

Creation Matters

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Courtesy of JAXA / NHK

"Earth-Rise"
(see p. 10)

*Illustrations
of the Trinity*

*Evolution's
Achilles Heel*

*Catastrophic Plate Tectonics,
Flood Basalt, and
Large Igneous Provinces*





Math Matters

by

Don DeYoung, Ph.D.

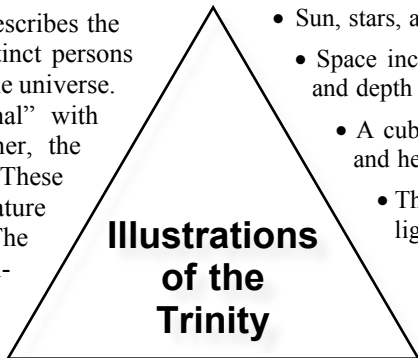


The word *Trinity* describes the unity of three distinct persons in the Creator of the universe.

God is “tripersonal” with distinctions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three share jointly the nature and majesty of God. The Trinity transcends our finite comprehension but the concept is revealed to us in Scripture (Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Is. 6:8; Matt. 3:16-17).

Over the years there have been many efforts to illustrate the nature of the Trinity. No picture is fully adequate, but each is helpful in a limited way. Objects are chosen with parts which are distinct, yet closely related:

- A three-leaf clover (Saint Patrick)
- A tree with root, trunk, and branches (Augustine)
- A flower with fragrance, form, and medicinal use (Luther)



- Sun, stars, and space (Kepler)
- Space including height, width, and depth
 - A cube with length, width, and height (John Wallis)
 - The sun’s production of light, energy, and heat
 - Human personality which includes intellect, emotion, and will
- A man who is a son, husband, and father
- An egg’s shell, white, and yolk
- An equilateral triangle

The last entry is an interesting trinitarian symbol dating from medieval times. The points of the triangle represent the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word “loves” then can be written along each line. That is, the Son loves the Father, the Father loves the Spirit, and four additional equal relationships. Consider some of the properties of an equilateral triangle:

- The internal area is undivided.
- The three sides are equal in length.
- Each corner remains distinct yet equal.
- Each corner gives equal access to the entire triangle.

Two serious cautions arise when illustrating the Trinity with objects. First, any loss of the true unity of the Godhead leads to the heresy of *tritheism*, or three separate gods. Second, any loss of the true trinity character of God leads to a false *unitarianism*. This denial of personal distinctions in the Godhead was earlier called Sabellianism, after Sabellius (A.D. 250). Perhaps the only proper Trinity illustration is found in Scripture itself. In John 17:11, for example, the three distinct persons of the Godhead are clearly shown in sameness of life and thought.

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Cover Photo — “Earth-rise” over the moon

Image Credit: JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) and NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)

Image acquired from HDTVearth images taken from the Japanese lunar explorer “KAGUYA.”

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The Creation and Evolution of Governments

by Henry Hoffmann

Editor's note: Mr. Hoffman, age 16, was the 2007 senior division winner in the essay contest sponsored by the Midwest Creation Fellowship. Very minor editing changes have been made. See elsewhere in this issue for information about the 2008 contest.



In this statement, Patrick Henry unequivocally emphasized the Christian roots of America.

[T]his great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹

Unfortunately, many today fail to recognize this fact and its conclusion: that the doctrine of creation, as the foundational doctrine of Christianity, provided the foundation for the American form of government. In contrast, the alternative theory of origins, evolution, produces far different, wicked, forms of government.

Creation and Christianity

It is the doctrine of creation upon which the reliability of the rest of the Bible depends. A cursory reading of the main elements of Scripture will demonstrate this statement's truth. For example, a reference to creation is found in the Ten Commandments, which states, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."² This fact that God created the earth and everything contained in it, provided the basis for the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."³

Additionally, during his time on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ also made numerous references to special creation, such as his defense of marriage in Matthew 19:4: "Have ye not read, that he that made them at the beginning made them male and female?" Here, with the query, "have ye not read," Jesus asserts² that the story of creation is authoritative history, not an allegory. If either He or his listeners doubted the creation narrative, there would have been no point in asking the question.

Furthermore, in his interview with Nicodemus, Jesus asks, "If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"⁴ If God's story of the beginning of the earth is not to be believed, then there is no basis for

any other biblical claim. Consequently, once creation is regarded as false, then all of Christianity can be rejected.

The foundation of Christianity on the Genesis account is particularly true in regard to the Christian doctrine of the sovereignty of God. God rules as the sovereign of the universe because He created the universe. Since God is the Creator, He is the Sovereign. Revelation beautifully states, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."⁵ God deserves "glory and honor and power," i.e., He is sovereign, for one reason: He "created all things," and today graciously continues the existence of all things for His pleasure. The statement, "for thou hast created all things, for thy pleasure they are and were created," is God's claim to power over all creation. He is the maker of all things; thus He can shape and control them as He desires. Because He is the only Creator, He is the only Sovereign.

