

The Discerner

“Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error”
1 John 4:6

The Voice of the Religion Analysis Service

Volume 24, Number 2

April • May • June 2004

AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL QUARTERLY EXPOSING UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

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Editorial Committee

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FAREWELL TO DR. AND MRS. BEVIER

By Ervin D. Ingebretson
Vice-President, Religion Analysis Service



Left to right – Rev. Ervin Ingebretson, Vice President; Dr. Roy E. McRoberts, Newly-elected President; Dr. William BeVier, Retired President; Ron Anderson, Treasurer; Rev. Laurence J. Sutherland, Secretary, Editor of Discerner.

On 17 April 2004 Dr. William BeVier resigned as President and Board Member of Religion Analysis Service, Inc. This was done in preparation for the BeViers' move in May from Minnesota to Springfield, Missouri to enjoy their retirement years. Dr. BeVier served on the Board of Religion Analysis Service for twenty-five years, fifteen of which he served as President of the organization.

Dr. and Mrs. BeVier have served the Lord faithfully in several venues of ministry throughout their lives. Their leadership in the ministry of Religion Analysis Service has been professional, genuine, and based on a deep love for God and the message of the Word of God. During his tenure on the Board,

Dr. BeVier also taught a class on cults as a faculty member of Northwestern College in St. Paul.

Mrs. BeVier (JoAnn) used her professional training and experience in office management to adequately direct office operations, an important support of the ministry.

Dr. BeVier has favorably responded to a request to serve on the RAS Board of Reference and as Assistant Editor of the Discerner. The RAS Board is most grateful for this continuing involvement.

The faithful and loving service of Dr. and Mrs. BeVier will be greatly missed. On behalf of the Board members, volunteers, faithful contributors, and all who have used the services of the ministry, we wish for the BeViers a happy and blessed retirement in their new location. May God bless them richly!

FROM THE EDITOR (Self-introduction)

By Laurence J. Sutherland

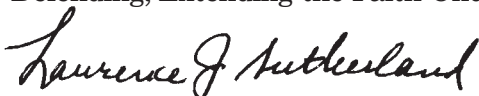
Years ago I became acquainted with the ministry of the Religion Analysis Service. At that time my wife Shirley and I and our family of five children were living in Germany where I instructed at a German Bible College. One of my courses I taught had to do with Cults or in German: “Sektenkunde” or “The Study of the Cults”. The RAS supplied significant documentary and anecdotal data for this course. More recently, since 1994, I have regularly taught about the cults in Bible Colleges in Latvia, Romania, and Ukraine. Presently, Shirley and I are serving in various missions activities while located in Coon Rapids, a suburb of Minneapolis.

When RAS requested help on its Board in 1999, I gladly joined. During these four years I have become acutely aware of the quality, depth, and scope of this ministry. In its 58 years of existence, RAS has helped thousands to understand, analyze, and confront a myriad of unbiblical cults and movements. During the last 25 years, my predecessor and esteemed professor, Dr. William BeVier, and his wife JoAnn, have made this ministry of incalculable value to the church of Jesus Christ. They have given their best years of humble devotion to Christ and to RAS.

Upon Dr. BeVier's retirement in April 2004, the RAS Board asked me to assume the editorship of the DISCERNER. I accept this call, though daunting, as a solemn, but welcome opportunity to continue the unique work of RAS. With your prayers and by the grace of God, RAS will continue to assist God's people in this countercult ministry.

A Bible verse that is helpful to me at this time is: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord,” Romans 12:11 (NSV)

Defending, Extending the Faith Once Delivered,



P. S. In the next issues of Discerner, I will detail more about my family, spiritual, academic, and missions backgrounds.

IN THIS ISSUE

By Laurence J. Sutherland

With this new quarterly edition (April - June 2004), we have chosen a diversity of themes.

