

"The Bigger
the **IDEA**
the Bigger
the **CONSEQUENCE**"

IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES



NATIONAL CONFERENCE
on Christian Apologetics 2015

@SESApologetics | #NCCA





REASONS TO BELIEVE

INTEGRATING SCIENCE AND FAITH



HUGH ROSS & FAZALE RANA

OUR MISSION: ENGAGE & EQUIP



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REASONS.ORG (855) REASONS



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Southern Evangelical Seminary remains committed to the twin pillars of our founding, apologetics and global evangelism. We are firmly committed to the belief that in the years ahead we are going to increasingly understand that evangelism, discipleship, missions, and Christian education are all inextricably intertwined with apologetics.

Apologetics means, among other things, “loving people enough to answer their honest questions.” At SES, we believe no area of inquiry, investigation, or human endeavor is beyond the purview of the changeless Truth revealed to us in the Resurrected and Exalted Jesus Christ and His Holy Word. As the Apostle Paul said, spiritual warfare is the “destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4-5 NASB).

This year’s conference theme is *Ideas Have Consequences: The Bigger the Idea, the Bigger the Consequence*. Everywhere we look, both here in America and around the world, we see the truth of that statement as we see the ever-widening concentric circles of the consequences of false ideas that have led people and whole societies into destruction and heartache. Our speakers at this year’s conference will analyze and address these destructive ideas and how God has provided the answers that will put things right. If wrong ideas have bad consequences, it is also true that the right ideas have blessed and beneficial consequences. It is our fervent prayer that you leave our conference this year inspired, informed, and emboldened to contend for “the Truth” revealed in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our goal is for each of you to leave Charlotte better equipped to be a soldier for God’s truth than when you arrived.

Also, please pray for us here at SES. Hundreds of SES graduates are already proclaiming and defending the Christian faith from the pulpit, on campus, on the mission field, in the chaplaincy, and in corporate America, seeking to reclaim America and the world for Christ and His Kingdom. We hope you will prayerfully consider joining the SES family in helping to produce an ever increasing number of graduates who will be the green berets, paratroopers, and marines in the Lord’s army and who will be used by Him to win tremendous victories for Christ and His Kingdom. We are committed to meeting you wherever you are geographically or educationally, equipping you to be of ever more productive service to our Risen Savior and His Kingdom. Our professors will challenge your mind, strengthen your faith, and warm your heart. We are educators, but first and foremost we are brothers and sisters in Christ who are committed to come alongside you in your personal faith journey of service and commitment to our Lord and Savior.

Yours in His Service,

Richard Land, D.Phil.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

"The Bigger the **IDEA** the Bigger the **CONSEQUENCE**"

FRIDAY MORNING

8:00 A.M. – 8:50 A.M. Plenary

Richard Land †SES & Bill Cummings *Friday Morning Devotional and Worship* Sanctuary

9:00 A.M. – 10:05 A.M. Plenary

Norman Geisler †SES *The Idea of God* Sanctuary

10:15 A.M. – 11:05 A.M. Breakouts

Gary Habermas *Can Skeptics Disprove the Resurrection of Jesus?* Sanctuary

Kie Bowman *Answered Prayer in the Public Square* Crown Room

Paul Nelson *Discovery Institute: Living Waters Film* Chapel

NOTE: This discussion lasts until 12:05 p.m.

Corey Miller *The Good Life According to Mormonism* LC-1400

James Dew *Body, Soul, and the Human Person: Exploring the Implication for Evangelical Ethics* LC-1300

Kimberly Credit *An Apologetic Answer For Racism* RM 232

Darryl Giles †SES *Christ or Chaos: Why the Church Must Respond to Islam* RM 222

Richard Tompkins †SES *The American Church and the Building of Apologetic Disciples: Reversing the Theological Decline of Today's Church and Expanding the Church's Evangelistic Effectiveness through Apologetics* RM 226

Richard Simi †SES *Refuting the Infidel: the Islamic View of Christ and the Bible* RM 233

Peter Frish †SES *Eugenics, the Nazi Party, and Planned Parenthood: The Final Solution* RM 227

Brian Derickson †SES *Written on Our Hearts: An Introduction to Natural Law* RM 238

Del Potter †SES *The Early Apologists: "We're Sorry No Apologies"* RM 240

11:15 A.M. – 12:05 P.M. Breakouts

Jay Richards *Is Libertarianism Christian?* Sanctuary

Hugh Ross †SES *Preparing Earth for the Redemption of a "Great Multitude"* Crown Room

Paul Nelson *Discovery Institute: Living Waters Film* Chapel

David Geisler †SES *Post-Modern Implications for Using Apologetics in Our Evangelism* LC-1400

Brian Huffling †SES *God and Classical Theism: Consequences of Abandoning the Traditional View of God* LC-1300

Michael Sherrard *A Solution: Training the Next Generation to Renew Culture Through Truth and Civil Engagement* RM 232

John Stewart *Establishing the Reliability of the New Testament Text* RM 222

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– THOMAS HOWE

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– DOUG POTTER

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†SES – Indicates the speaker is either an SES student, alum, or full-time/part-time/adjunct faculty member

Don Deal †SES	<i>The God of the Bible and the God of the Qur'an: A Historical and Philosophical Examination</i>	RM 226
John Ferrer †SES	<i>Thirty or So Arguments Against Abortion</i>	RM 233
Kathryn Camp †SES	<i>The Bible and Sexual Diversity</i>	RM 227
Matthew Joss †SES	<i>How Premises Determine the Resurrection Debate: Why You Can't Change Your Skeptical Friend's Mind</i>	RM 238
Steve Garofalo †SES	<i>Perseverance in Persecution: I am Unto Death a Christian</i>	RM 240

NOTE: Pre-ordered box lunches are available in the Calvary Life Center following this session

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

1:25 P.M. – 2:30 P.M. Plenary

Richard Howe †SES	<i>The Religion of the Force</i>	Sanctuary
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2:40 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. Breakouts

Fuz Rana †SES	<i>The Four Pillars of Design: Biochemistry and the Modern Day Design Argument</i>	Sanctuary
Mark Gabriel †SES	<i>Islamic Law and the Conflict with Radical Islam</i>	Crown Room
Paul Nelson	<i>Dr. Seuss Biology: How Evolutionary Theory Hinders Biological Discovery</i>	Chapel
J. Thomas Bridges †SES	<i>The Uniqueness of The Christian Intellectual Life</i>	LC-1400
J. Andrew Payne †SES	<i>Must There Be a Reformed Objection to Natural Theology?</i>	LC-1300
Jonathan Mclatchie	<i>The Case for Intelligent Design</i>	RM 232
Mark Phillips †SES	<i>Jesus as Divine Figure: Second Temple Judaism and the Biblical Texts</i>	RM 222
Jim Damron †SES	<i>Valueless: Righteous Road Rage</i>	RM 226
Rob Velez †SES	<i>Word of Faith: The Cunning Movement Taking the Church By Storm</i>	RM 233
Tom Baker †SES	<i>Arguments for God from Natural Theology</i>	RM 227
Tom Gilson	<i>Too Good Not To Be True: A Clear Answer to the 'Legend' Critique</i>	RM 238
Tony Gurule †SES	<i>My Thoughts Are Not Your Thoughts: How Misunderstanding God's Nature Leads to a Lack of Worship</i>	RM 240

3:40 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. Breakouts

Josh McDowell	<i>Does Jesus Deserve An Oscar?</i>	Sanctuary
John Sanford	<i>The Waiting Time Problem: A Compelling Refutation of Human Evolution</i>	Crown Room
Tyler Geffeny	<i>The Greatest of All Apologetics</i>	Chapel
Mel Winstead †SES	<i>The Historical Reliability of the New Testament</i>	LC-1400
Alex McLellan	<i>How to Share Ultimate Truth with Ordinary People</i>	LC-1300
Jonathan Mclatchie	<i>Sharing the Gospel with Muslims</i>	RM 232
Joel Paulus †SES	<i>Revelation Through the Performing Arts: Embodiment and the Christian Worldview</i>	RM 222
Terry Rathman	<i>The Origin of Homochirality of Vital Biomolecules: Easier than Baking a Cake?</i>	RM 226
Jeremy Cummings †SES	<i>Is the Church to Blame for the Collapse of Marriage?</i>	RM 233
Glenn Smith †SES	<i>What is the Mess We're In And How Did We Get Here?</i>	RM 227
Mike Kozlinski †SES	<i>A "Mentally" Healthy Approach to Christian/Biblical Counseling</i>	RM 238
Glen Pietruski †SES	<i>What Do the Major Cults Believe?</i>	RM 240

4:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. Dinner Break

WOMEN'S THURSDAY, OCT. 15, 2015 PRE-CONFERENCE

2:10 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Plenary

Carole Ardizzone	<i>Christ in Us, The Hope of Glory: Who is Called to Change the Culture?</i>	LC-1400
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3:10 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. Breakouts

Tricia Scribner †SES	<i>Theistic Evolution's Failure to Keep its Promises</i>	LC-1400
Laurie Stewart †SES	<i>Women, Human Rights, & Christianity</i>	LC-1300
Charmain Barnes †SES	<i>Understanding the Godhead: A Defense of the Trinity</i>	LC-1104
Kimberly Credit	<i>Womanhood: Helping Younger Women Have Better Consequences Through Better Ideas</i>	LC-1105

4:10 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. Breakouts

Nel Brace †SES	<i>Logic: The Lost Art of Thinking</i>	LC-1400
Hillary Ferrer	<i>The Youth Exodus: Why Young People are Leaving the Church and What We Can Do About It</i>	LC-1300
Kristen Davis †SES	<i>Morality's Foundation: Rock or Sand?</i>	LC-1104
Jill Graham †SES	<i>The Problem of Evil</i>	LC-1105

5:00 P.M. – 6:10 P.M. Dinner Break

6:10 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Breakouts

Charmain Barnes †SES	<i>Understanding the Godhead: A Defense of the Trinity</i>	LC-1400
Kathryn Camp †SES	<i>Parents Beware! Do Your Homework</i>	LC-1300
Dianna Newman †SES	<i>Christianity & Feminism</i>	LC-1104
Cynthia Sufferen †SES	<i>Women in Islam and Christianity</i>	LC-1105

Continued on Next Page

FRIDAY EVENING

5:55 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. Plenary

Richard Land †SES *Presidential Update*

Sanctuary

7:35 P.M. – 8:25 P.M. Breakouts

Jay Richards *Why Libertarians Need God*

Sanctuary

Gary Habermas *The Fall of Naturalism*

Crown Room

Paul Nelson *The Fall of Darwin's Tree of Life, and What That Means for 21st Century Biology*

Chapel

Doug Potter †SES *The Missing Links in Christian Apologetics Education: Developing a Comprehensive Model for Apologetic Education*

LC-1400

John Baumgardner *Catastrophic Plate Tectonics: Key to a Robust Defense of the Flood*

LC-1300

BJ Mauser †SES *Reading to Grow: Biblical Interpretation for Everyone*

RM 232

William Roach †SES *New Perspectives on Paul*

RM 222

Kie Bowman *Answered Prayer in the Public Square*

RM 226

Ray Ciervo †SES *"What's at Stake?" Views of God*

RM 233

Eric Chabot †SES *F. A. C. T.'s of the Resurrection of Jesus*

RM 227

Don Deal †SES *ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Future of the Middle East*

RM 238

Joe Bergeron *CSI: Jerusalem*

RM 240

8:40 P.M. – 9:45 P.M. Plenary

Josh McDowell & Scott Carroll *Radical Developments in Manuscript Evidence and Ministry*

Sanctuary

SATURDAY MORNING

8:15 A.M. – 8:50 A.M. Plenary

John Munro & Bill Cummings *Saturday Morning Devotional and Worship*

Sanctuary

9:00 A.M. – 10:05 A.M. Plenary

Hugh Ross †SES *Rare Ice Age Cycle, Rare Opportunity for Redemption*

Sanctuary

10:15 A.M. – 11:05 A.M. Breakouts

Paige Patterson *What Does It Mean to "Earnestly Contend" for the Faith*

Sanctuary

Ryan Anderson *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom*

Crown Room

Nora Hale †SES & Dianna Newman †SES *Does Christianity Oppress Women*

Chapel

Ken Wolgemuth *Ice, Rocks, and Plates: What Would the Bereans Do?*

LC-1400

Jordan Lorence *Five Myths About Religious Liberty*

LC-1300

Dave Glander *Shroud of Turin: History or Hoax?*

RM 232

Jeff Lenhart †SES *From Perversion to Orientation: How a Shift in Terminology Led to the Inversion of Moral Judgment*

RM 222

Stephen Cutchins †SES *Get in the Game*

RM 226

Terry Beatley *The Deadliest American Hoax: What the Co-Founder of NARAL Pro-Choice America Wanted Every American to Know*

RM 233

Tim Brown †SES *The Offensive and Defensive Aspects of Apologetics*

RM 227

Brian Henson †SES *What Would Indiana Jones Say About the Old Testament?*

RM 238

Joseph Algahry †SES & Bassin Gloria *Exposing Islam to the Rising Son 24/7*

RM 240

WOMEN'S PRE-CONFERENCE, cont.