Creation and government

It is this doctrine of God's sovereignty as Creator which provides the foundation for limited, representative government and individual liberty. These are inextricably-linked political doctrines generated from the belief that God alone is sovereign. Lorraine Boettner quoted J. C. Monsma, who attested:

Governments are instituted by God through the instrumentality of the people. No kaiser or president has any power inherent in himself; whatever power he possesses, whatever sovereignty he exercises, is power and sovereignty derived from the great Source above. No might, but right, and right springing from the eternal Fountain of justice. . . . The government is God's servant. That means that AS MEN all government officials stand on an equal footing

with their subordinates; have no claim to superiority in any sense whatever... For exactly the same reason the Calvinist gives preference to a republican form of government over any other type. In no other form of government does the sovereignty of God, the derivative character of government powers and the equality of men as men, find a clearer and more eloquent expression.⁶

Lorraine Boettner emphasized the fact that representative governments are preferred by Calvinists; however, the same should be true of all Christians who recognize God as the Creator and the only Sovereign in the universe. From this recognition comes representative government, because this is the type of government which, above all other governments, upholds the sovereignty of God by limiting government powers to those which are derived from God, and by respecting all men as equals before Him and the law. Thus, republicanism and individual liberty are derived from Christianity, specifically, the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, which is a direct consequence of the doctrine of creation.

From the famous statement, "all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ...," originates a second demonstration that the Lord's role as Creator plays a large part in the protection of liberty. The Declaration of Independence makes this clear: men's rights stem not from governments, but from their status as beings created in the image of God. As a result, governments may not take freedom away, because governments have no power over a gift from God to men. As the Declaration of Independence states, only God gives liberty, and therefore only God has the power to take it away.

Interestingly, however, the Declaration of Independence was not solely the creation of Thomas Jefferson, but of men more deeply religious than he. Many of the words and phrases, and most of the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were borrowed from the Mecklenberg Declaration, written a year before for Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, by Ephraim Brevard, which "was, 'in effect, a declaration as well as a complete form of government.'"⁷ Lorraine

Boettner, citing a biographer of Jefferson, noted,

‘Everyone must be persuaded that one of these papers must have been borrowed from the other.’ But it is certain that Brevard could not have “borrowed” from Jefferson, for he wrote more than a year before Jefferson, hence Jefferson, according to his biographer, “borrowed” from Brevard. But it was a happy plagiarism, from which the world will freely forgive him. In correcting his first draft of the Declaration it can be seen, in at least a few places, that Jefferson has erased the original words, and inserted those that are first found in the Mecklenburg Declaration. No one can doubt that Jefferson had Brevard’s resolutions before him when he was writing his immortal Declaration.’⁸

But the men who crafted the Mecklenburg Declaration differed significantly in their religion from Thomas Jefferson, who leaned toward Deism in his theology.⁹ In fact, all of the delegates to the Mecklenburg convention were “staunch Calvinists, just one third of whom were ruling elders in the Presbyterian church, including the president and the secretary; and one was a Presbyterian clergyman.”¹⁰ Hence, the basis of American government, contained in Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, actually owes its creation to an even more Christian document, the Mecklenburg Declaration. Consequently, the text of the U.S. Declaration, with its references to God and to His law, as well as its historical context, clearly show that it is a Christian document.

Once again, it was the belief in the sovereignty of God that inspired the separation of America from England. While it is true that the doctrine of the sovereignty of God teaches that God ordains all rulers, and thus all rulers must be obeyed while they operate under God’s mandate,¹¹ it is also true that,

On the other hand, this doctrine of the sovereignty of God operated as a mighty defense of the liberties of the subject citizens against tyrannical rulers. Whenever sovereigns ignored the Will of God, trampled upon the rights of the governed and became tyrannical, it became the privilege and the duty of the subjects, in view of the higher responsibility of the supreme Sovereign, God, to refuse obedience and even, if necessary, to

depose the tyrant, through the lesser authorities appointed by God for the defense of the rights of the governed.¹²

In summary, it was this doctrine, the sovereignty of God, that prompted the original separation of the American colonies from England, initiated by the Mecklenburg Declaration. This doctrine also ensures limited, representative government and personal rights of the governed. These are the results of the belief in God’s sovereignty, which itself is derived and cannot be separated from the doctrine of creation. Hence, God’s creation is the basis for the government created by the Declaration of Independence, and thereafter, the Constitution.

The antithesis

Since the doctrine of creation produces these desirable traits of government, what governments “evolve” from an opposing view, namely, evolution? Not surprisingly, governments which “spontaneously arise” from the “organic soup” of evolution theory are as different from creationist governments as the theory of evolution is from the theory of creation. In sharp contrast to the governments and values promoted by creation, evolution produces Communism, Nazism, and Positivism, thereby creating a total disregard for human rights.

Evolution and communism

Evolution provided the philosophical and scientific foundation for communism, by introducing the idea that life arose and can change its form without God. Marx and Engels, the early popular advocates for evolution, candidly admitted this to be so. In Engels’s eulogy of Marx, he lauded, “just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history.”¹³ To Marx and Engels, evolution created a world in which “God was as powerless as individual man to interfere with the internal, self-adjusting dialectic of change and development.”¹⁴

This communistic “internal, self-adjusting dialectic of change and development,” was and is evolutionary in nature as well. This is the dialectic of Hegel, who taught that change occurs over time by pitting the thesis of one age against its antithesis, and the resulting synthesis becoming the thesis of the next age. Scholar Henry Morris explains this system’s evolutionary basis:

With communism’s emphasis on environmental influences, there has

also been a long-continued mixture of Larmarkianism (inheritance of acquired characteristics) and saltationism (sudden evolution instead of the slow-and-gradual process postulated by Darwinism and neo-Darwinism). The Marxist “dialectic,” taken from Hegel, maintains that progress — both in thought and in society — going from thesis and antithesis to synthesis, lends itself to rapid qualitative evolutionary changes as well as slow quantitative changes. Whatever differences in details of evolution are involved, it is still evolution.¹⁵

Therefore, communism, the antithesis to the government instituted earlier by creationists in America, is predictably spawned by the antithesis of creation, specifically, evolution.