Dr. Ron McRoberts, the President of the RAS Board and mathematics researcher, begins a series of reflections on Dispensationalism. In some circles this word is almost anathema as critics view Dispensationalism as a relic of the past, a theological system that chopped up the Scriptures into segments that hindered a clear progressive view of God's revelation to His people. Dr. McRoberts wishes to clarify and demonstrate that Dispensationalism is still alive and is quite appropriate to give us an overarching and balanced perspective of the story of redemption. Certainly this new look at Dispensationalism is timely in the wake of Near Eastern dramas.

We have also been led to include two scientific articles written by Dr. Henry Morris, founder of the Creation Research Institute, and used by permission. These two articles: "The Mathematical Impossibility of Evolution" and "Design is Not Enough" are extremely thought provoking, to say the least, and they are a serious challenge to scientific secularism, evolution, and mediating theologies of the Genesis account. This is not easy reading. One might want to put aside an hour or two to thoroughly digest these accounts.

In the book review, Rev. Ervin Ingebretson, our senior RAS Board member, treats "Unveiling Islam" the authors, Ergun and Emir Caner, are former Muslims. Rev. Ingebretson reviews historical, documentary, and anecdotal material from the hand of the Caner brothers, who now as Christian educators, compare Christianity with the Muslim faith. Their comparisons and analyses are extremely helpful in our understanding of Islam. This is our second review of this book (see an earlier review by Dr. William BeVier, Volume 23, Number 2). We feel that this book has strong current interest and is worthy of serious study.

A PRIMER ON CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM

PART I: THE HERMENEUTICS OF DISPENSATIONALISM

By Ronald E. McRoberts, PhD

With this article, the Discerner introduces a multi-part series on dispensationalism. The objectives of the series are threefold. First, the series will provide a discussion of the fundamental principles and features of Classic Dispensationalism as taught by Darby, Scofield, and Dallas Theological Seminary via Chafer, Walvoord, Ryrie, and Pentecost. Second, the series will emphasize development of the primary features of dispensationalism from fundamental first principles. Third, the series will organize the presentation of dispensationalism using a combination of heuristic and systematic approaches. The series is not intended to be a defense of dispensationalism against the attacks of its critics, nor is it intended to provide a detailed comparison of dispensational and non-dispensational systems. Nevertheless, it will distinguish among different forms of dispensationalism including Classic Dispensationalism, Ultra- or Hyper-Dispensationalism, and Progressive Dispensationalism. The series will not break new ground in the study of dispensationalism but will be a synthesis of dispensational teachings from multiple sources. Although considerable material is available on dispensationalism, much of it is brief and superficial, much of it is available only in tracts and pamphlets, and much of it is apologetic or historical in nature. Finally, the series is intended for the layperson who may not have access to these sources.

The idea for a publication with these objectives, originally envisioned under the title of "A Primer on Dispensationalism," emerged from a series of Sunday School classes the author taught a number of years ago. Unfortunately, in the interim John H. Gerstner has authored a critical, disparaging commentary on dispensationalism with the same title.¹ Thus, the more precise term, Classic Dispensationalism, is used in the title of this series as a means of distinguishing it from the Gerstner work.

The proponents of dispensationalism have offered numerous definitions of this theological system. Although those familiar with dispensationalism may find these definitions meaningful and acceptably precise, novices may easily find them convoluted and rife with jargon. Thus, there is merit in investigating the foundational principles on which dispensationalism is based before attempting a definition.

The investigation begins with the understanding that God gave man the gift of language as a medium for conveying His revelation. A fundamental principle underlying dispensationalism is that God used this gift of language to communicate His revelation in such a way that man would readily understand it. Thus, dispensationalists argue for an approach to interpreting Scripture that gives to every word the same meaning that it would have in normal usage. Terms used to describe this approach include literal, plain, normal, and obvious. In addition, because words are analyzed in their historical and grammatical context, this approach has been characterized as the historical-grammatical method. This literal or normal interpretative approach does not preclude the use of figures of speech, symbols, and types, but it insists that they be interpreted in their normal sense. Thus, in Luke 13:32 when Jesus refers to Herod as “that fox,” He was not saying that Herod was a carnivorous mammal of the dog family. Those hearing the statement understood that Jesus was referring to Herod’s cunning and sly nature. In Revelation 22:16, when Jesus referred to himself as “the Morning Star”, dispensationalists understand, as did John’s original readers, that Jesus is not being characterized as an inanimate object, but rather that His attributes are being described with a figure of speech. Similarly, in Revelation 11:3, when John described a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, dispensationalists understand, as did John’s original readers, that the dragon is a symbol, a symbol which was later associated with Satan. Dictionaries define the word *hermeneutics* as the study of the methodological principles of interpretation. Dispensationalists use the phrase *literal hermeneutic* to describe the literal or normal interpretative approach they use.