7:10 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. Breakouts

Tiffany Andrews *How You Parent Matters!*
LC-1400

Cynthia Suffern †SES *How Do Christians Encourage Cultural Change?*
LC-1300

Carey Walton †SES *Building a Strong Foundation: Why Doctrine Still Matters*
LC-1104

Nora Hale †SES *Gender Matters: Who's the Biggest Loser?*
LC-1105

8:10 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. Plenary

Rebekah Land *Is Submission Politically Correct?*
LC-1400

9:00 P.M. – 9:30 P.M. Plenary

Q&A Panel LC-1400

CONFERENCE RECORDINGS

will be available during and immediately after the conference at CA Tapes in the exhibitor area. Go to www.SES.edu for updates after the conference.

11:15 A.M. – 12:05 P.M. Breakouts

Michael Brown †SES	<i>Outlasting The Gay Revolution</i>	Sanctuary
Fuz Rana †SES	<i>Unveiling the Biochemical Anthropic Principle</i>	Crown Room
Scott Carroll	<i>The Power of Artifact-Driven Apologetics and How You Can Engage It!</i>	Chapel
John Baumgardner	<i>Radioisotope Evidences That the Earth Is Young</i>	LC-1400
George Yancey	<i>Anti-Christian Discrimination in the United States: Myth or Reality?</i>	LC-1300
Nora Hale †SES	<i>Gender Matters: Who's The Biggest Loser?</i>	RM 232
Ramon Margallo †SES	<i>Simplified: Apologetics Made Easy</i>	RM 222
Mark Lanier	<i>Christianity on Trial: A Lawyer Examines the Christian Faith</i>	RM 226
Chris Winchester †SES	<i>Did Jesus Even Exist?</i>	RM 233
Daniel Janosik †SES	<i>Did Muhammad Exist? The Traditional Muslim View in Light of History</i>	RM 227
Peter Jones	<i>The Only Two Worldviews in Open Conflict</i>	RM 238
Carey Walton †SES	<i>Nothing New Under the Sun: How Ancient Heresies Find New Life in Contemporary Faith</i>	RM 240

NOTE: Pre-ordered box lunches are available in the Calvary Life Center following this session

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M. – 1:25 P.M. Worship

Conference Worship Team Sanctuary

1:25 P.M. – 2:30 P.M. Plenary

Richard Land †SES *Panel Discussion on Marriage: What Do We Do Now?* Sanctuary
Frank Turek †SES
Michael Brown †SES
Ryan Anderson
Daniel Heimbach
John Stewart
Judge Phil Ginn †SES

2:40 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. Breakouts

Richard Howe †SES	<i>The Design Argument: Aquinas vs. Paley</i>	Sanctuary
Frank Turek †SES	<i>Why Science Needs God</i>	Crown Room
Barry Leventhal †SES	<i>Just Give Me the Cross: I'll Preach It with My Best Eloquence (1 Cor. 1-4)</i>	Chapel
Mark Lanier	<i>As a Defense Attorney, Can I Get Hitler Off?: Yes, with a Jury of Atheists</i>	LC-1400
Judge Phil Ginn †SES	<i>Same Sex Marriage: The End of Religious Liberty</i>	LC-1300
Prem Isaac †SES	<i>Beyond DNA: Design and the Epigenetics Revolution</i>	RM 232
Thomas McCuddy †SES	<i>Lost in Translations: From Papyri to iPad – How We Got Our English Bible and Why We Can Trust It</i>	RM 222
Mark Gabriel †SES	<i>The Struggle for Religious Reform in the Middle East</i>	RM 226
Dan Heimbach	<i>Defending Marriage Against Radical Deconstruction</i>	RM 233
Harold Felder	<i>Darwinism and the Roots of Racism</i>	RM 227
Tom Griffin †SES	<i>Be Tolerant or Else!</i>	RM 238
Andrew Brown †SES	<i>Church vs. Relativism</i>	RM 240

3:40 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. Plenary

Paige Patterson *Go Forth and Contend: How to Use What You Have Learned at the 2015 NCCA* Sanctuary

THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S EXHIBITORS

Please be sure to visit our gracious exhibitors in the exhibit hall, museum, and conference bookstore.

- ▶ ABN Sat
- ▶ Anchors Away
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- ▶ Cross Examined
- ▶ Discovery Institute
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- ▶ Mt. Ararat Discovery Foundation
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- ▶ ParentalRights.org
- ▶ Peach of a Patriot
- ▶ Ratio Christi
- ▶ Reasons to Believe
- ▶ Reasons Institute
- ▶ Truth Ministries



IN MEMORIAM JERALD D. TANNER

In 1993, Dr. Norman Geisler, co-founder of Southern Evangelical Seminary, was introduced to Jerald and Sandra Tanner by Jerry Urban, a retired United Airlines captain and lay expert on cults. Mr. Urban had met the Tanners when they first started their ministry to the Mormons in 1968, and since then they had become internationally known cult researchers.

In 1983 the Tanners established the non-profit organization Utah Lighthouse Ministry, which continues to publish his research. He authored more than forty



Jerald D. Tanner

books, including *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* and *The Changing World of Mormonism*.

Through a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Urban, a "lectureship" was founded in January 1994. Each year the National Conference on Apologetics, Cults, and Other Religions was presented in honor of Sandra and Jerald Tanner. Jerald Tanner's spirit of outreach and discipleship lives on in the annual National Conference on Christian Apologetics. Jerald went to be with the Lord on Oct. 1, 2006, at the age of 68.

THANK YOU UNDERWRITERS & SPONSORS!

The National Conference on Christian Apologetics is grateful to the following corporate underwriters and sponsors who helped make this event possible. Be sure to find out about sponsorship opportunities for the 23rd annual National Conference on Christian Apologetics as details become available.

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A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

The SES National Conference on Christian Apologetics would not be possible without the involvement, investment, and prayers of many.

We are thankful for the plenary speakers who made time to join us; we thank the Lord for people from across the nation who have supported SES prayerfully and financially in the months of preparation leading up to this event. We are deeply grateful for the many pastors, churches, organizations, and individual believers from the greater Charlotte area who assisted in the production of the National Conference on Christian Apologetics. An event such as this would not be possible without the cooperation and hospitality of ministry partners like Dr. John Munro and the staff and members of Calvary Church, Charlotte, NC. We appreciate the help of Paul Hundrieser, Calvin Masaoka, Eric Nizinski, Kathey Overcash, Dan Smith, and Matthew Thompson.

Heartfelt thanks also goes out to:

- All faculty, staff, students, and supporters of Southern Evangelical Seminary.
- A very special thank you goes to Simon Brace, Stephen Cutchins, Ted Davis, Christian Drake, Bobbie Freyler, Eric Gustafson, Jill Joyner, Dianna Newman, Daniel Roberts, Adam Tucker, and Christina Woodside of Southern Evangelical Seminary for exceptional service in the production of this event.

Most of all, we are thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ!

THANK YOU CHURCH & SCHOOL PARTNERS!

This year marks the 22nd annual National Conference on Christian Apologetics. We value the local church and their support! Thank you all for your help in promoting the Conference this year and for making apologetics a part of your ministry.

2015 CHURCH & SCHOOL PARTNERS

Berean Knight Ministry, *Chesterfield, VA*

Berean Light Fellowship, *West Point, VA*

Calvary Church, *Charlotte, NC*

Children's Outreach Ministry, *Commerce, GA*

Christ the King Christian Academy, *New London, NC*

No Pat Answers (Ray Ciervo Ministries), *NJ*

Fairbluff Bible Chapel, *Charlotte, NC*

First Baptist Church, *Proctorville, OH*

Huntsville Baptist Church, *Yadkinville, NC*

Indian Upstate Fellowship, *Greenville, SC*

Life Community Church, *Alexandria, VA*

Midway Community Church, *Anderson, SC*

Mt. Harmony Baptist Church, *Matthews, NC*

North Star Community Church, *Charlotte, NC*

Parkwood Baptist Church, *Concord, NC*

Neal Perkins, *www.AppReasons.org*

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**SES does not necessarily endorse or agree with the views held by the churches or schools.*



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2015 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



RYAN ANDERSON

Ryan Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Senior Research Fellow in American Principles and Public Policy. Anderson is also the Founder and Editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J. He is the author of *Truth*

Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom, the first book-length response to the Supreme Court's 2015 ruling on marriage. He is also the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*.



JOHN BAUMGARDNER

After a four-year tour of duty at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory John Baumgardner joined the staff of CRU. Dr. Baumgardner began to develop lectures to expose evolution's false claims. His Ph.D. thesis research involved the development of a 3-D spherical-shell finite-element model for the earth's mantle, a program now

known as TERRA. Upon completing his Ph.D. he was on staff in the Theoretical Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory. In 2008 he joined Logos Research Associates, a collaborative network of Christian research scientists whose focus is origins and earth history issues from a Biblical perspective.



TERRY BEATLEY

Terry is president and founder of Hosea Initiative, dedicated to restoring a life-affirming culture by fulfilling a promise made to Dr. Bernard Nathanson, who came to regret co-founding NARAL Pro-Choice America. Beatley is a graduate of the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview Centurion Program and of the St.

Paul Center for Biblical Theology's "Applied Biblical Studies" program. She serves on the Virginia Christian Alliance Board. Beatley ran a political action committee in 2011, which successfully helped defeat one of Virginia's most pro-abortion state senators. Her book will be released in early 2016.



JOSEPH W. BERGERON

Joseph Bergeron is a specialist in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, dedicated to treating neuromuscular disease and injury. He has authored a review and analysis of medical hypotheses for Jesus' cause of death published in the *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*. Dr. Bergeron and Dr. Gary Habermas have recently

collaborated on a critique of hallucination hypotheses for the biblical story of Easter published in the *Irish Theological Quarterly*. Dr. Bergeron lectures in churches and college campuses using his peer reviewed published work as a basis for apologetic discussion.



KIE BOWMAN

Kie Bowman has served as Senior Pastor at Hyde Park Baptist Church since 1997. Born in Fairbanks, Alaska, Dr. Bowman accepted Jesus Christ as a teenager. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in New Testament Interpretation from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas, where he also

received the Master of Divinity degree. He received the Bachelor of Arts in Religion from the University of the Cumberland in Williamsburg, Kentucky.