Evolution and positivism

Positivism is the theory that government can make laws and grant rights, and change them at the will of the rulers. It is the theory which the Nazis used in their defense at the Nuremberg trials, and which is unfortunately often adhered to today in the administration of justice.¹⁶ It is also based firmly upon evolutionary principles. Positivism, or “political law,” is the system in which “freedom comes from the government.... The law is whatever the government in power says it is. Positivism requires that all laws be written down, and that there are no theoretical or artificial restraints on the ability of a popularly elected government to enact whatever laws it wishes.”¹⁷

This view of government differs tremendously from the one instituted by creation. In a representative government with derived powers, the political offspring of creation, not only are rights granted by God (not the government), but the government also cannot enact any law that it chooses. Because of the doctrine of derived powers, the government can only pass the laws which God has given it the power to pass. On the other hand, the positivist system generates a government which grants rights and can pass any law, even one which abridges the previously-granted rights. Judge Napolitano alarmingly notes, “If rights come from government, they can be repealed by government.”¹⁸ Henry Morris contends that Positivist thinking is evolutionary as well:

Today’s lawyers, jurists, political scientists, and similar professionals

largely view the law and government as evolving entities, changing with time and society's flexible mores. Even the Constitution is no longer considered an absolute; it also must evolve in accordance with the changing times. Dr. John Eidsmoe, who is both an attorney and a theologian, as well as a student of legal history, has evaluated all this as follows: "Underlying the disagreement over the interpretation of the Constitution is a major confrontation between worldviews — the creationist, absolutist, Newtonian views of the founders, versus the evolutionist, relativist, Darwinian views of most scholars today."¹⁹

Positivism takes the theory that all things evolved and applies it to law and government: if man evolved, then the laws and governments which govern man can evolve as well. As briefly alluded to earlier, the danger of this system can be demonstrated by the rise of Hitler who, under positivist theory, was legally elected and subsequently legally passed his tyrannical and genocidal laws:

Critics of Positivism have argued that it leads to the tyranny of the majority. These critics remind us that Hitler and his Nazi government were popularly elected, and once in power, under the theory of Positivism, passed all sorts of horrific laws, all of which were lawfully enacted. Because there was no Natural Law to protect the minority, these awful laws became the law of the land.²⁰

It was this very point that the Nazi defense team made at the Nuremberg war crime trials,²¹ but justly, following the creationist principle of a "Higher Law," the Nuremberg judges found the defendants guilty, and ordered their execution.²²

A chillingly relevant example today of the dangers of Positivism can be found in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As one reads the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the reader might conclude that this document protects human rights. However, Article 29 §3, states, "These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations."²³

Consequently, whenever the United Nations (UN) deems it necessary, any freedom listed in the Declaration can be revoked. For example, the "prior right" of parents "to choose the kind of education

that shall be given to their children,"²⁴ can be overruled by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, none of the liberties which the United Nations has the arrogance to "grant" are really secure. Only when liberties are granted by the Creator God are they truly secure.

Evolution, creation, and the future of America

Creation, as the basis of Christianity, cannot be denied without also denying Christianity. As a result of denying Christianity, however, overlooking other, even more grave spiritual consequences, the consequences to law and government would be dreadful. Alarmingly, these consequences are already beginning to occur, as can be seen in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They are occurring because of the rejection of creation, and the acceptance of evolution, which has produced unthinkable evils in the past, and which can do no differently than initiate them once again. Thomas Jefferson once worried,

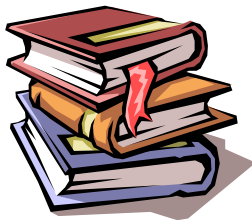
And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed them from their only secure basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the Gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever.²⁵

If America does not return to its Founding Fathers' belief in creation, the future presented to it will indeed cause all Americans to tremble. It is time that the doctrine of creation, and its political ramifications, be expounded and defended everywhere; that the theory of evolution be refuted and its corresponding political theories likewise exposed and confuted. Only then, when America's government is based once again upon creationist principles, will its future as a free country be secure.

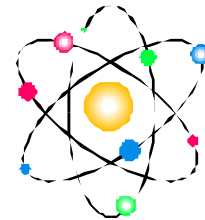
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- Evolution's impact on compromises in the church
- Thermodynamics and the origin of life
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Through Him all things were made;
without Him nothing was made that
has been made. - John 1:3

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Catastrophic Plate Tectonics, Flood Basalt, and Large Igneous Provinces

by Carl R. Froede, Jr., B.S., P.G.

Geologists commonly use conceptual models when describing large-scale geological events in Earth's past. These models are a speculative way of explaining how things might have occurred beyond what could actually have been observed. Plate Tectonic (PT) theory is one such conceptual model of Earth history. It is used to explain the movement of Earth's crust over the course of hundreds of millions of years.

More recently, Catastrophic Plate Tectonics (CPT) has been proposed by several young-Earth creationists as a means of using the same conceptual ideas in PT theory (sans deep time) within the context of the biblical record (Austin et al., 1994). Although supporters of CPT claim the same PT evidence within the context of the year-long Flood, little peer-reviewed work has been offered to either defend or substantiate this claim.