On occasion, the Scriptures document exceptions to the literal hermeneutic. For example, sometimes teaching was given with the intent that it not be understood. In Matthew 13, Jesus’ disciples asked why He taught the crowds in parables,

and He responded that He did so in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (6:9) that the people would hear but not understand. In addition, sometimes later revelation expands the fulfillment of prophecies to include features that were not originally communicated. Paul explains to Gentile believers that they have become spiritual sons of Abraham and, as a result, partakers of the blessings that God originally promised only to Abraham's physical descendants (Romans 4:12, 16-17; 11:11-32, Galatians 3:14). However, Paul cautions the Romans that their inclusion as spiritual sons of Abraham is not at the expense of Israel; i.e., their inclusion does not mean that Israel has now been excluded. The interpretive principle, guided by the literal hermeneutic, is that although the fulfillment of an original promise or prophecy may be expanded, the original itself is not revoked. Dispensationalists acknowledge these exceptions but only when they are documented by Scripture, not at the whim of interpreters.

Ryrie gives three reasons dispensationalists adhere to the literal hermeneutic.² First, as previously noted, if God gave man language for the purpose of communicating with mankind, then it follows that in communicating His revelation He would use language that man would readily understand in its literal, normal, plain sense. Second, the Old Testament prophecies concerning the birth, ministry, and death of Messiah were all fulfilled literally. Third, adherence to the literal hermeneutic leads to consistent, objective interpretation, while failure to interpret literally or normally opens the door to as many subjective interpretations as there are interpreters.

Thus, the first distinctive of dispensationalism is its adherence to the literal hermeneutic. Although dispensationalists are not the only ones to use the literal hermeneutic, they are the only ones to use it consistently in the interpretation of the entirety of Scripture. Proponents of other theological systems may use the literal hermeneutic, but they do so selectively and inconsistently, particularly when it comes to prophecy where they use allegorical interpretations or advocate spiritual rather than physical fulfillment.

The most pronounced distinctive of dispensationalism is the distinction it maintains between Israel and the church. Regarding Israel, God's unconditional, everlasting covenant with Abraham featured promises in three categories: (1) personal blessings that included a great name, a multitude of

physical descendants, the land of Canaan, and blessings upon those who blessed him and curses upon those who cursed him; (2) national blessings that included Abraham's physical descendants becoming a great nation and the land of Canaan becoming an everlasting possession of that nation; and (3) universal blessings, primarily that all peoples would be blessed through Abraham's physical descendants (Genesis 17:1-8). When the provisions of the covenant are interpreted using the normal meaning of the words, it is clear that God intended Abraham to understand that his physical descendants would be a great physical nation and that they would have the physical land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. Further, knowing that God's personal promises to Abraham were fulfilled literally and that his physical descendants have indeed become a great nation, there is no reason to expect the remainder of the provisions not to be fulfilled literally also. Regarding the church, Enns distinguishes it from Israel with respect to several features³: (1) the church was a mystery unknown until Messiah's first coming, (2) the church consists of both Jews and Gentiles with no conversion of Gentiles to Judaism required as was the case in the Old Testament, and (3) the church began with the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and will conclude its earthly existence before Messiah's kingdom is established on earth. Thus, application of the literal hermeneutic clearly leads to a future for Israel that is distinct from the future of the church.