J. THOMAS BRIDGES

J. Thomas Bridges has a B.S. from Iowa State University, M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, M.A. in Philosophy from Baylor University, and a Ph.D. from Southern Evangelical Seminary in the philosophy of religion. His academic interests include Intelligent Design, the Problem of Evil, and the philosophical

theology of Thomas Aquinas. Dr. Bridges teaches graduate level philosophy classes including Epistemology, Metaphysics, Symbolic Logic, and the History of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy. He is the Academic Dean of SES.



MICHAEL BROWN

Michael Brown is the founder and president of FIRE School of Ministry in Concord, N.C.; director of the Coalition of Conscience; and host of the daily nationally syndicated talk radio show, *The Line of Fire*, as well as the host of the apologetics TV show, *Answering Your Toughest Questions*, which airs on the NRB television

network. He holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at SES among other others. The lecturer and author is a national and international speaker on themes of spiritual renewal and cultural reformation.



TIMOTHY BROWN

Timothy Brown is currently the Adjunct Professor of Missions and Evangelism at Southern Evangelical Seminary, as well as a staff member at Northside Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C. He holds a B.Sc. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, a M.Div and a Th.M. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion from Southern Evangelical Seminary.



SCOTT CARROLL

Scott Carroll has a Ph.D. in Ancient Studies from Miami University. Dr. Carroll has assembled the largest collections of biblically-related materials in the world: first, the Van Kampen Collection and second, the Green Collection (Hobby Lobby). He also organized and directed an exhibition conducted in conjunction with

the Vatican Library and works regularly with the British Library. Dr. Carroll and his wife, Denise, direct a business that identifies unknown items of high value in private collections. They also direct a non-profit entity, the Manuscript Research Group (MRG), that provides African Ph.D.s and advanced Ph.D. students unprecedented access to ancient documents.



JAMES DEW

James Dew is Associate Professor of History of Ideas and Philosophy and the Dean of the College at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also the Vice President for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Support. His areas of interest are Philosophy of Religion, History of Philosophy, Theological Studies, Epistemology, and Apologetics.



MARK GABRIEL

Mark A. Gabriel is a renowned expert on Islam. Several governments have asked him for advice on counter terrorism affairs and the concerns for human rights abuse in the Islamic world. Dr. Gabriel grew up as a devout Muslim in Egypt. He was a lecturer on Islamic History and Culture at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He

has authored many books. The most famous, *Jesus and Muhammad* and *Islam and Terrorism*, have been translated into over 50 languages. Currently he is working with a leading faculty of law, in cooperation with moderate Muslim scholars to develop a model to reform Islamic criminal law in the light of international human rights.



NORMAN GEISLER

Norm Geisler is co-founder of Southern Evangelical Seminary, a prolific author, veteran professor, speaker, lecturer, traveler, philosopher, apologist, evangelist, and theologian. He has authored/coauthored over 80 books and hundreds of articles. He has taught theology, philosophy, and apologetics on the college or graduate

level for over 50 years. He has served as a professor at some of the finest seminaries in the United States, including Trinity Evangelical Seminary, Dallas Seminary, and Southern Evangelical Seminary. He now lends his talents to Veritas Evangelical Seminary in Murrieta, California, as the Distinguished Professor of Apologetics.



DAVID GEISLER

David Geisler is an Adjunct Professor at SES and founder and president of Norm Geisler International Ministries (NGIM). He graduated with a D.Min. in Apologetics at SES. David has trained pastors, missionaries and seminary students in thirteen countries in Asia alone. In 2011 he and his wife and three children relocated his

ministry base from Singapore (then known as Meekness and Truth Ministries) back to the U.S. where David oversees NGIM's global ministry. Through Harvest House, he co-authored *Conversational Evangelism: Connecting with People to Share Jesus* with his father, Dr. Norman Geisler. It has also been published in Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and Slovakian.



HON. JUDGE PHIL GINN

Phil Ginn has twenty years of experience as a trial judge in NC and served as a Resident Superior Court Judge for the 24th Judicial District. He also received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern Evangelical Seminary.



DAVE GLANDER

Dave Glander is the founder of Truth Ministries, an apologetics-based ministry, and Tied2Christ. He has taught at major conferences, universities, churches, and youth camps around the country. He is the author of the *Faith Survival Guide*, an Apologetics curriculum. Dave is also the owner and curator for the Museum

of Truth, which is an 1,800 square foot traveling Biblical Museum, including a comprehensive collection that chronicles the rise of modern Israel. Dave is also an expert on the Shroud of Turin, traveling with one of only five life-sized Shroud of Turin displays in the world. Additionally, Dave hosted the *What is Truth* Radio Show.



DERWIN GRAY

Derwin Gray is the founder and lead Pastor of Transformation Church, a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped community. Transformation Church (TC) was recognized three years in a row as the 2nd fastest-growing church by percentage in America for 2010 by *Outreach Magazine*. After graduating from

Brigham Young University, Pastor Derwin played professional football in the NFL for five years with the Indianapolis Colts and one year with the Carolina Panthers. Pastor Derwin went on to graduate from SES with an M.Div., with a concentration in Apologetics.



GARY HABERMAS

Visiting Professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, is the Distinguished Research Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Theology at Liberty University. He has published 36 books (18 on the subject of Jesus' resurrection). He has also published more than sixty chapters or articles in other books, plus

more than 100 articles in journals and other periodicals. During the past ten years or so, he has been a Visiting or Adjunct Professor, teaching dozens of courses at 15 different graduate schools and seminaries in the US and abroad.



NORA HALE

Nora Hale holds a B.A. in Studio Art from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and an M.A. in Religion from Southern Evangelical Seminary. Upon graduating, Nora served as Dean of Women at SES, where she led instruction in the Women's Ministry Certificate Program. Nora designed the program with a passion to

help women understand their biblical role in the family and local church ministry. Nora has spoken on multiple occasions at the National Conference on Christian Apologetics, as well as at national and international women's events.



DANIEL HEIMBACH

Daniel Heimbach has a B.S. from the United States Naval Academy, an M.A. and M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and an M.Phil. and Ph.D. in law, politics, and Christian ethics from Drew University Graduate School. Professor Heimbach has been teaching Christian Ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary since

1993. Before that he served in several capacities, including 2 years on the White House staff under President George H. W. Bush both as Associate Director for Domestic Policy and as Deputy Executive Secretary to the Domestic Policy Council. Professor Heimbach has written or contributed to fourteen books, and numerous articles and book reviews.



RICHARD HOWE

Richard Howe earned a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Arkansas. He is Professor Emeritus at Southern Evangelical Seminary, a contributing writer for the *Christian Research Journal* and the *Christian Apologetics Journal*, and has contributed to several apologetics books. He speaks and writes widely on philosophy and Christian apologetics.



BRIAN HUFFLING

Brian Huffling has an M.A. in Apologetics, Biblical Studies, and Philosophy and Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Theology and is the Director of the Ph.D. program at SES. Dr. Huffling has taught philosophy and world religions at The

Art Institute of Charlotte and Apologetics and Worldview at Arborbrook Christian Academy. Dr. Huffling has served in various pastoral roles. He has also served his country in the Marines, Navy, and currently he serves as a reserve Air Force chaplain at the United States Air Force Academy.



DANIEL JANOSIK

Daniel Janosik's interests in academics range from Science Apologetics to Apologetics to Islam to Church History and Historical Theology. As an adjunct faculty, Dr. Janosik teaches Islamic Studies at Southern Evangelical Seminary. Dr. Janosik desires to develop materials and provide instruction that will encourage students to

learn more about Islam so that they can minister more effectively to Muslims.



RICHARD LAND

is president of Southern Evangelical Seminary. In addition to his presidency, Dr. Land also teaches courses at the seminary. Previously, Dr. Land served for 25 years as the President of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Southern Baptist Convention's official entity assigned to address social, moral, and ethical

concerns, with particular attention to their impact on American families and their faith. He is a graduate of Princeton University (BA, *magna cum laude*), New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (Master of Theology, Honors Program), and Oxford University in England (D.Phil.).



MARK LANIER

Attorney, Author, Teacher, Pastor and Expert Story Teller, W. Mark Lanier is no stranger to the public rostrum. He founded The Lanier Law Firm in 1990. Since then, Mark Lanier has earned international recognition as one of the top trial attorneys in the United States. Firm offices in Houston, New York City, and Los Angeles,

California support his work for clients across the country. Mark Lanier is the founder of the Lanier Theological Library (www.LanierTheologicalLibrary.org), one of the nation's largest private theological collections. An accomplished author, Mark recently published the book, *Christianity on Trial* (IVP 2014).



BARRY LEVENTHAL

Barry Leventhal earned his Th.M and Ph.D. at Dallas Theological Seminary, writing his dissertation on *Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust*. Dr. Leventhal is an author of numerous articles and contributing author to several books. He is currently serving as Distinguished Senior Professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary.



JOSH McDOWELL

Josh McDowell serves on the Advisory Board of SES. He has had the opportunity to speak to more than 10 million students at live events since beginning ministry in 1961. He has given over 24,000 talks in 118 countries. He is the author or co-author of 120 books, selling over 49 million copies worldwide, including *More*

Than a Carpenter, (15 million copies worldwide), which has been translated into over 85 languages. Josh is currently traveling the United States with the message of TRUTH in the context of RELATIONSHIPS. Many people refer to Josh as "America's Dad." Josh will tell you that his family does not come before his ministry – his family is his ministry.



COREY MILLER

Corey Miller is the President/CEO of Ratio Christi and teaches courses at Indiana University-Kokomo in philosophy and comparative religions. Raised in Utah as a sixth generation Mormon, he came to Christ and became a youth and college pastor, a Bible college and university professor, campus minister, lecturer, and an

evangelist. He is variously published and is co-editor of *Is Faith in God Reasonable? Debates in Philosophy, Science, and Rhetoric*. He holds master's degrees in philosophy (Purdue), biblical studies (Multnomah), and in philosophy of religion and ethics (Talbot). His PhD is in philosophical theology from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.



JOHN MUNRO

John Munro completed a four year honors degree in law at Edinburgh University, Scotland. He practiced law in Scotland as a criminal prosecutor and later was a partner in a private law firm. Called to ministry, Dr. Munro moved to Dallas and earned his M.T. and D.Min. at Dallas Theological Seminary. He has served in

pastoral ministry for over 25 years and has been Senior Pastor at Calvary Church since February 2006.

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PAUL NELSON

Paul Nelson studied evolutionary theory and the philosophy of science at the University of Chicago, where he received his Ph.D. He has been a Fellow of the Discovery Institute and from 2004 to the present and an Adjunct Professor in the Master of Arts Program in Science & Religion at Biola University. Dr. Nelson's scholarly articles have appeared in journals such as *Biology & Philosophy*, *Zygon*, *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, and *BioComplexity*, and book chapters in the anthologies *Mere Creation*, *Signs of Intelligence*, *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics*, and *Darwin, Design, and Public Education*.



PAIGE PATTERSON

President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Paige Patterson also served almost 18 years as president of The Criswell College in Dallas and 11 years as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. After graduating from Hardin-Simmons University, Patterson completed the Master of Theology (Th.M.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. While he was President of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1998–2000, he presided over the historic session of the convention in which the revised Baptist Faith & Message, the confession most widely employed by Southern Baptists, was adopted.



DOUG POTTER

Doug Potter, from Southern Evangelical Seminary, is an avid writer, teacher, and speaker on Christian theology and apologetics who has committed his life to maximizing every opportunity to prepare the next generation of believers to know what they believe and most importantly, why it is true. Currently Dr. Potter is an Assistant Professor and is the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Southern Evangelical Seminary. He is also the author of *Developing a Christian Apologetics Educational Program* and has written and published articles in the *Christian Apologetics Journal*, *The Homeschool Digest*, as well as the *Christian Research Journal*.



