem or part of the solution. Not one person in this room has a choice, if you follow Christ and follow the Christ of the Bible. Have you ever stopped to think what a jolt Jesus was to his disciples? You know, there's a page in the book of Mark. Here Jesus is paying attention to a man with a withered hand. In many societies, people who are deformed are rejected. That's true in the New Testament society. Jesus paid attention to them. He paid attention to sick people, he paid attention to children.

Ok, the next verse is Galatians 2:20. "I have been crucified with Christ and it is NO LONGER I who live but Christ who lives within me, and the life I live I live by the faith of the son of God." Faith is the word for divine illumination. Faith enables belief. The guidance of God is very rarely teleological. It's very rarely going to see ten years ahead. His ways are not our ways. The third verse is in Ephesians. It says here in 2:10 "we are his workmanship that no one should boast." Created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared for him. By grace we have been saved. Saved through faith.

Now, I'm sorry that this is all so sketchy. And the big question of course is what is it he wants to do. I talked to a girl this afternoon, she is interested in hunger. And I said how about poverty. And I said well how about disease. If 4 out of 5 members of the family are sick then the family is in poverty. Disease is pulling people down all the time. Pulling me down, pulling you down. You know what. If we want to glorify God we have to reduce those things that tear him down. Our God is being blamed for all kinds of evil today. Once you get it clear in your mind that to Glorify God is to restore his creation not

merely get people into heaven; get people saved not simply to give them a new life but to enlist them. Now whatever you decide to major in, you can't, unless you are following God.

I have a very close friend who is a wonderful tremendous pastor, brilliant man. When my first wife was diagnosed with cancer he said, "You have to realize this is God." When a gnat bats its wing it's God's power. Everything that happens, is God. There is no Satan in that picture. There is no intelligent evil. And God is the one that does all of these terrible things. THIS gospel will not float in a scientific era. And that is not the God of the Bible. There is a recent book called *Is God to Blame?* And one of the things it says is that in present day times Evangelicals, when something goes wrong, resign themselves to saying "What's God up to?" In the New Testament when they don't expect it they say, "I'm going to be a good Christian and God is going to protect me." Half of all males and a third of all females will have cancer before they die. In one way or another all who follow Christ will experience his sufferings. I get tired when I hear people talk about "The Passion" movie and how wonderful it is that Jesus' blood atoned for our sins. Well, that's certainly part of the movie and that's the reason that this guy, whatever his name is, realized Jesus suffered for him so he made a movie emphasizing Christ's suffering. But you know what that movie shows? It's pretty obvious. It shows the existing power of the Devil. If you want to know what Satan is up to, he had a hand in that. This is something that we usually don't attribute to Satan. We say "God sent his son to the cross."

God is in charge of everything, but there is also an evil. Well look, my time is up. But you know, accepting Jesus Christ, if we don't accept his commission, we are simply worthless. All of the religions of the world cater to human aspirations. Except for Jesus. Let's face it, this whole conference is about missions. Every single thing that was said has to do with the mission of God. There is no such a thing as a missionary call. Most Christians, in their own minds are off the hook. But that's not really true.