Dispensationalists make the crucial point regarding the distinction between Israel and the church that God has not revoked His promises to Israel and given them to the church. Although the church inherits the spiritual blessings God promised all the people of the earth through Abraham's descendants, it does not, as a result of Israel's disobedience or any other reason, inherit Israel's unconditional, unique, promised blessings, either physically or spiritually. In God's plan Israel has neither been permanently set aside nor supplanted by the church. Very simply, Classical Dispensationalists do not accept the church as any kind of new Israel.

A third distinctive of dispensationalism derives more from its consideration of God's creation and revelation as a whole than from the literal hermeneutic. This distinctive is that the ultimate purpose of God is the manifestation of His glory (Ephesians 1:9-11). God's glory is the unifying principle of the Scriptures, and it is the end to which all creation and all histo-

ry point. Although some non-dispensationalists share this understanding, they emphasize that the salvation of man from the penalty of sin is the sole means by which God is glorified. This is particularly the case for those who see no unique, promised future for physical Israel and no physical establishment of Messiah's kingdom on the earth. Although dispensationalists concur that salvation is an important means by which God glorifies Himself, they also recognize other means. For example, God's ultimate purpose includes a plan for the angels of whom the righteous require no salvation and the rebellious have been excluded from it. Also, through application of the literal hermeneutic, dispensationalists understand that Messiah will return to establish a physical, 1000-year earthly kingdom on the earth. In this kingdom, the glory of God is seen world-wide in the presence of the glorified Messiah. Thus, dispensationalists understand God's purpose is broader than simply man-centered salvation; they understand it as nothing less than the universal recognition and praise of His glory.

Ryrie characterizes these three distinctives, the literal hermeneutic, the distinction between Israel and the church, and the glory of God, as the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism.⁴ The expression, *sine qua non*, is Latin and means, literally, *without which not*. For Classic Dispensationalists, Ryrie's *sine qua non* are the essentials; delete any one, and the result is something different than Classic Dispensationalism. Thus, these three distinctives characterize the essence of Classic Dispensationalism; they provide the means by which dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists may be distinguished; and they provide the basis for further development of the dispensational system.

Next: Dispensationalists believe that the basis of salvation is always the death of Christ, that the requirement for salvation is always faith, and that the object of that faith is always God. However, they believe that the content of that faith changes with God's progressive revelation through the dispensations.⁵ So, what is a dispensation? The next article consists of an exposition of the term *dispensation* and a preliminary discussion of the relationship between dispensations and God's progressive revelation.

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THE MATHEMATICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF EVOLUTION

By Henry M. Morris, Ph.D.

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ICR began publishing its popular free newsletter *Acts & Facts* in June 1972, over 31 years ago. The first two issues were 6-page, single-column, fold-over tract-like papers, black-and-white-not very impressive in appearance.

Issue No. 1 contained only news items describing some of our early campus meetings. Specially featured was the meeting held by Dr. Duane Gish on the Davis campus of the University of California. This was the meeting that involved an unscheduled 2½ hour debate with world-famous evolutionist, G. Ledyard Stebbins. A favorable response from the large student attendance and a very positive write-up in the student paper eventually led to Dr. Gish's famous cartoon booklet, *Have You Been Brainwashed?* which has been greatly used by the Lord in the past three decades, being distributed in the millions all over the world.

That issue also announced the publication of Dr. Gish's first book, *Evolution: The Fossils Say No!* which has been used widely and has won many evolutionists to accept the truth of special creation.

Issue No. 2 also was mostly news, but it did contain a semi-technical article on "The Mathematical Impossibility of Evolution" which is being reproduced herein as a matter of interest-not only of historical interest as the forerunner of our popular *Impact* articles (the first of which was published in the first 1973 issue), but also because it still seems to show in a very simple way that evolution is impossible-no one, to my knowledge, has ever tried to refute it.

The third issue of *Acts & Facts* reported on the first ICR-sponsored expedition to Mount Ararat in search of Noah's Ark, led by John Morris. The first *Impact* article, however, was published in the January/February 1973 issue on the subject, "Evolution, Creation, and the Public Schools," urging that concerned citizens should use an educational and persuasion

approach, rather than legislation or litigation, in trying to get a balanced approach to origins teaching accepted in the public schools.