FAZALE 'FUZ' RANA

Fuz Rana earned a BA in chemistry from West Virginia State College, a PhD in chemistry at Ohio University, and did postdoctoral studies at the Universities of Virginia and Georgia. "Fuz" travels widely, speaking on science-and-faith issues. He also participates in RTB's podcasts and daily blog, *Today's New Reason to Believe* and has made guest appearances on various television shows. Since joining RTB as Executive Vice President of Research and Apologetics, Fuz has authored and coauthored the books *Origins of Life*, *Who Was Adam?* and *The Cell's Design*, published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, and made presentations at many international scientific meeting.



JAY RICHARDS

Jay Richards is a Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute and the author of many books, including the award-winning *Money, Greed, and God*, *The Privileged Planet*, and *Indivisible*. He is the executive director of the documentaries *The Call of the Entrepreneur* and *The Birth of Freedom*. He has been featured in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and has appeared on *Larry King Live*. He has also lectured on economic myths to members of the U.S. Congress.



HUGH ROSS

Hugh Ross is an adjunct Professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary. As an astronomer and pastor, he focuses his ministry on harnessing the power of science for evangelism. Founding Reasons To Believe in 1986, Dr. Ross' desire to communicate that science and faith are, and always will be, allies, not enemies is the basis for RTB's outreach efforts. He proclaims this message by writing books, recording podcasts, and speaking in many venues. Dr. Ross engages skeptics and equips believers with powerful reasons to believe in the God of the Bible as the Creator and Savior.



JOHN C. SANFORD, PH.D.

John Sanford is the Associate Professor of Horticultural Sciences (semi-retired) at Cornell University, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. Dr. Sanford is a researcher in genetics and is currently looking at the theoretical limits of mutation and selection. He earned his M.A. and his Ph.D. in Plant Breeding/Plant Genetics from the University of Wisconsin. On behalf of intelligent design, Dr. Sanford was involved in the 2005 Kansas evolution hearings. As an inventor, Dr. Sanford holds more than 25 patents, including the "gene gun."



BRAD STINE

Brad Stine is the most media covered Christian comedian in the country. He has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*; featured on *NBC Nightly News*, *HBO*, *Showtime*, *CNN*, *Glenn Beck*, *Hannity and Colmes*, *NPR's Fresh Air*, *ABC Nightline*, *MTV*, and *Comedy Central*. He also has had material published in *Readers Digest* and *Focus on the Family* magazine. With a spirit to inspire believers and plant seeds of faith and reason of God's existence through comedy using sword swallowing, sleight-of-hand, and optical illusion, Brad began a 2015 Tour of "God Experience."



FRANK TUREK

Adjunct Professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Frank Turek is the Founder and President of *CrossExamined.org*. He is also a popular speaker and the award-winning author of three books, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, *Legislating Morality*, and *Correct, Not Politically Correct: How Same Sex Marriage Hurts Everyone*. In addition to speaking and teaching for numerous Christian events, Frank does presentations for corporate clients. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy. He has been a guest on *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Hannity and Colmes*, *CBS News*, and *Fox News*. He holds a D.Min. degree from Southern Evangelical Seminary.



MEL WINSTEAD

Mel Winstead holds a B.A. in Biblical Studies from Piedmont Baptist College, an M.Div. with Biblical languages, and a Ph.D. in Biblical studies from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Winstead is the pastor of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church and teaches adjunctively at Southern Evangelical Seminary. He has taught courses such as Introduction to World Religions, New Testament, New Testament Greek, New Testament book studies, Old Testament Introduction, and Christian Literature. In addition, he has published several essays/articles and book reviews and is a contributor to the *Lexham Bible Dictionary* in Logos.



KEN WOLGEMUTH

Ken Wolgemuth is a petroleum geologist with over 30 years of experience in the oil industry. He received a B.S. in chemistry from Wheaton College and a Ph.D. in geochemistry from Columbia University. His broad work experience includes Dickinson College, the Hess Corporation, and the American Association of Petroleum

Geologists and publishing 20+ papers and research reports about geochemistry. For the last 10 years he has been teaching oil industry short courses around the world in over 18 countries. He specializes in teaching geology to non-geologists, and founded Solid Rock Lectures to communicate geology of the Earth in seminaries and church venues.



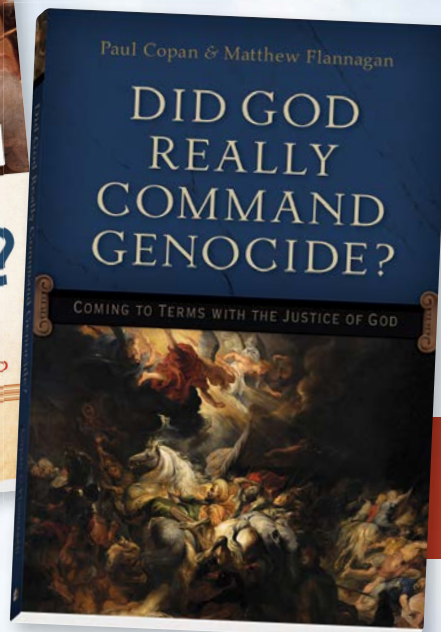
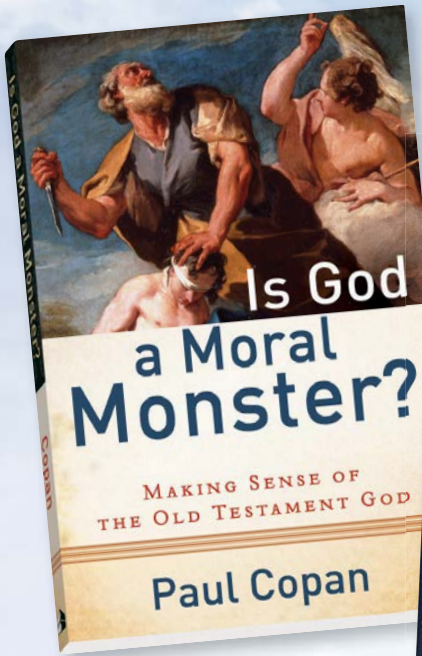
GEORGE YANCEY

George Yancey is a Professor of sociology at the University of North Texas. He has published several research articles on the topics of institutional racial diversity, racial identity, academic bias, and anti-Christian hostility. His books include *Compromising Scholarship*; *There Is No God; So Many Christians, So Few Lions*; and *Hostile*

Environment, a book that explores how Christians should deal with Christianophobia. He currently is working to create the first Christian Studies center on a secular campus.

ALSO PRESENTING ARE THE FOLLOWING STAFF, STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND FRIENDS OF SES

Joseph Algahry	Ray Ciervo	Brian Derickson	Tom Gilson	Peter Jones	Thomas McCuddy	Terry Rathman	Laurie Stewart
Tiffany Andrews	Kimberly Credit	Harold Felder	Bassim Gloria	Matthew Joss	Jonathan McLatchie	William Roach	Cynthia Suffern
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DR. HUGH ROSS

Dr. Hugh Ross has been a champion for defending the faith for many decades. It is an honor and a privilege for Southern Evangelical Seminary to be able to award Dr. Ross the fifth Lifetime Achievement in Apologet-

ics Award. This award is tantamount to being elected to the Christian Apologetics Hall of Fame.

The citation on the award reads, "In recognition of your service as a minister of the Gospel, your scholarship as a premier apologist, educator, and author, and in light of your example as a Christian leader."

Dr. Ross, the founder of the Reasons to Believe ministry, is deeply committed to integrating biblical truth and scientific knowledge for the defense of the timeless truths of the Christian faith.

Dr. Ross has been a prolific author, writing numerous books including *Navigating Genesis*, *Hidden Treasures in the Book of Job*, and *Why the Universe is the Way It Is*. Dr. Ross earned his Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Toronto. For several years he continued his research on quasars and galaxies as a postdoctoral fellow at the California Institute of Technology.

We are proud and honored to have Dr. Ross serve as an adjunct professor of Southern Evangelical Seminary and to award him our Lifetime Achievement in Apologetics. ▲

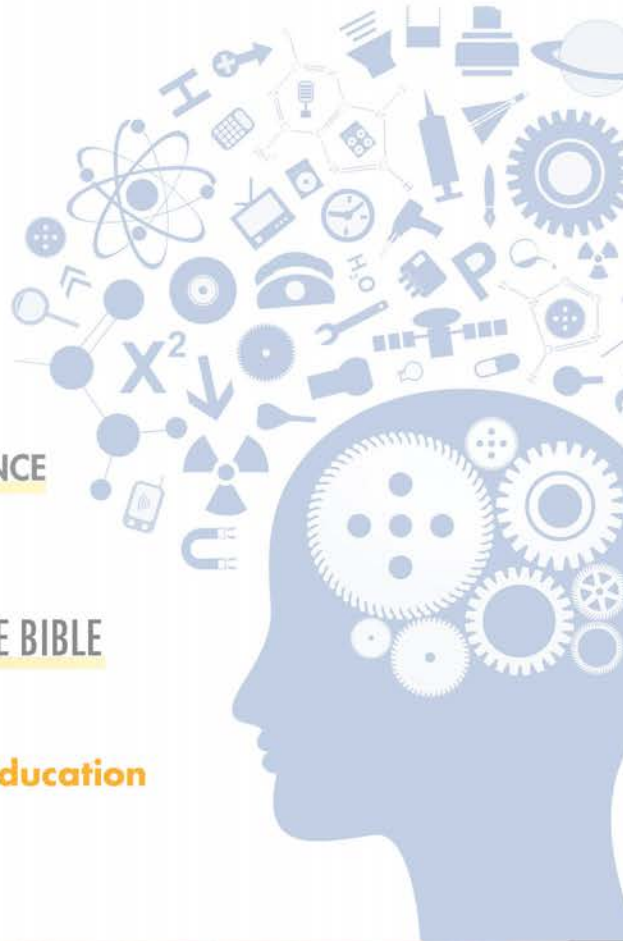
- **2009**
Ross became a regular guest on SES's nationally syndicated radio program
- **2010**
He first spoke at the SES National Conference on Christian Apologetics
- **2011**
Ross taught his first course at SES on scientific apologetics
- **2011**
He helped SES create the Institute of Scientific Apologetics (ISA)
- **2012**
He taught the very first course offered in the ISA
- **2013**
The SES Hugh Ross Scholarship in Scientific Apologetics was created
- **2015**
Ross received the SES Lifetime Achievement In Apologetics Award