Defending CPT theory

A disturbing trend is developing among supporters of CPT, viz., rather than presenting a vigorous scientific defense of CPT theory, they are focusing on taking their concept to the general public (see Akridge et al., 2007). This is happening despite numerous questions raised by fellow young-Earth creationist scientists. There is a danger that Christians might come to identify the truth of the Genesis Flood with CPT theory and thus become susceptible to rejecting biblical truth if CPT falls into disrepute. Defense of the biblical Flood does not require CPT theory. The Flood was a factual event that is recorded in the Bible. CPT theory remains a tentative proposal that lacks solid evidence over the broad range of data that it seeks to explain.

Rapid ascent of basalt magma

Dr. A.A. Snelling (2007) recently offered an explanation for the rapid ascent of basaltic magmas within the context of the Flood. He cited several uniformitarian geoscientists who acknowledged that in Earth's distant past, basaltic magma rapidly ascended from the mantle to the surface. Regrettably, this

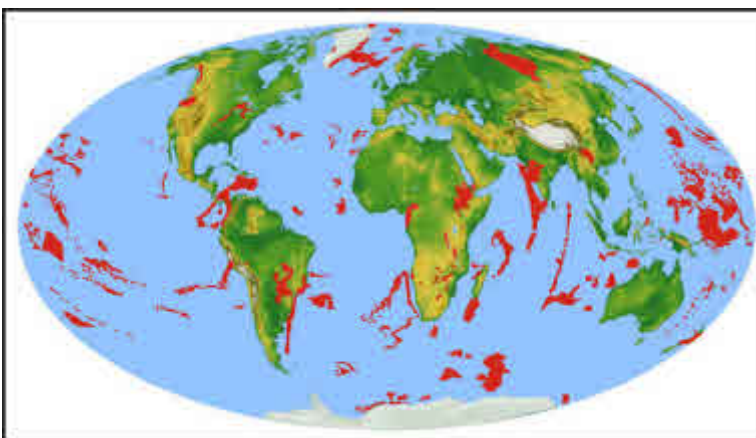


Figure 1. Large Igneous Provinces are highlighted in red. These areas are covered by massive outflows of basaltic lava that have no ready explanation by either Plate Tectonics or Catastrophic Plate Tectonics. Their formation supports the expected high energy conditions associated with the global Flood (Reed et al., 1996), but they have yet to be well defined within that context. It is likely that these provinces formed at varying times during the Flood. Modified from Coffin and Eldholm (1994, Figure 1) and Coffin (2006).

article overlooked previous work conducted by other creationists that document the rapid ascent of basaltic magma in settings not requiring CPT, but clearly within a diluvial framework (e.g., Froede, 2000; Nevins, 1974; Reed, 2000; 2002). Contrary to the conclusions of this prior work, Snelling (2007, p. 11) stated:

Thus catastrophic plate tectonics during the Flood is the only viable explanation for the many basalt flows found in earth's rock record.

Is this statement defensible? Is CPT theory the only way of understanding the many basaltic lava flows across the Earth? Is there now no need for "scientific" discussion and peer-reviewed articles to defend CPT and its possible application to the Flood? Sadly, this is how CPT is currently being offered by its supporters — in fiat statements. However, the evidence against this concept that CPT is the only means of defining basalt lava flows in Earth's rock record is by no means isolated or minuscule — it is global.

Large igneous provinces

Marine geologists have discovered many new things about Earth's oceanic crust, with the advent of deep-sea drilling and the use of advanced, remotely operated vehicles. One of the most amazing discoveries is that Earth's surface (both oceanic and continental) is covered in places by massive basaltic

lava flows (Figure 1). Coffin and Eldholm (1992, p. 17) first defined these areas as "Large Igneous Provinces" (LIPs), and they characterized them as:

... voluminous emplacements of predominately mafic extrusive and intrusive rock whose origins lie in processes other than "normal" seafloor spreading. They include continental flood basalts and associated intrusive rocks, volcanic passive margins, oceanic plateaus, submarine ridges, ocean basin flood basalts, and seamount groups. LIPs represent major global events, whose genesis and evolution must have a direct link to mantle dynamics.

Coffin and Eldholm (1994, p. 20) also recognized that, preceding major volcanic activity, the uplift of the area above a LIP could be considerable:

Maximum uplift can reach 1000 m in continental, and likely more in oceanic, lithosphere and precedes initiation of major basaltic volcanism...

Even uniformitarians acknowledge that this uplift would have been rapid. With this in mind, we would likely consider the formation of LIPs as representing primarily a vertical tectonic component in the history of the crust. Large-scale vertical tectonics cannot be easily accommodated within either PT or CPT theory. From a creationist perspective, some of these provinces may have been uplifted with the onset of the Flood, while others likely formed both during and following the Flood. Each LIP will need to be studied and placed within its proper diluvial setting. This will require a thorough understanding of the vertically adjacent and surrounding rocks and sediments.

The LIPs that today cover various portions of Earth's surface were clearly not formed by PT or CPT processes. Thus, this one empirical example invalidates any necessity for CPT to explain basaltic lava flows. Furthermore, there has been no specific study of LIPs published by advocates

of CPT. These interesting features simply show that all geoscientists still have an incomplete understanding of processes occurring in Earth's interior, especially as it relates to either PT or CPT theory.