In spite of this advice, however, many well-meaning creationists have tried—always unsuccessfully—to try to force this issue. We still recommend education and persuasion as the best policy.

Anyway, an *Impact* article on significant scientific or apologetics topics has been published every month since that first 1973 *Acts & Facts*. The forerunner of all these, still quite valid, I believe, is reproduced with a few modifications below:

The Mathematical Impossibility of Evolution

According to the most-widely accepted theory of evolution today, the sole mechanism for producing evolution is that of random mutation combined with natural selection. Mutations are *random* changes in genetic systems. Natural selection is considered by evolutionists to be a sort of sieve, which retains the “good” mutations and allows the others to pass away.

Since random changes in ordered systems almost always will decrease the amount of order in those systems, nearly all mutations are harmful to the organisms which experience them. Nevertheless, the evolutionist insists that each complex organism in the world today has arisen by a long string of gradually accumulated good mutations preserved by natural selection. No one has ever actually *observed* a genuine mutation occurring in the natural environment which was beneficial (that is, adding useful genetic information to an existing genetic code), and therefore, retained by the selection process. For some reason, however, the idea has a certain persuasive quality about it and seems eminently reasonable to many people—until it is examined *quantitatively*, that is!

For example, consider a very simple putative organism composed of only 200 integrated and functioning parts, and the problem of deriving that organism by this type of process. The system presumably must have started with only one part and then gradually built itself up over many generations into its 200-part organization. The developing organism, at each successive stage, must itself be integrated and functioning in its environment in order to survive until the next stage. Each successive stage, of course, becomes statistically less likely than the preceding one, since it is far easier for a complex sys-

tem to break down than to build itself up. A four-component integrated system can more easily “mutate” (that is, somehow suddenly change) into a three-component system (or even a four-component non-functioning system) than into a five-component integrated system. If, at any step in the chain, the system mutates “downward,” then it is either destroyed altogether or else moves backward, in an evolutionary sense.

Therefore, the successful production of a 200-component functioning organism requires, *at least*, 200 successive, successful such “mutations,” each of which is highly unlikely. Even evolutionists recognize that true mutations are very rare, and beneficial mutations are *extremely* rare—not more than one out of a thousand mutations are beneficial, at the very most.

But let us give the evolutionist the benefit of every consideration. Assume that, at each mutational step, there is equally as much chance for it to be good as bad. Thus, the probability for the success of each mutation is assumed to be one out of two, or one-half. Elementary statistical theory shows that the probability of 200 successive mutations being successful is then $(\frac{1}{2})^{200}$, or one chance out of 10^{60} . The number 10^{60} , if written out, would be “one” followed by sixty “zeros.” In other words, the chance that a 200-component organism could be formed by mutation and natural selection is less than one chance out of a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion! Lest anyone think that a 200-part system is unreasonably complex, it should be noted that even a one-celled plant or animal may have millions of molecular “parts.”

The evolutionist might react by saying that even though any one such mutating organism might not be successful, surely some around the world would be, especially in the 10 billion years (or 10^{18} seconds) of assumed earth history. Therefore, let us imagine that every one of the earth’s 10^{14} square feet of surface harbors a billion (i.e., 10^9) mutating systems and that each mutation requires one-half second (actually it would take far more time than this). Each system can thus go through its 200 mutations in 100 seconds and then, if it is unsuccessful, start over for a new try. In 10^{18} seconds, there can, therefore, be $10^{18}/10^2$, or 10^{16} , trials by each mutating system. Multiplying all these numbers together, there would be a total possible number of attempts to develop a 200-component system equal to $10^{14} (10^9) (10^{16})$, or 10^{39} attempts. Since

the probability against the success of any one of them is 10^{60} , it is obvious that the probability that just one of these 10^{39} attempts might be successful is only one out of $10^{60}/10^{39}$, or 10^{21} .