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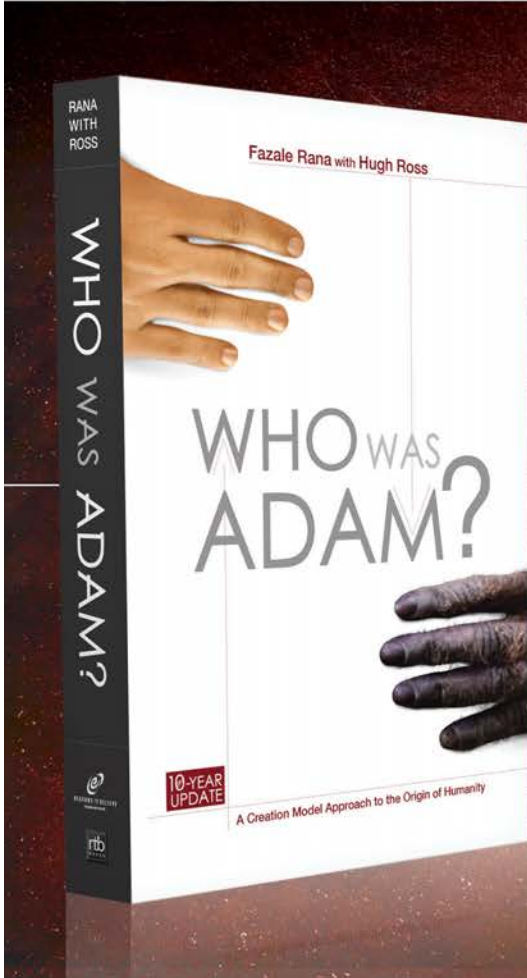
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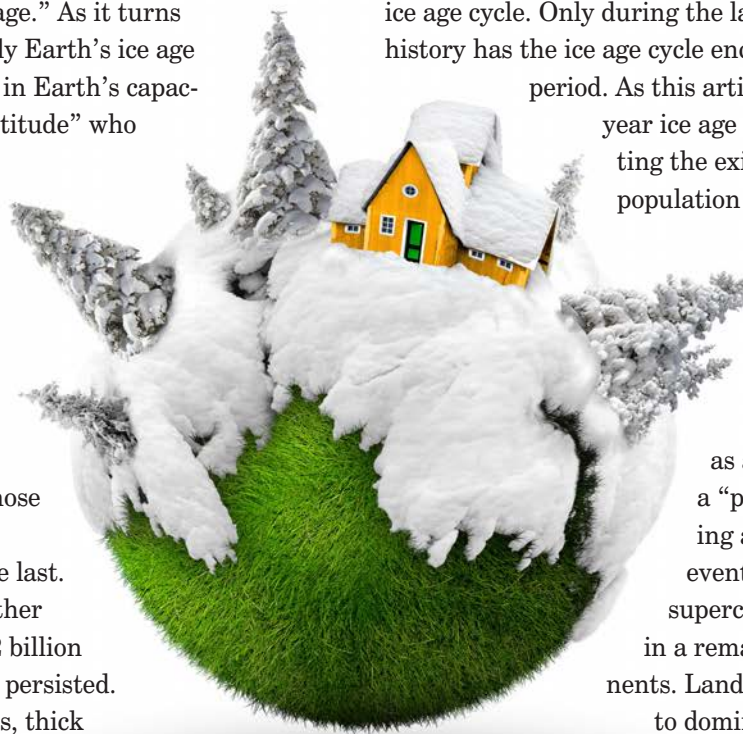
IS IDEAL FOR HUMANITY

You may wonder what ice ages have to do with apologetics. I can understand why. No doubt you learned little about them in school, and I suspect they're rarely mentioned in Sunday sermons or Bible studies. However, all the recent concerns about climate change have brought them into focus. This intensive research into Earth's climate history has brought to light some theologically relevant discoveries, findings that provide powerful new evidence for God's hand in shaping Earth for fulfillment of his redemptive plan. According to Revelation 7:9, that plan includes "great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language." As it turns out, ice ages—more specifically Earth's ice age cycle—plays an essential role in Earth's capacity to support this "great multitude" who will, by God's grace, hear and respond to His call.

Ice ages are rare in Earth's history; ice age *cycles* are even rarer. In the past 2 billion years, ice ages occurred in only 3 of the 21 geological periods prior to our own (Quaternary), and those ice ages were relatively brief, with each one briefer than the last. The Quaternary is the only other geological period of the past 2 billion years during which ice sheets persisted. For the past 2.59 million years, thick ice sheets have covered at least 10 percent (and as much as 23 percent) of the continents.

One extraordinary feature of the present glacial age is that it occurs during life's history when the Sun is at its brightest (see figure 1).¹ Furthermore, it occurs when the atmospheric greenhouse gas abundance is 280 parts per million, no less than it was during the Neogene period (beginning 23 million years ago and ending 3 million years ago).

The present glacial age is also cyclical. Ice coverage of the continents oscillates rhythmically from 10 to 23 percent within either a 41,000- or 100,000-year period. Only during the last 0.00057 part of its history has Earth manifested an ice age cycle. Only during the last 0.00017 part of Earth's history has the ice age cycle encompassed a 100,000-year period. As this article will explain, a 100,000-year ice age cycle is essential to permitting the existence of a large human population capable of launching and sustaining civilization.



PERFECT STORM

The current delicate balance between ice and no ice, manifesting itself as an ice age cycle, is due to a "perfect storm" of five amazing and simultaneous tectonic events. First, the breakup of the supercontinent Pangaea resulted in a remarkable alignment of continents. Landmasses, not oceans, came to dominate the high latitudes of the northern hemisphere and the Arctic Ocean became a nearly enclosed sea. Because

continents have a much lower heat capacity compared to oceans, such a continental arrangement dramatically cooled the high northern latitudes and played an important role in the formation of the polar ice cap.

Second, Antarctica split off from Australia and centered on the South Pole, completely surrounded by open ocean.² Between 2.75 and 3.15 million years ago, about 8 million cubic kilometers (2 million cubic miles) of additional ice was deposited on Antarctica.³ This increased ice coverage and Antarctica's geographical location initiated stronger heat transfer from the North Atlantic Ocean to the deep parts of the Pacific Ocean.⁴ This heat transfer substantially cooled the northern hemisphere and, thus, contributed to its glaciation.

Third, about 3 million years ago, converging tectonic plates led to the formation of a land bridge connecting North and South America. This isthmus cut off water flow between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, which forced a rerouting of ocean currents and atmospheric circulation. These new currents and circulations provided a more even distribution of precipitation on the continents, a crucial requirement for the launch and spread of future civilization.

Forcing currents and wind patterns more into north-south, rather than east-west, directions resulted in global cooling. Specifically, the Gulf Stream brought atmospheric moisture into the Arctic region, contributing to the formation of ice caps over the Arctic Ocean and Greenland. Fourth, the movement and uplift of Greenland also contributed to the establishment of the current ice age cycle. Recently, four geophysicists demonstrated that over the past 60 million years Greenland has moved northward by 18° latitude.⁵ They showed that a "northward rotation of the entire mantle and crust toward the pole, dubbed True Polar Wander," moved Greenland 12° north.⁶ Plate tectonic reconstruction moved Greenland relative to the mantle another 6° north. All this movement resulted in Greenland becoming the northernmost landmass on Earth. Its northern tip is just 713 kilometers (443 miles) from the North Pole.

While Greenland's new location certainly made it much colder, the movement alone is insufficient to explain its enormous store of ice. The four geophysicists also discovered that, as Greenland moved north, a mantle plume pulse thinned the lithosphere (crust) below it. Starting about 5 million years ago, younger plume pulses led to dramatic uplift. These pulses lifted the eastern parts of Greenland to elevations exceeding 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) above sea level.



The combination of Greenland's northerly location and high elevation above sea level decreased its temperatures enough to sustain long-term glaciation. Today, an ice sheet covers 81 percent of Greenland and has reflected more of the Sun's heat and light, thereby cooling the entire planet.

Fifth, the continuing collision of the Indian subcontinent with Eurasia resulted in the uplift of the Tibetan Plateau. About 50 million years ago, the Indian tectonic plate hit the Eurasian tectonic plate at a hyper-fast velocity of 18–20 centimeters per year (7–8 inches per year).⁷ Then, about 23 million years ago, the sea gap between India and Asia closed and the Himalayas began to rise up. The northeast movement of the Indian subcontinent into Eurasia has now slowed to about 5 centimeters per year.

Around 8 million years ago, the ongoing collision between India and Asia lifted the Tibetan Plateau to an average elevation above 2,300 meters (7,500 feet). This large, high plateau created an air pressure gradient relative to the nearby oceans and initiated the Indian and East Asian monsoons.⁸ As the uplift continued, the monsoons strengthened. At 2.59 million years ago, the ongoing collision lifted the Tibetan Plateau to an average elevation of about 4,000 meters (13,125 feet).⁹ This average height was sufficient enough to form permanent ice, alter the summer-winter monsoon cycle,¹⁰ and cause loess (wind-blown fine dust) sediments to be deposited all over the lowlands of China.¹¹

Today, even though Earth is in a warm interglacial, the store of ice in the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau is

greater than 14,000 cubic kilometers,¹² exceeded only by the ice caps over Antarctica and Greenland. The Tibetan Plateau presently stands at an average elevation of 4,600 meters (15,100 feet).

When covered in snow and ice, the Tibetan Plateau, because of its low latitude (26–37° above the equator), has a powerful cooling impact on the planet. It reflects solar heat four times as efficiently as an equivalent area of ice-covered arctic landmass. Many climatologists are convinced that the rise of the Tibetan Plateau was the predominant factor in triggering the onset of the current ice age.¹³ Indeed, Tibet may have been the first region in the world to experience large-scale glaciation.¹⁴

Given how bright the Sun is today, it is truly remarkable that Earth is presently experiencing an ice age. Nothing less than the just-right combination and near-simultaneous occurrence of the five factors described above would be adequate to produce an ice age at this time. However, the present ice age is much less extensive than ones occurring previous to 3 million years ago, and the minimal nature of the present ice age is what makes its cyclical property possible.

HOW TO GENERATE A CYCLICAL ICE AGE

Milankovitch cycles, the collective effect of periodic changes in Earth's orbit and rotation on its climate, drive the cyclical property of the current ice age. The cyclical change in the direction of Earth's rotation axis relative to the stars is called precession. Currently, Earth's axis points toward Polaris. In about 13,000 years it will point toward Vega, and in another 13,000 years it will again point to Polaris.

There is also a precession effect related to Earth's orbit around the Sun. The net outcome is that within a cyclical period of 21,600 years, Earth's northern hemisphere alternates between pointing toward and away from the Sun during the northern hemisphere winter. For example, in 2014, Earth was most distant from the Sun on July 3, which explains why high northern latitude landmasses (e.g., England) experience milder seasonal differences than do high southern latitude landmasses (e.g., southern Chile).

Earth's rotation axis tilt (obliquity) relative to the plane of its orbit varies between 22.1° and 24.5° within a period of 41,000 years. The greater the tilt, the greater the temperature difference between summers and winters worldwide. Given the current sizes and configurations of the conti-

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nents, a lesser obliquity generates a global cooling effect whereas a greater obliquity has a global warming effect.

Like all planets, Earth's orbit has an elliptical shape. Earth's eccentricity (departure of the orbital ellipse from circularity) varies between 0.000055 and 0.0679 due to the gravitational influence of the neighboring gas giant planets. Earth's two most dominant eccentricity cycles last about 400,000 years and 100,000 years, respectively.

Typically, these cycles would have a subtle influence on global mean temperatures. However, when the planet is as delicately balanced as it is now, between an ice age and no ice age, the impact is much bigger.

Several events worked together to tip the balance from an ice-free planet to one with extensive ice:

1. The movement of a large continent to the South Pole and several other continents to high northern latitudes
2. Greenland's movement toward the North Pole and tectonic uplift
3. The near enclosure of the Arctic Ocean
4. The joining together of North and South America
5. The rise of the Tibetan Plateau

The result is permanent ice formed over a portion of Antarctica and intermittent small patches of ice over high-latitude and high-elevation parts of the northern continents in response to the Milankovitch cycles.

The ice age cycle that occurred around 0.86–0.95 to 2.59 million years ago lasted 41,000 years.¹⁵ During that time, the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau continued their rise, eventually taking the ice coverage of that region from just 2–4 percent at glacial maximum to about 29–40 percent.¹⁶

Consequent increase in solar heat reflection lowered temperatures and resulted in other northern hemisphere snow-



and-ice patches growing larger with each successive cycle.