When presenting ideas to the public, scientists must be careful to communicate the inherent uncertainties of their conclusions. This is especially true in the case of the unknown past. Claiming sole explanatory power for any one model is a disservice to the public, as creationists have been saying for years about evolution, deep time, and other facets of the naturalist worldview. Creationists need to keep an open mind to ideas outside of the "standard" uniformitarian models — especially when even naturalist models fail to be able to explain the physical evidence. The concept of CPT is an interesting proposal. However, it needs to be thoroughly and rigorously tested. To prevent possible erosion in the confidence of creationist research, supporters of CPT need to take their work through the peer-review process before serving it to the unwitting public.

Acknowledgments

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I thank my wife Susan for allowing me the time to work on this article. Any mistakes that may remain are my own. Glory to God in the highest (Proverbs 3:5–6).

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Carl R. Froede Jr., is a professional geologist who has been writing about the geological aspects of the biblical framework of Earth history for over 13 years. He has published articles in both Creation Matters and the Creation Research Society Quarterly.

Origins: the Science behind Creation

The Creation Research Society is pleased to announce *Origins: the Science behind Creation*, a weekend seminar featuring three CRS scientists and plenty of creation books, videos, DVD's, and other wonderful Biblical resources.

The dates are February 22–23, 2008, and the seminar will be held at Grace Church of Glendora in the beautiful foothill community of Glendora, CA.

Speakers include Dr. Danny Faulkner (Ph.D. Astronomy), Dr. Kevin Anderson (Ph.D. Microbiology) and Mark Armitage (M.S. Biology, doctoral candidate, Liberty University), and Dr. Gene Wood, Senior Pastor at Grace Church.

Check www.creationresearch.org for up-to-the minute details and instructions. Doors and book table area will open at 5:00 PM Friday February 22, and at 8:00 AM Saturday February 23.

Tickets will be available for sale beginning January 2, 2008 (cost: \$7 student, \$10 individual, and \$15.00 family of two or more).

For more information call Grace Church (626-335-4067) or Mark Armitage (626-969-5197), or email micromark@juno.com.

Seminar

February 22 - 23, 2008

Tell your friends and neighbors!

Speaking of Science

Commentaries on recent news from science

Editor's note: All S.O.S. (Speaking of Science) items in this issue are kindly provided by David Coppedge. Opinions expressed herein are his own. Additional commentaries and reviews of news items by David, complete with hyperlinks to cited references, can be seen at: www.creationsafaris.com/crevnews.htm. Unless otherwise noted, emphasis is added in all quotes.

Early Platypus Stuns Evolutionists

With the possible exception of a monotreme tooth assumed to be 62 million years old, the oldest known platypus fossil was dated 15 million years old. Now, a fossil from Australia reported in *Science* sets a new record: 112 million years old.¹

"It's really, really old for a monotreme," Timothy Rowe of the University of Texas (UT), Austin, told the audience at a meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology last month in Austin, Texas. How to fit this with the evolution of monotremes?

That would push back the fossil record of the platypus quite a bit; the next youngest fossil is *Obdurodon dicksoni* from **15-million-year-old rocks in Australia**. It is also **much older** than current estimates from DNA of when platypuses and echidnas diverged from **their most recent common ancestor**. **Molecular clocks** put that date somewhere between 17 million and 80 million years ago. Rowe **speculated that one reason for the underestimate may be that monotremes evolve at slower rates** than other mammals do, **an idea that fits** with their **lower diversity**.

Was this platypus a transitional form? No. Was it evolving from a simpler animal into a complex creature with a duck bill, poison spur, electrical sensing organ, webbed feet, fur, and ability to lay eggs? No — it was Darwin's nightmare popping up way, way back in the record, over 100 million years earlier (in their own dating scheme) than the next clear platypus fossil. Why not consider the obvious, that there was never any 113 million years between the two fossils?

According to evolutionary theory, most of the other mammals diversified into elephants, giraffes, lions, and whales in far less time, but these Darwin-defying furry-duckmammals just lived on and on in their niche as if nothing else was going on in the world. Rowe's reply that they just evolved more slowly (and that lower diversity demonstrates this), should be seen not only as a gratuitous speculation, but as an escape from reality.

That's it: Darwin was the prophet of Second Life, a virtual world where any fantasy you want to dream up can come true and be called science. Whenever their virtual fantasyland has an internal conflict, they can always dream up virtual ways to resolve it. Science needs to kick the habit and get back to the real world — literally, not virtually.

1. Stokstad, E. 2007. Jaw shows platypus goes way back. *Science* 318:1237, DOI: 10.1126/science.318.5854.1237a.



The Stars That Shouldn't Exist

Theories in astronomy are fun to model on paper with equations, but once in awhile they need to stand up to observations. Phil Berardelli wrote for *ScienceNOW*:¹

It seems as though **every time** astronomers **point their telescopes** at the night sky, **some weird new finding forces them to revamp their theories**. And so it is with **nine newly discovered white dwarfs**. The stars **defy their expected chemical makeup** and **by rights shouldn't even exist**. An explanation could open up a new branch of astronomy.

The stars may be violating human rights but apparently abide by stellar rights. One astronomer concluded, "It tells us that **nature has found a way that we didn't know** to make white dwarf stars without the usual hydrogen or helium surface layers."

According to stellar evolution theory, white dwarfs should be enveloped with hydrogen and helium, not carbon. Astronomers could find no trace of hydrogen or helium in the spectra from these oddball stars. "Astronomers don't have a clue why," the article continued. Another astronomer commented, "There is currently no explanation how such stars can be formed. It's a real challenge to stellar-evolution theory." The stars were identified in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. The original paper was published in *Nature*.² According to the abstract, "Our analysis shows that the atmospheric parameters found for these stars do not fit satisfactorily in any of the currently known theories of post-asymptotic giant branch evolution."