All this means that the chance that any kind of a 200-component integrated functioning organism could be developed by mutation and natural selection just once, anywhere in the world, in all the assumed expanse of geologic time, is less than one chance out of a billion trillion. What possible conclusion, therefore, can we derive from such considerations as this except that evolution by mutation and natural selection is mathematically and logically indefensible!

Discussion

There have been many other ways in which creationist writers have used probability arguments to refute evolutionism, especially the idea of random changes preserved, if beneficial, by natural selection. James Coppedge devoted almost an entire book, *Evolution: Possible or Impossible* (Zondervan, 1973, 276 pp.), to this type of approach. I have also used other probability-type arguments to the same end (see, e.g., *Science and Creation*, Master Books, pp. 161-201).

The first such book, so far as I know, to use mathematics and probability in refuting evolution was written by a pastor, W. A. Williams, way back in 1928. Entitled, *Evolution Disproved*, it made a great impression on me when I first read it about 1943, at a time when I myself was still struggling with evolution.

In fact, evolutionists themselves have attacked traditional Darwinism on the same basis (see the Wistar Institute Symposium, *Mathematical Challenges to the Neo-Darwinian Interpretation of Evolution*, 1967, 140 pp.). While these scientists did not reject evolution itself, they did insist that the Darwinian randomness postulate would never work.

Furthermore, since the law of increasing entropy, or the second law of thermodynamics, is essentially a statement of probabilities, many writers have also used that law itself to show that evolution on any significant scale is essentially impossible. Evolutionists have usually ignored the arguments or else used vacuous arguments against them (“Anything can happen given enough time”; “The earth is an open system, so the second law doesn’t apply”; “Order can arise out of chaos

through dissipative structures”; etc.).

In the real world of scientific observation, as opposed to metaphysical speculation, however, no more complex system can ever “evolve” out of a less complex system, so the probability of the naturalistic origin of even the simplest imaginary form of life is zero.

The existence of complexity of any kind is evidence of God and creation. “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isaiah 40:26).

***Dr. Henry Morris is Founder and President Emeritus of ICR.**

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DESIGN IS NOT ENOUGH!

By Henry M. Morris, Ph.D.

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“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

There is a strong movement among evangelicals today to emphasize “intelligent design” as the argument of choice against naturalism and Darwinian evolution. The movement is also called “mere creation” or “the wedge movement,” the idea being to avoid controversial subjects such as the Biblical doctrine of creation in talking to evolutionists. Any discussion of a young earth, six-day creation, a worldwide flood and other Biblical records of early history will turn off scientists and other professionals, they say, so we should simply use the evidence of intelligent design as a “wedge” to pry them loose from their naturalistic premises. Then, later, we can follow up this opening by presenting the gospel, they hope.

But this approach, even if well-meaning and effectively articulated, will not work! It has often been tried in the past and has failed, and it will fail today. The reason it won't work is because it is not the Biblical method.

The famous book, *Natural Theology*, written two centuries ago by William Paley, profoundly impressed Charles Darwin with the evidence of design in nature. But it didn't lead him to Christ. Instead, he embarked on a lifelong quest to find an alternative to the Christian God as an explanation of apparent design. This quest led him to the “discovery” of *natural selection* as that desired alternative, and this concept soon became the worldview of the western world.

There are, indeed, innumerable evidences of “intelligent design” in the world, from the stars in their courses to the insects in the forests. Isaac Asimov, certainly one of the century's outstanding scientists and writers, called the human brain “the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter in the universe.”¹ But he still remained an atheist.