At 0.86–0.95 million years ago, the ice age cycles switched from 41,000 years to 100,000 years. Climatologists have found two contributing causes for this switch. One research team, in their analysis of data from South Atlantic deep-sea cores, discovered that a major shift in Atlantic Ocean thermohaline (heat + salt) circulation occurred about 900,000 years ago.¹⁷ The team then demonstrated that this change would have facilitated the drawdown of atmospheric carbon dioxide that occurred at the same time, which in turn would have helped to cool Earth sufficiently to cause the ice age cycle switch.

Other researchers pointed to geological evidence showing that while the Tibetan Plateau steadily rose from a 4,000- to a 4,600-meter average elevation over the past 2.59 million years, there were brief episodes of especially dramatic uplift.¹⁸ This quickened uprising explains the intensification of Indian and East Asian monsoonal events¹⁹ and light eolian dust accumulation²⁰ that occurred about 0.9 million years ago.

High-resolution magnetostratigraphy and tectonosedimentology shows such uplift took place about 0.8 million years ago.²¹ This event caused snow and ice to cover the majority of the plateau at glacial maxima.²² The coverage, combined with heightened atmospheric dust, brought on enough global cooling to significantly enlarge the snow-and-ice packs at high northern latitudes. Photosynthetic activity decreased and intensified monsoons enhanced silicate weathering, both contributing to a drawdown in atmospheric carbon dioxide.

The intensified cooling stabilized the 100,000-year ice age cycle. In response to the ever-increasing elevation of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau, each successive ice age over the past 800,000 years became slightly more severe.

About 100,000 years ago, the Tibetan Plateau experienced a tectonic uplift event of the same order of magnitude as the one it experienced about 0.8–0.9 million years ago.²³ Consequently, the most recent ice age was the most expansive of all (see figure 7). The larger ice sheets ranged from 1 to 3 kilometers thick.²⁴ Ice covered the entire Antarctic continent and much of the surrounding seawater, and as much as 2.4 million square kilometers of the Tibetan Plateau was under a thick ice sheet.

Continued on page 44...

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What Makes SES UNIQUE?

By **Richard Land**

I am often asked, “What are the real distinctions of Southern Evangelical Seminary? We know you believe in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture and you are Evangelical in doctrine and theology. We also know you are committed to evangelism and missions. Such things are true of dozens of seminaries. What makes SES unique?”

In the three articles immediately following this introduction, you will find clear, compelling, and succinct answers as to why SES is unique..

Three professors long associated with SES’s ministry produce graphic illustration and explanation of why SES is unique. In the future, when asked what is unique about SES, I am going to send them these articles.

First, Dr. Thomas Howe provides trenchant arguments for “objectivity” in the study of Holy Scripture. Dr. Howe makes a compelling case for the belief that we can understand and comprehend objectively the objective truth revealed by God in the Bible.

Dr. Doug Potter provides an excellent, brief introduction to Thomistic Realism, which demonstrates that “reality” is indeed not just an idea, abstract or otherwise. As Dr. Potter explains, “Since form, individualized and universalized, are the same in reality as determined by reality and not by the knower, knowledge, meaning, and the intended purpose of all things is grounding in reality and is objectively verifiable.” He then proceeds to apply this fundamental truth

to Apologetics, Theology, and Ethics. His concluding statement is as profound as it is succinct, “But it is necessary to understand that this is why we do apologetics, theology, and ethics a certain way and not another way; so as to maintain the knowability of reality, the absolute nature of truth, and its testability and transferability to all.”

“But it is necessary to understand that this is why we do apologetics, theology, and ethics a certain way and not another way; so as to maintain the knowability of reality, the absolute nature of truth, and its testability and transferability to all.”

Dr. Richard Howe furnishes an excellent survey of Classical Apologetics. Frankly, I do not think you will find a clearer, more succinct explanation and “anatomy” of classical apologetics anywhere else in the English language. Dr. Howe concludes his erudite essay with a ringing declaration:

“We see that there is, indeed, a mandate from Scripture to engage in apologetics. According to the

Classical Apologetics approach, demonstrating the truth of Christianity necessitates the tools of sound reason and logic that can be employed to build the case that God exists and has certain attributes and that God has revealed Himself in history through His prophets, apostles and ultimately through His Son Jesus Christ. This mandate has been incorporated into the very DNA of Southern Evangelical Seminary.”

DNA exists to reproduce itself. That is the goal and purpose of SES. Based on the twin goals of our co-founders Dr. Norman Geisler (classical apologetics) and Dr. Ross Rhoads (global evangelism), SES is committed to reproducing whole platoons of Richard and Tom Howes and Doug Potters for the Lord’s Army of Righteousness and Truth. ▲

OBJECTIVITY

& Why is It Important for Bible Study?

All of us at one time or another have been involved with a Bible study where after reading a passage, the leader looks up and asks the group, “What does that passage mean to you?” On the surface it may sound like a reasonable, amiable question, but is the purpose of Bible study to bounce around subjective ideas based on changing times? Would not the serious student of the Bible want to know an objective meaning that is true for all people and at all time, one that reveals the mind of the Author?

What is objectivity when it comes to studying the Bible? Objectivity in Bible study means that it is possible to know what the text of the Bible actually means, to have a correct interpretation of the Bible.

However, for many Bible scholars today, objectivity is thought to be a kind of neutrality, or an approach to the text and to reality that is determined by one’s own perspectives. According to these scholars, objectivity is rejected as a naïve approach that ignores what they believe is the important perspective of the interpreter. They believe that Bible study involves interpretation, but that interpretation involves everything that we think and everything we are, what we believe, our point of view, what we think is true and false, what is important to us, what we think about our world, our training, dispositions, opinions—all these factors that come together to form our personal world view. Our personal world view determines how we interpret the world. It is like having a set of glasses through which we look at and interpret our world. Since no two world views are exactly alike and since our world view determines the way we look at the world, it is not possible, they say, to have an objective

understanding the Bible. This is a belief held not only by those outside the Christian church, but also by almost all Evangelical scholars today

IMPLICATIONS

There are two significant implications for Bible study that follow directly from these beliefs about objectivity. First, if objectivity is a kind of neutrality, then in order to be neutral, the reader must take off his glasses/world view. This creates a problem. It is our world view that makes understanding possible, and without your world view, you cannot understand or know anything. When you take off your glasses, you cannot see. So then, no one can study the Bible without looking through his own glasses/world view. But, it is this very world view that unavoidably influences your interpretation. So, every interpretation will necessarily be a product, to some degree, of your own world view, and this fact militates against the degree of certainty about having arrived at the correct interpretation.

The second implication that follows is that with the rejection of objectivity there would seem to be no grounds upon which to decide whose interpretation is the correct interpretation. If every interpretation is the product of your own world view, then there can be no single correct



interpretation. James Smart identified how the rejection of objectivity makes it impossible to know what God says in His Word:

“The danger inherent in this development was that theological interpretations of Scripture would be its meaning for this or that theologian. Thus, theological exposition, instead of penetrating to the one word of God in Scripture that brings all Christians into fellowship with one another, would give each segment of the Christian community the license to read its own theological convictions out of the text of Scripture.”¹

Once we reject the possibility of objectivity, we have lost the very Word of God.

CONNECTING DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS & OBJECTIVITY

Does this mean that it is impossible to know what God says? In fact, objectivity is possible even though each person has his or her own world view. How is it possible? This is because there are some things in the world that are the same for all people, all the time, no matter where or when they lived. These things are called first principles or truths that cannot be denied. First principles form the foundation of knowledge and make it possible for different people with different world views to connect with each other and communicate to each other.

Let me give you an example of a first principle: the law of non-contradiction (also often referred to as the law of contradiction). This law means that a statement cannot be both true and false in the same sense. So, if I make the statement, “God is good,” this statement cannot be both true and false in the same sense. Either God is good, or He is not. You cannot have it both ways. We know that this is a first principle because it cannot be denied. Anyone who says that the law of non-contradiction is not true must use the law in order to deny the law.² Now, a statement can be both true and false, but not in the same sense. If I am living in Charlotte, North Carolina, I can say, “I live in Charlotte, North Carolina,” and this is a true statement. However, if I were to move to another city in another state, then the statement “I live in Charlotte, North Carolina” is no longer true. So, the statement can be both true and false, but not at the same time or in the same sense.

The law of non-contradiction was as true for the biblical

authors as it is for us today. Because of these first principles, like the law of non-contradiction, when the Bible says that “God is good,” then we know that this statement was as true for the authors of the Bible as it is for us today. Because these first principles are the same for all people at all times and in every place, we have a connection with the Bible that is not affected by our own personal world view. These first principles form the foundation upon which truth rests. These first principles are true for everyone because that is the way God created the world, and because the first principles transcend our own world views, it is possible to have an objective interpretation, a correct interpretation, of the Bible. Let me apply this solution to the question of objectivity.

1. Doesn't everyone have his or her own worldview?

We do not deny the fact that everyone has his or her own world view. However, we disagree that a person's world view makes objectivity impossible. The fact is, there are first principles that are common to all humans as part of the nature of humanity as God created it. For someone to say that there is no such thing as objectivity is to count on the objective meaning of this very claim. To deny objectivity while counting on objectivity is self-defeating. Indeed, any claim that denies first principle is ultimately self-defeating and false. Although everyone has his or her own world view, the foundation of any world view is the same for all people, at all times, in all cultures, regardless of language, background, training, world view, perspective, horizon, etc.

2. Can any world view be universally valid?

It is simply false to claim that no world view is universally valid. In fact, this very claim assumes its own universal validity. It is undeniably the case that there are aspects of every framework that are unavoidable, self-evident, and true. The basic laws of logic and the undeniability of truth are the same everywhere and at all times. Consequently, any claim that denies these foundational principles is self-defeating and false.

3. But, isn't universal validity implied in the notion of objectivity?

Not only is universal validity implied in the notion of objectivity, but it is also the very essence of objectivity. Anyone who attempts to deny neutrality assumes that his own claims are universally valid and therefore objective. To claim that there can be no neutrality assumes this very neutrality. All such claims are self-defeating and false.

4. Can an interpreter really be objective in interpretation?

To claim that no interpreter can be objective in his or her interpretation is both self-defeating and false. For anyone to claim that no interpreter can be objective assumes that the one making the claim has been objective in his interpretation of the question of objectivity. Regardless of the fact that interpreters do not always achieve the objectivity, the fact is that objectivity is possible.

5. If objectivity is possible, then isn't a "correct" interpretation also possible?

Since objectivity is possible, then so is a "correct" interpretation. To claim that there is no correct interpretation assumes one's own interpretation is the correct one. This too is self-defeating and false.

6. If objectivity is possible, doesn't that mean that it is also possible to judge whether an interpretation is correct or not?

In spite of their denials of objectivity, some Evangelicals still think that it is possible to decide between interpreta-


tions. It is not only possible; it is unavoidable. Every act of understanding is, in one way or another, an act of deciding between interpretations. We hold one thing to be true and its contrary to be false. We accept one view and reject its opposite. It is not necessary for Evangelicals to compromise on the notions of objectivity and truth in order to accept the undeniable fact that all understanding is mediated through one's own world view. The fact of self-evident, undeniable first principles constitute a foundation upon which objectivity is based.

We believe that the God of the Christian Scriptures has created us after His image, and this insures the objectivity of truth and a correct interpretation of His Word is in fact possible. ▲

Endnotes


¹James D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 46.


²In other words, by saying the law of non-contradiction does not exist, one is saying things can be true and not true at the same time in the same sense. If you insist that you are right that the law of non-contradictions does not exist, then you are saying what you just said does not need to be true. But you are insisting that it is true, so you are agreeing with the law of non-contradiction.