This portion of the news is brought to you by the makers of Humble Pie, reminding you that moderation in science is a good thing.

"Twinkle twinkle little star, I don't wonder what you are; for by spectroscopic ken, I know that you are hydrogen."³ So astronomers used to say. Always be wary when a scientist says, "I know." What rhymes with carbon?

If they had only found seven of these unexpected stars, we could have spun some fairy tales about Snow White Theories and the Seven Dwarfs getting lost in the Data Mine. We'll show moderation, though, and not discuss which astronomers were sleepy, dopey, or grumpy.

1. Berardelli, P. 2007. Odd little stars. *ScienceNOW Daily News* (21 November). <http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2007/1121/1>
2. Dufour, P., J. Liebert, G. Fontaine, and N. Behara. 2007. White dwarf stars with carbon atmospheres. *Nature* 450:522-524, doi:10.1038/nature06318.
3. See <http://bcn.boulder.co.us/~neal/poetry/twinkle.html>

Give Thanks for Our Rare Moon

Our moon is a rare treat, says a press release from Jet Propulsion Laboratory,¹ based on findings from the Spitzer Space Telescope. See also the story on *New Scientist*.² The telescope looked for indications of dust from collisions in other planetary disks thought to be



the age of our solar system when our moon formed. According to the leading theory, our moon formed from the collision of a Mars-sized body impacting the earth when our solar system was 30 million years old. Only 5-10% of dust disks had telltale signs of dust from such collisions.

The claim is based on a controversial theory that invokes an extremely improbable collision. It is based on unverifiable dating assumptions. The theory has many problems and is not accepted by some geologists, including Harrison Schmidt, who walked on the moon during the Apollo 17 mission. Students of philosophy of science may want to examine this story as an example of an explanation so intertwined with theory, it is hard to know where the theory stops and the evidence begins.

While it is nice for astronomers to recognize that our moon is special, we didn't need their evolutionary assumptions. The moon's role in stabilizing earth's axial tilt and tides is part of a large suite of evidences that show our home planet was designed for life.

1. Anonymous. 2007. Astronomers say moons like ours are uncommon. *News Release, Jet Propulsion Laboratory* (20 November). www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2007-132
www.spitzer.caltech.edu/Media/releases/ssc2007-18/release.shtml
2. Shiga, D. 2007. Moons like Earth's are few and far between. *NewScientist.com* (21 November). <http://space.newscientist.com/article/dn12947-moons-like-earths-are-few-and-far-between.html>

Photo: Earthrise 2007

The Japanese Kaguya spacecraft has taken a series of "Earthrise" photos from lunar orbit, including the photo on the cover. The complete set of new hi-resolution photos is available at the website for the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency.¹ (Due to the orbital path of the spacecraft, Antarctica is at the top.)

"Earth-rise is a phenomenon seen only from satellites that travel around the Moon, such as the KAGUYA and the Apollo space ship," the caption explains. "The Earth-rise cannot be observed by a person who is on the Moon as they can always see the Earth at the same position."

The first set of Earthrise images, taken in December 1968 from Apollo 8, had a dramatic impact on the inhabitants of Spaceship Earth. Borman, Lovell and Anders called it their Christmas present to the inhabitants of the "good Earth" as they celebrated by reading the opening verses from Genesis (see NASA photo and article²). The recent movie *In the Shadow of the Moon* retold the story (see CNN review³).

Who could not be thankful at the sight of such a perfect blue sphere out there, loaded with life and beauty? The contrast with the lifeless and sterile moon makes the scene all the more thought-provoking. What poetry or Scripture would come to mind as you look at these stunning images? What deep questions about the universe, Earth, life, humanity, politics, ethics, meaning, and destiny arise in your soul? Take a moment to jot down your thoughts after a good, long gaze at the image on the cover.

It's sad to consider that if astronauts today, 39 years after Apollo 8, tried to read inspirational words from the Bible, they would be promptly sued by the ACLU, and roundly condemned by leading politicians, scientists, and educators. Your thoughts do not have to reflect their thoughts; they can be aligned with God's thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

1. www.jaxa.jp/press/2007/11/20071113_kaguya_e.html
2. www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_102.html
3. www.cnn.com/2007/SHOWBIZ/Movies/09/11/astronaut.movie/index.html
4. www.esa.int/SPECIALS/Rosetta/SEM9MQ53R8F_1.html

Evolutionists Explain Living Fossils

Here's an old "evolutionary puzzle" to challenge your local Darwinist: explain living fossils. Many living animals and plants were known only from the fossil record, thought to have gone extinct many millions of years ago, only to turn up in a local meat market or remote forest. S. Perkins tackled this question in the Nov. 17 issue of *Science Daily*.¹

Perkins told the story of three famous cases of "Lazarus" species that came forth from the dead: coelacanth, Laotian rock rat, and Wollemi pine. Sifting away the extraneous facts, what was the kernel of evolutionary explanation for these organisms, some of which supposedly spent up to 93 million years of evolutionary time alive and well, without leaving a trace in the rocks? Here are the three leading suggestions:

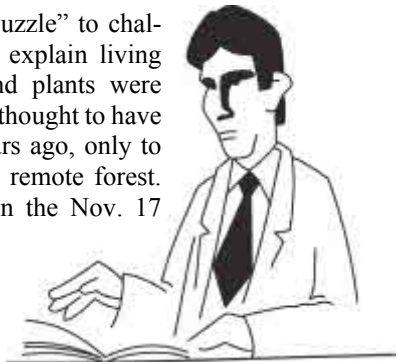
Many scientists contend that the simultaneous reappearance of so many Lazarus taxa indicates that the **fossil record from that era can't be trusted**, says [Margaret] Fraiser [U of Michigan-Milwaukee]. Others suggest that the missing creatures simply **became so rare** that they weren't captured in the fossil record. Yet others propose that the creatures **survived only in small areas** and that their fossils haven't yet been discovered.