Sir Julian Huxley, probably the chief architect of neo-Darwinism, once made the following remarkable statement of faith

in natural selection, after discussing the complexity of the horse:

One with three million noughts after it is the measure of the unlikeliness of a horse-the odds against it happening at all. No one would bet on anything so improbable happening: and yet it has happened! It *has* happened, thanks to the working of natural selection. . . .²

An even more remarkable example of faith in the omniscient omnipotence of natural selection appears in the following recent statement:

The genetic code is the product of early natural selection, not simply random, say scientists in Britain. . . . Roughly 1020 genetic codes are possible, but the one nature actually uses was adopted as the standard more than 3.5 billion years ago . . . it is extremely unlikely that such an efficient code arose by chance-natural selection must have played a role.³

Thus natural selection not only “creates” new species, as Darwin thought, but even the very code by which life itself evolved and carries on. Although 100 billion billion different codes were possible choices, natural selection made the one right choice, and it did so before any life existed at all, so the reasoning goes. All hail the power of natural selection!

It is obvious that neither “intelligent design” nor “irreducible complexity” nor any other such euphemism for creation will suffice to separate a thorough-going Darwinian naturalist from his atheistic religion, in favor of God and special creation.

On the other hand, a goodly number of atheists may convert to pantheism through such arguments. The various ethnic religions (Hinduism, etc.) all accommodate design, and so do the modern “New Age” cults and movements. They agree that there must be some kind of cosmic consciousness in nature-call it Mother Nature, perhaps, or Gaia (the Greek goddess of the earth)-that enables the earth and the cosmos to organize themselves into complex systems.

The very fact that the universe is creative, and that the laws have permitted complex structures to emerge and develop to the point of consciousness-in other words, that the universe has organized its own self-awareness-is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all. The impression of design is overwhelming.⁴

Design yes-but God, no! Davies is a very eminent astronomer and has received one of the famous Templeton prizes for relating science and religion, but he thinks modern evolutionary cosmology

has proved the universe has “no need for an external creator in the traditional sense.”⁷⁵

It should not surprise us that design is not enough, for this is what the Word of God tells us. Probably the two greatest passages on the evidences of intelligent design in nature are Psalm 19:1-6 and Romans 1:19-23—one in the Old Testament, one in the New. Let us, therefore, look briefly at these two passages. First, Psalm 19.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge (vv. 1,2).

Thus the created cosmos continually displays wonderful evidences of the glory and handiwork of God, for everyone in every nation to see and hear, night and day. Yes, but this very testimony becomes an indictment against them when they go on without believing Him.

The heavens do “*declare the glory of God,*” but “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). The evidence of design may *impress* the soul, but it will not *save* the soul! But there is something that will, for it does not fall short at all.

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether (Psalm 19:7-9).

We must go to the Scriptures for salvation. The scientific evidence for design and creation and the Creator are vital to present to those who do not know or believe the Bible (note Acts 14:15-17 and 17:22-29), but then they must go to the Scriptures if they would learn about the true God and His work of creation and redemption.

Note also the message built around Romans 1:19-23, also stressing the reality, but the inadequacy, of so-called natural revelation.

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (v.20).

In many marvelous ways, the fact of God and the nature of God are clearly revealed in His beautiful “poem” of creation (Greek, *poiema*, “things that are made”). Nevertheless, those who see it, “*professing themselves to be wise, (become) fools*” (v.22). In the ancient world, they “*changed the truth of God* [that is, His word,

which is truth-John 17:17] *into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature [or `creation`] more than the Creator”* (v.25). These were the pantheistic evolutionists of old Babylon and Egypt and Greece and Rome.

And the modern New Agers are doing exactly the same thing. They see the wonderful evidences of design all around them, but instead of turning to the true Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ, they worship nature instead, attributing all these marvelous evidences of God’s eternal power and Godhead to the creative cosmos. In so doing, they are utterly “without excuse,” for the evidence of God is all around them.

They are without excuse, but they are also *without salvation!* The evidence of intelligent design does not bring them to Christ, but to Mother Nature. Scientific creationism, which incorporates the evidence of design along with the overwhelming evidence against any evolutionary substitute (whether Darwinian atheism or New Age Pantheism) is vitally important, but it must be either followed by or accompanied by a sound presentation of true Biblical creationism if it is to be meaningful and lasting.