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By Doug Potter

REALITY

It's Not Just a Good Idea

Many today fail to see the importance of grounding their reasoning process in reality in spite of the fact that whatever is not based on reality is un-reality, in other words unreal. The slippery slope of subjectivism and relativism is the result of such “reasoning” manufactured in the imaginations of the mind rather than in reality, on Truth. This distinction is especially important for the Christians who desire to share their “reasonable” faith. Sadly, subjectivism has crept its way into the church with the assumption that we do not need to defend our faith with reason; we only need the Bible. I hope this article will show that reason and faith are not in conflict.

To better understand the connection between reality and reason, we must return to the work of an ancient philosopher, Aristotle, and a medieval philosopher, Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas’s philosophy builds upon the work of Aristotle, and while there are differences, the following offers a brief and somewhat simplified explanation of reality, what they would call *being*, and human processing of knowing within that tradition. Following that, we see how this

philosophy supports the human endeavors of Christian apologetics, theology, and ethics, the basis for the two great apologetic goals: to demonstrate the existence of God and to demonstrate the historical truth that God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

REALITY CHANGES YET REMAINS THE SAME

One of the most fundamental observations anyone can make of reality is that it changes, and yet something about it remains the same. What remains the same is its essence. What is changeable is what is called *accidental* properties. We can observe anything in reality, natural or man-made, for example a real tree, and see that it changes—grows larger, develops branches, colorful leaves, etc. over time—and yet it remains the same tree such that it is distinguishable from all the other trees. Its change is accounted for by the principles of *actuality* (act) and *potentially* (potency) that are present in all created things. Actuality is the existence of some thing. Potentiality accounts for the capacity of some thing to change or become other than what it is. Change could be substantial, in that I could destroy the tree and it could no longer exist. Or it could be accidental, such as cutting off a limb. The change could be internal, such as its growing a new limb, or the change could be external if I cut the tree down.

This observation is important because it shows that everything that changes cannot account for its own existence. There must be something other—something else—that causes it to be. This existence (actuality) must be given to it by something else that is not dependent on anything else for its existence. Something dependent on its existence from outside itself could not be or it could cease to *be*. Hence, its existence and nature, also called *essence*, are not necessary. But there must be something that is necessary existence that can give existence to everything else. And such existence (actuality) must not have any potentiality to change. That is, it cannot change in any way, or it too would require something to give it existence. Such Existence must be identical to its essence (nature). Hence, something must be *pure* act or *pure* existence with *no* potential to be other than what it is. Christians call this Pure Existence God.

CATEGORIES OF REALITY: ANIMATE OR INANIMATE AND VEGETABLE OR ANIMAL

All of natural reality that we observe seems to fall into the

categories of inanimate things and animate substances. An inanimate thing, a rock for example, has extension in space but cannot move itself, yet it can be changed by something external to it. To distinguish further we might say the animate can be vegetative or animal. That which is vegetative has all that animal things have, but vegetables can change, grow, and reproduce. That which is animal has all that the vegetative power has to a greater degree, but also the power of self-locomotion, and some have the sensitive powers such as seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling.

Form of Things and Matter of Things

Everything in the world that we experience is a composition of *form* (actuality)—or what something is—and *matter* (potentiality to change) that individuates the form to be this thing and not that thing. For example, a cat is a cat because of its form or catness (what it is), and its matter individuates it to be *this* cat as opposed to *that* cat. Matter, as used here, should not be equated with physical matter, and form should not be equated with the shape of something. Instead, these are principles found in things or substances. As already explained, there are things essential and accidental to a nature. Something essential cannot be removed without changing what it is. Something accidental could be otherwise and would not change what something is. For example, it is essential to the nature of a cat that it be an animal nature. If that is changed or removed somehow, it ceases to be a cat. But it is accidental if the size and color of the cat changes. Despite the change, it stays a cat. Such a description is possible for every created thing from the smallest subatomic particle to the largest galaxies.

Hence, everything in the world *has* existence given to it and a nature that is composed of form/matter to varying degrees and capacities. All of this needs an explanation, such as we find in Aristotle's four causes: there must be an efficient cause of the thing or substance, a formal cause to explain the form, a material cause to account for the matter, and a final cause to explain its end or purpose. This in short, is the Aristotelian-Thomistic hylomorphic understanding of reality.¹

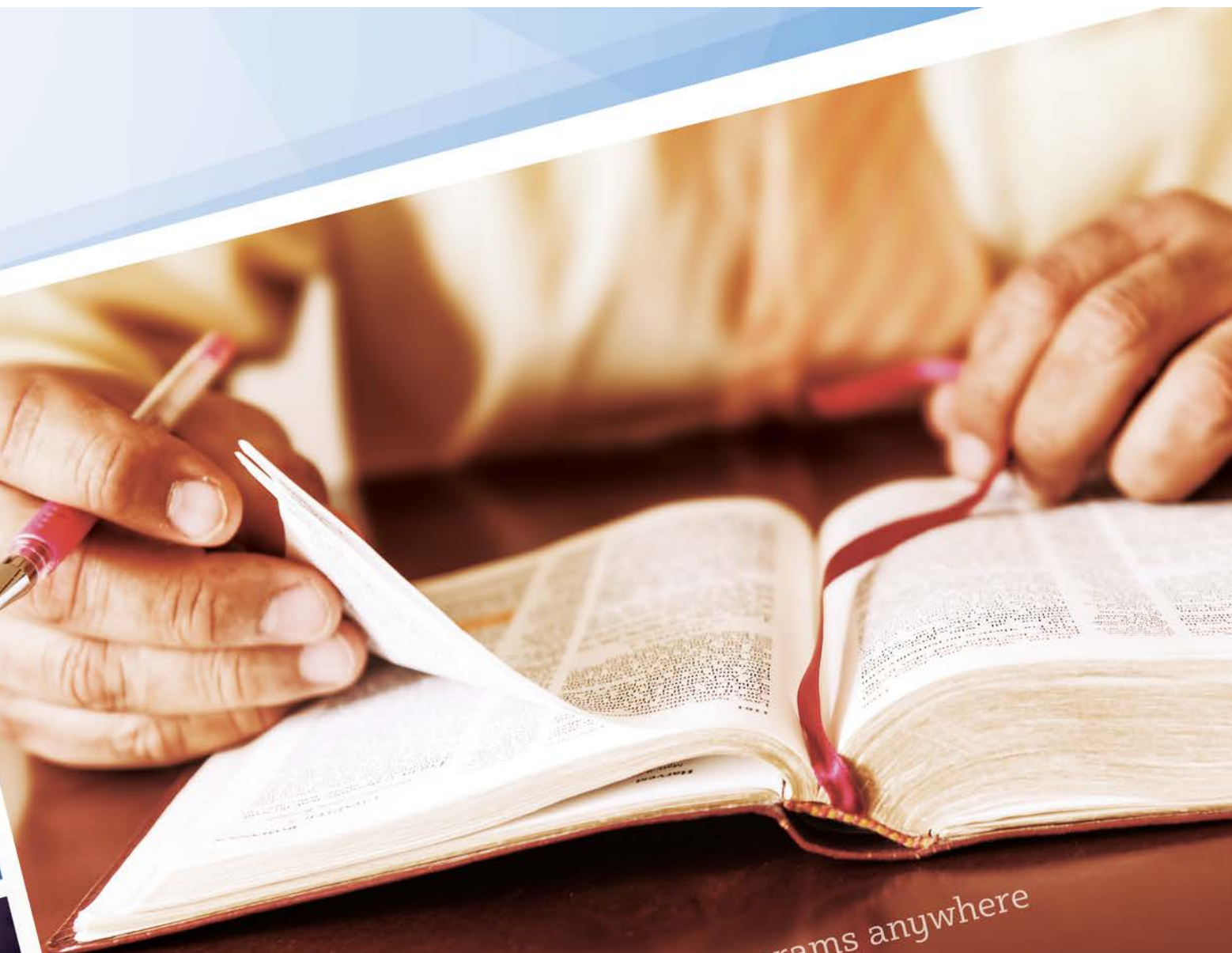
KNOWING REALITY

We come to know reality in an act of existence, in other words by its actual existence. This knowing relates to its form (essence) and its matter (potential to change). The form of something is related to its actuality. Again, *form* is



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what something is (i.e., an essence). For example, a cat has the form of catness and a dog has the form of dogness. *Matter* is related to the individual potentiality (to change). It is that which individuates an essence to be this cat or that cat. The form of a substance is immaterial. The matter of a substance is what individuates the essence to be a particular thing that gives it extension in space, which is limited to its form. We can say a dog is not a cat because of their different form or essence. We can say this cat is not that cat because of their different matter or individuation of matter.

Process of Knowing

The soul is the substantial *form* of the human body. The way in which we know something is by its form, which is united to matter. We know things via our five senses. Since the form of a substance is immaterial, it is able to enter our mind, and we are able to know the thing, know the form extracted (in our mind) from its matter, as it is in itself. Contrary to what some philosophies have proposed throughout history, the form that enters the mind is not a different substance or copy of the substance that comes to exist in the mind of the knower. The same form that is united with matter unites with the mind of the knower; in a sense the knower and the thing known become one.

Once the form enters our minds, in an act of existence, our internal senses combine all the available external sensitive input. Our intellect is able to extract the universal from the particular, catness for example. We are able to form mental images (*phantasms*) of particulars by using the internal senses combined with other intellectual powers such as remembrance and the abstracted universal. We are able to make judgements and form concepts and ideas about the known thing. All of this and much more happens effortlessly, almost without awareness.

This process of knowing can be applied to the creation and to the interpretation of any text or spoken word. We come to know a written or spoken word the same way we come to

know any other thing in sensible reality. First, the author or speaker has an idea. Meaning exists as form (immaterially) in the mind of the author/speaker. The author/speaker causes a text to exist by imposing form (meaning) upon language (combining it with matter) to create a text or spoken language in sensible reality. The speaker expresses his thought, then the mind of the reader or hearer extracts the form (meaning) from the text or spoken word in reality through the senses, and then the meaning is processed by the intellect. In this way a reader or hearer is able to know the meaning that is in the text or spoken words.

“This unity of existence between intellect and reality is the basis for the two extremely important great apologetic goals: to demonstrate the existence of God and to demonstrate the historical truth that God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.”

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All humans have the same nature; therefore, every intellect has the same capacities. Since form, individualized and universalized, are the same in reality, as determined by *reality* and *not the knower*, knowledge, meaning, and the intended purpose of all things is grounded in reality and is objectively verifiable. This explanation supports all human endeavors in

the sciences and humanities and particularly makes Christian apologetics, theology, and ethics a worthy endeavor, as long as the assumptions and methods of the discipline do not undermine the principles of knowing absolute truth.

Christian Apologetics

This unity of existence between intellect and reality is the basis for the two extremely important great apologetic goals: to demonstrate the existence of God and to demonstrate the historical truth that God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

Since humans know the world, they must conclude that knowledge can be reduced to undeniable facts or principles. In philosophy these are expressed as *first principles*. For example: *something exists* is an undeniable statement about our act of knowing reality. It is on this undeniable knowledge that we reason logically to demonstrate that God exists and that He is knowable. Not only does God exist, but He alone is *pure actuality*, the efficient and final cause of all things. Thus, Theism, which is the belief in God, is the cor-

rect view from which we view everything else, as opposed to polytheism or atheism. As the Apostle Paul warns, Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:19–20 NASB).