Fraiser and her colleagues put these ideas to the test by surveying fossil counts before and after the Permian extinction. They concluded that the fossil record *is* trustworthy. Richard Twitchett, a paleoecologist from the Univ. of Plymouth, concluded, "These Lazarus taxa **must have been somewhere**, maybe in [rocks] that paleontologists haven't sampled yet. Or **maybe** their fossils have been misidentified or overlooked."

Perkins did not discuss a related evolutionary puzzle. Why did the living forms look identical to the ancient forms after so many tens of millions of years of evolution?

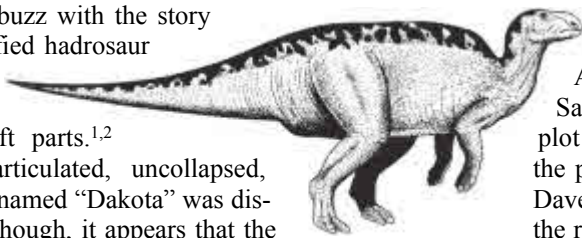
This is not science; it is religion masquerading as science. They did not even consider the possibility that living fossils falsify long ages and evolutionary theory. But if they want to play the "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" game, creationists can, too. If an evolutionist asks you to show you a Precambrian rabbit or Silurian human, show them this story. Of course, we know what the Darwin Party would do if they *did* find a Precambrian rabbit: they would say, "Well, what do you know? We were wrong! This rock isn't Precambrian, it's Pleistocene!" Have faith, brother, and you will see miracles: Lazarus species rising from the dead.

1. Perkins, S. 2007. Back from the dead? 'Resurrections' of long-missing species lead to revelations. *Science News* 172(20):312.



Hadrosaur Skin Flick

The press is abuzz with the story of a mummified hadrosaur found in North Dakota with skin and fossilized soft parts.^{1,2} Since the fully-articulated, uncollapsed, mummified fossil named “Dakota” was discovered in 1999, though, it appears that the announcement is being made now primarily as publicity for a National Geographic (NG) documentary.



The exceptionally-preserved specimen has allowed paleontologists to understand more details about the skin patterns, muscle mass, and body proportions of hadrosaurs, and to infer something about their running speed. Of interest beyond these details echoed in all the news media reports, however, is what page two of the NG story said about soft-tissue preservation. Acknowledging that Mary Schweitzer’s team earlier this year had reported evidence for unfossilized collagen in a *T. rex* bone, the NG article states that the hunt is on for preserved macromolecules in Dakota. If they have been detected, no one is talking about it until the peer-reviewed paper is published. One team member admitted, though, that “We have an array of chemical analysis techniques that we’re applying to the organism — and not just to the skin.” Any future announcement of preserved proteins or nucleic acids may be the biggest story within an already big story.

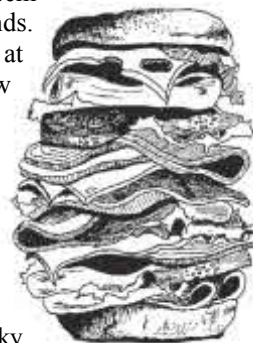
Evolutionary paleontologists know that creationists are going to beat them over the head with any discovery of preserved soft tissue and biomolecules, so one has to wonder how hesitant they are to reveal what they find. Hopefully, the excitement of such a find, and the value of scientific objectivity, will prevent a cover-up. Such news would deal a severe blow to the belief that these specimens are 65+ million years old, and once confidence in millions of years is shattered, the whole evolutionary tree will be undermined.

Think of how long the Darwin Party has been feeding the public the assumption of long ages. They know the public is going to find it hard to swallow the line that soft tissue and DNA or proteins could lie undisturbed for tens of millions of years. With so much at stake, and the cult of Darwin vulnerable to a mass exodus, will they tell the whole truth? It may take creationist expeditions to do original research in this area to get the facts out. They will need to provide unimpeachable documentation and technical rigor to rule out any claims of contamination. Let’s wait and see what the peer-reviewed paper says. Creationists do not stand to lose face if soft tissue is *not* found, because it is tenuous stuff (even for burials of known age). But if it is found, it would be much more plausible to believe it has been preserved for thousands of years, not tens of millions.

1. Schmid, R.E. 2007. Dino mummy unlocks Jurassic secrets. *The Associated Press* (4 December). www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22068363/
2. Anonymous. 2007. Mummified dinosaur unveiled. *National Geographic News* (3 December). <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/12/photogalleries/dinosaur-pictures/index.html>

Origin of Life: Food for Queazy Thought

New theories of the origin of life seem to come and go like fashion trends. A biochemist at University of California at Santa Barbara (Helen Hansma) put out a new plot line about biomolecules forming between the protective flakes of mica. This was all Dave Mosher at Live Science needed to tease the reader’s taste buds:¹



Soup and pizza couldn’t explain the origins of life, so a researcher built a **sandwich** of an idea instead.