We call this body of evidence and doctrine the study of scientific Biblical creationism. But this is still only the foundation, not the complete saving gospel. Jesus Christ must then be presented as not only the eternal Creator, but also as our redeeming Savior, living Lord, and soon-coming King. And that *is enough* for eternal salvation to all who believe and follow Him.

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BOOK REVIEW

Unveiling Islam

By Ergun Nehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner

Reviewed by Rev. Ervin D. Ingebretson

This book is a very unusual treatise for several reasons: First, it is written by two brothers. Secondly, these brothers were raised by a very strict Muslim father. Thirdly, salvation came to the Caner brothers. Coming to America brought them into contact with Christian friends who invited them to churches where they heard the Gospel clearly preached, and the love of God was undeniably presented. Ergun received the Gospel first and his brother Emir soon after.

The father, after hearing of the sons' conversion to Christianity, attempted to win them back to their family faith. Failing to do so, he disowned them. The sons should have been killed for disavowing the Muslim faith. Their early training in the Muslim faith prepared them well for the task of writing this book. The sons did not see their father for seventeen years when they visited him just before his death from cancer.

In 1982 Ergun surrendered to the Gospel ministry. Ergun and Emir pursued advance degrees in theology. Now both are teaching Christian theology, one at Wake Forest and one at Criswell College in Dallas, Texas. The authors, who are so well versed in Islamic theology and tradition, make comparisons of that system with the doctrine of the Christian faith. Early on they say that the greatest difference between the faiths is the personal quality of God. The Bible states that God loves all persons while Allah, according to the Koran (Arabic - Quran), chooses to hate, especially non-Muslims.

The authors cite the five pillars essential to the embracing of the Islamic faith. They are:

- 1) The Creed which says, that "There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is His messenger";
- 2) Prayer which is the ultimate worship for the Muslim;
- 3) Almsgiving which is equitable distribution of money and goods;

- 4) Ramadan which is a fast that honors the arrival of the Koran; and
- 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca which they believe honors Abraham.

Muhammed is the militant messenger of Allah. The first criterion, the authors say, for evaluating the worth of Islam or Christianity is to determine whether Muhammed and Jesus are worthy models. According to the authors, Muhammed's life can be summed up as complex, expedient, and depraved while the life of Jesus far exceeds Muhammed's in integrity, grace, and wisdom. The Muslim considers Jesus to be no more than a prophet equal to Muhammed.

The Muslim believes that the Koran is the primary source of revelation from Allah that provides guidelines for every area of the believer's life. A second source often referred to is the Hadith which is a transmission of an oral tradition.

The authors detail a story of Islam as a "Trail of Blood". War is a primary vehicle for religious and political expansion. The Jihad (Holy War) is sanctioned by the Koran, the Hadith, and the writings of Muhammed. The participation in the Jihad is a promise of a special place in the martyr's heaven.

The authors describe the numerous Islamic sects and splinters which make up their faith population. The two prominent segments are the Sunni, the largest in number, and the Shiites.

The authors discuss social and cultural issues. Islamic women are regarded as inherently inferior to men. Public dress requirements indicate their social status. Wives are considered "playthings" for husbands. Holiday celebrations for the Muslim are much different than those for Americans. No non-Muslim is ever invited to a Muslim celebration. Americans would extend an open invitation to any Muslim.

The authors, in discussing the separate cultures, seek to find some commonality between the two faiths. The clash which exists, that dates back to Muhammed, leaves little promise. The creedal statement for the Muslim is unchangeable and unacceptable for the Christian. A belief in Jesus as the sacrificed Savior is abhorrent to the Muslim.

In earning any opportunity to share Christ with a Muslim, the authors recommend that a thorough knowledge of the

Islamic culture be gained. This will prevent seriously offending the Muslim friend. They also strongly recommend that Christians be diligent students of the Word of God in order to respond clearly and accurately.

This is a most scholarly work over a broad range of issues that define the Islamic culture. One would be well served to procure this book for help in leading a productive Christian witness to a Muslim.

This book is available through RAS. Cost is \$10.00 + \$1.75 Postage and Handling.

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