The new hypothesis describes how flaky layers of the mineral mica **could have created** the **perfect conditions** to **jump-start** the formation of molecules necessary for life...

Mosher should not be blamed for the menu, because these are exactly the metaphors Hansma herself used:

“Mica is **like a massive sandwich** with millions of layers of mineral sheets, which would be **the bread**,” Hansma said. “The nooks and crannies between the bread may have **jump-started** the formation of life’s chemicals and protected them. It’s like a **giant potluck of chemistry**.”

So Helen wins the award, and Mosher is just the assistant cook. He pointed out that she had to make the pizza and soup seem distasteful first: “To address these shortcomings, Hansma merged the soup and pizza ideas to create her sandwich hypothesis.” Does that mean he is offering us a wet, cheesy sandwich?

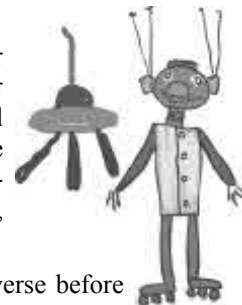
Origin-of-life researchers occasionally raise another plot line up the flagpole to see if anyone salutes. It’s only a way of distracting the public into thinking progress is being made. All the old criticisms still apply, and some new ones, also.

Hansma “cautioned that **significant work lies ahead**” (job security for storytellers) “before she can make the hypothesis appetizing to other scientists.” This will take a while, since many first have to recover from severe indigestion jump-started by the thought of pizza, soup, and a giant potluck of chemistry in a mica-bread sandwich.

1. Mosher, D. 2007. Life may have originated in a sandwich; New hypothesis proposes ‘giant potluck of chemistry.’ *LiveScience.com* (4 December), reprinted at *msnbc.com*. www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22098389/

SETI: Physics Conspires to Keep the Aliens Isolated

Where are the aliens? They’re too far away to get to know. Don’t look for galactic federations to join any time soon, said SETI Institute Director Seth Shostak.¹ The harsh realities of the speed of light make fellowship, both in person and via radio signals, too remote to be feasible.



Shostak noted the fine-tuning of the universe before discussing these problems with interaction.

For years scientists have **wrestled** with a **puzzling** fact: **The universe appears to be remarkably suited for life**. Its physical properties are **finely tuned** to permit our existence.

Stars, planets and the kind of sticky chemistry that produces fish, ferns and folks **wouldn't be possible if some of the cosmic constants were only slightly different.**

That led to the principle theme of his essay: "Well, there's another property of the universe that's equally noteworthy: It's set up in a way that keeps everyone isolated."

Realistic SETI researchers don't expect to have two-way communication with aliens. They understand that any message detected will have come from a civilization that has either become extinct or has gone on to bigger and better things than to care about an answer from us. The dream of SETI is to establish the existence of aliens, not, like Jimmy Carter wrote on the Voyager record, to "join a community of galactic civilizations."

It was nice of Seth to admit the fine-tuning of the universe.

He can say that and keep his job, but let an ID person say the same thing and he gets expelled,² as in the case of G. Gonzalez.

1. Shostak, S. 2007. Aliens apart. *Space.com* (6 December). www.space.com/searchforlife/071206-seti-aliens-apart.html
2. See website for Ben Stein's new movie, *EXPULSED: No Intelligence Allowed*, which is to be released in February 2008. The premise for the movie is "that educators and scientists are being ridiculed, denied tenure and even fired – for the 'crime' of merely believing that there might be evidence of 'design' in nature, and that perhaps life is not just the result of accidental, random chance." www.expelledthemovie.com/home.php

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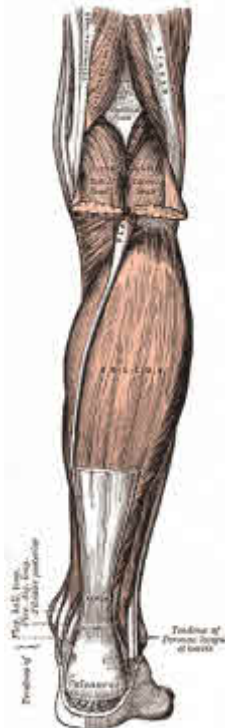
All by Design

by Jonathan C. O'Quinn, D.P.M., M.S.

Evolution's Achilles Heel

Evolutionists believe that as man's early ancestors developed, they progressed from a four-limbed, "quadrupedal" locomotive phase to walking upright on two legs (bipedal locomotion). Over millions of years, early hominids are said to have attained the ability to run, allowing them to graduate from a more herbivorous to the more omnivorous diet which later humans enjoyed as a result of hunting.

One of the most important lower extremity muscle groups for running is the gastrocnemius-soleus complex, or the triceps surae, which forms the bulk of the Achilles tendon. This is the largest and most powerful tendon in the human body, able to function as a giant spring, storing and releasing a tremendous



amount of energy during running. The problem for evolutionists is that the great apes, supposedly our closest living relatives, lack a functional Achilles tendon. In fact, modern great apes possess only "the smallest vestige" of an Achilles tendon, "certainly unable to store any appreciable elastic energy." Moreover, studies have shown that without an Achilles tendon, bipedal running speed is decreased by 50%, yet requiring twice as much energy.

Evolutionists firmly believe that man evolved from a common ancestor with chimpanzees six million years ago. However, the theory of natural selection dictates that evolving traits must function well and therefore confer a survival advantage. Where did this Achilles tendon come from, and how did

bipedal running ever evolve if it were so inefficient? Evolutionary theory, like early man, would fall flat on its face.

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