That which passes examination by our senses of sight, hearing, and touching, should be given the consent of our intellect as true. The Apostle Paul says:

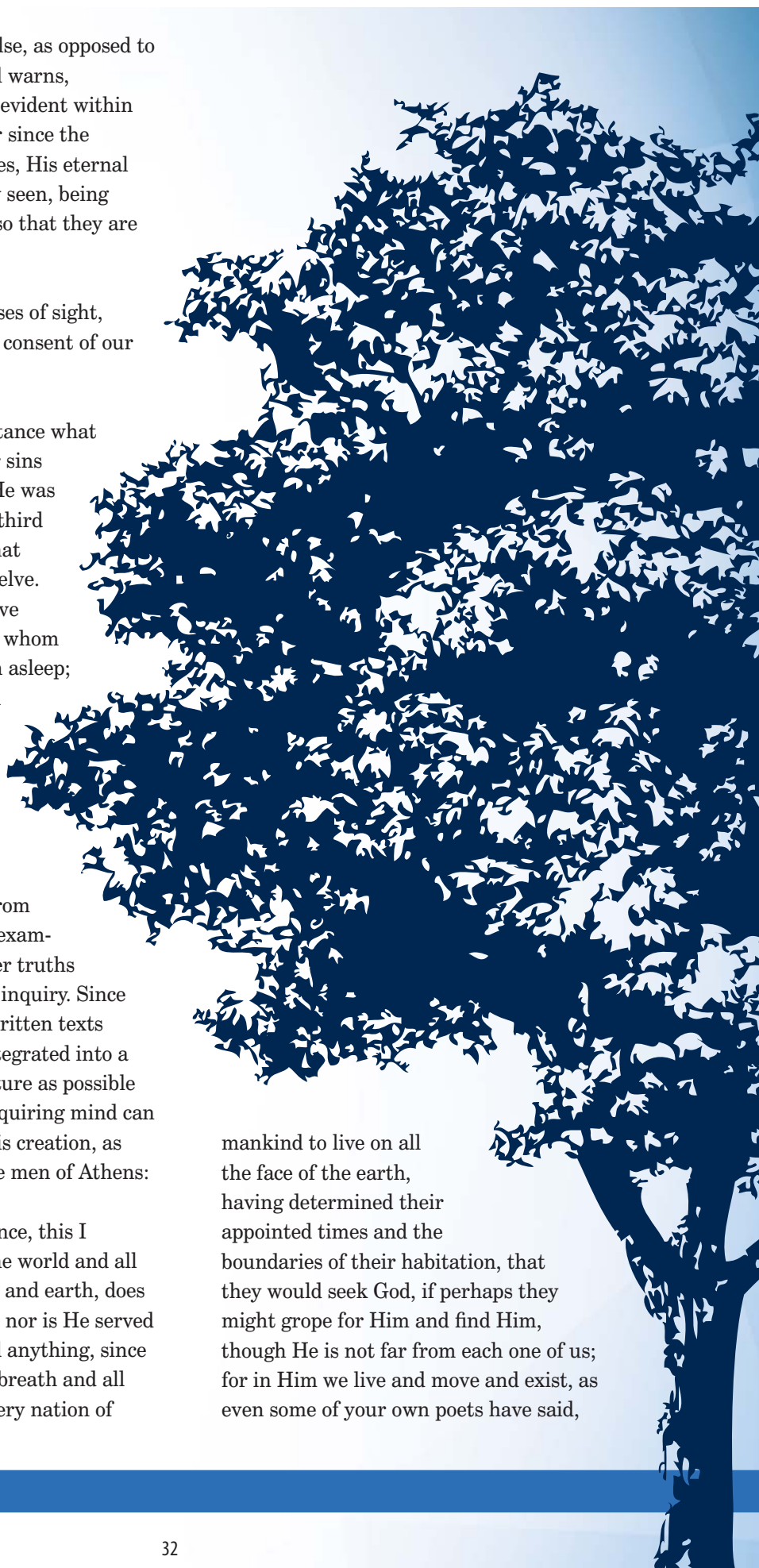
“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.” (1 Corinthians 15:3–8, NASB)

Theology

Theology builds upon the study of God’s revelation of Himself from His Word and from the world around us. The human intellect examines the written revelation of God and other truths found in His creation as a result of human inquiry. Since an objective meaning is extractable from written texts and reality, the two revelations must be integrated into a systematic whole to gain as complete a picture as possible of all that God has revealed. The honest inquiring mind can then engage in discourse about God and His creation, as the Apostle Paul does when speaking to the men of Athens:

“Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of

mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said,



‘For we also are His children.’ Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.” (Acts 17:23–29, NASB)

Ethics

Although all created things have a final cause, we especially observe humans are intended for specific functions, or ends, and not others. Such intended function is evident in every part of our hylomorphic body-soul unity. Likewise, human consciousness and behavior reveals these *ethical* ends of what is right and wrong found in everyone; even written texts from many cultures show a common ethic. Hence, a common ultimate cause exists for our moral obligations. We recognize our inabilities to live up to the expected demands of moral obligations and correctly infer this is true for all. Thus the Apostle Paul teaches:

“For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.” (Romans 2:14–16, NASB)

In accord with these intended common moral ends, we also find specific instruction in God’s Word, which gives categories of moral behavior, leaving to the power of the human intellect to judge in life what falls inside or outside these categories. For example, the Lord says, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them

male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?’” (Matthew 19:4-5, NASB).

And as the Apostle Paul reminds us every person is accountable to God, “For it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.’ So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 11-12, NASB).

“It may not be necessary to know this detailed explanation of reality for pursuing and sharing Christian apologetics, theology, or ethics, but because of the consequences of building one’s view of life and one’s eternal destiny on Truth as it conforms to reality, we should not be swayed from this understanding of reality by those who reject our arguments and reasoning based on it.”

CONCLUSION

It may not be necessary to know this detailed explanation of reality for pursuing and sharing Christian apologetics, theology, or ethics, but because of the consequences of building one’s view of life and one’s eternal destiny on Truth as it conforms to reality, we should not be swayed from this understanding of reality by those who reject our arguments and reasoning based on it. However, we realize that not everyone will accept Truth. As our Lord said, some will not be convinced even by a miracle (Luke 16:31). But it is necessary to understand why we do apologetics, theology and ethics a certain way and not another way—so as to maintain the knowability of reality, the absolute nature of Truth, and its

testability and transferability to all aspects of life and to all people. ▲

Endnotes

¹Hylomorphism is a philosophical theory that conceives being (*ousia*) as a compound of matter and form. The word is formed from the Greek words *hyle*, “wood, matter” and *morphē*, “form.”



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Classical

By Richard Howe

▶ APOLOGETICS

One distinctive of Southern Evangelical Seminary is our commitment to Classical Apologetics.¹ To say that our apologetics is ‘classical’ is to say something about our apologetic methodology, about how we *do* apologetics. It offers an answer to the question “what is the proper way for Christians to defend the truth of the Christian faith?” Our commitment to Classical Apologetics arises from what we believe about the nature of God and how He has created us in His image, including how we reason as humans and how we know truths not only about God, but about the rest of His creation.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR APOLOGETICS

In a mild sort of irony, Christian apologists sometimes find themselves needing to give an apologetic for apologetics. We are called upon at times to defend defending the faith. There are at least three lines of evidence that defending the faith is indeed biblical.

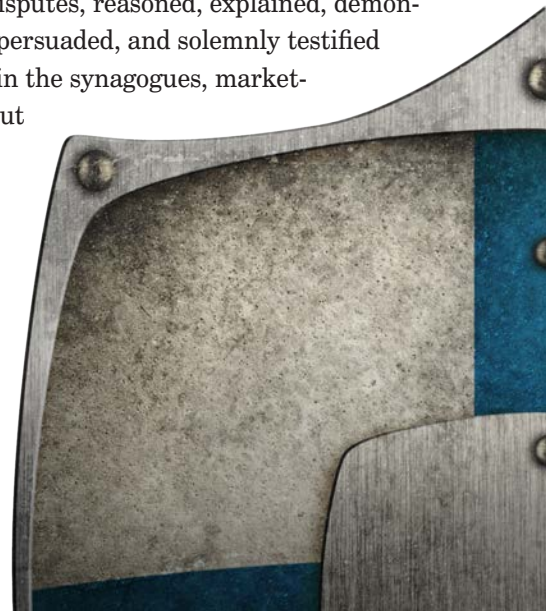
The Bible is clear about defending the faith.

In several places, the Bible commands us to defend the faith. First Peter 3:15 tells us to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”² Jude 3 says, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Another passage that is seldom cited in this context is Titus 1:10-11a. “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped.” The pressing question here is exactly how are we to stop the mouths of the insubordinate? I submit that it is through sound argument that can leave them without anything left to say in response. We see several instances of this very

thing in Jesus’ encounter with the Sadducees. Matthew 22:23-24 recounts the incident where Jesus was challenged to explain whose wife would a woman be in the next life if she was married to more than one man in this life. After schooling them in sound reasoning and biblical interpretation, the narrative observes that He had “silenced the Sadducees.” In another instance we find, “But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent” (Luke 20:26). Being able to cogently respond in certain situations is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a church elder. In the passage in Titus, right before the passage cited above we learn that the overseer must be able “by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” Convicting those who contradict involves defending the truth claims of Christianity.³

The Apostles engaged in defending the faith.

We can also see that the Apostles themselves modeled for us defending the faith. A chain of references throughout the book of Acts shows how often they confounded, proved, had dissensions and disputes, reasoned, explained, demonstrated, spoke boldly, persuaded, and solemnly testified with Jew and Greeks in the synagogues, marketplace, and schools about the things concerning the Kingdom of God.⁴ One can make several observations about how the apostles reasoned. Notice that they confronted both those who had a regard for the authority of God’s written word (the



Jews) and those who did not (the Greeks). Sometimes the appeal was from that biblical authority (Acts 17:2) and sometimes it was from other sources (Acts 17:22-33). The reactions ranged from some believing (Acts 17:4, 12), to some not believing (Acts 17:5), to some wanting to hear more (Acts 17:32).

The evidence is strong for defending the faith.

Last, one compelling reason to defend the faith is that there actually is strong evidence demonstrating many of the truths of Christianity. While not everything about our faith is susceptible to rational demonstration, many of the preambles to the faith as well as many of the elements of the faith certainly are.

God's ultimate revelation of Himself to mankind is through the Incarnation. In Jesus dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). The Incarnation is the climax of God's revealing Himself through a long line of prophets. It is the climax because Jesus is God Himself in bodily form. This long line of prophets, together with those whom Jesus appointed to be His own apostles have given us God's inspired, inerrant word—the Bible.

In addition to the Special Revelation that we have as the Bible, God has also revealed certain things about Himself through his creation. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Psalm 19 says that "the heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." Though our capacity to reason based on God's revelation of Himself through creation, there is a tremendous body of evidence that demonstrates many of the truths of Christianity.

Christianity is supported by philosophy. Rational speculations and intellectual analyses of reality constitute that body of knowledge that has come to be known as philosophy. To be sure,

there have been many mistaken notions throughout the history of philosophy. Cicero is reputed to have said that "there is nothing so absurd but some philosopher has said it."⁵ However, one can acknowledge that there is indeed overmuch absurdity to be found in philosophy without indicting philosophy as a whole. Just because our God-given faculties of experience and reason can sometimes fail us, does not mean that they cannot also be used by God to lead us to many of His truths, for this is exactly what Romans 1 tells us and why it is that we are without excuse in rejecting God's revelation of Himself through creation.

Given this, I submit that sound philosophical reasoning can demonstrate the existence and many of the attributes of God. Further, philosophy can show us what the nature of truth is and that truth is knowable. It can also help us understand the nature and grounding of human morality. Last, philosophy is indispensable in demonstrating the nature and limits of science.

Christianity is rooted in history.

Not only can philosophy service us in the defense of the faith, but so can history. Since Christianity arises out of God's invasion of history, then the tools of the historian can be brought to bear in demonstrating the truth of Christianity. Second Peter 1:16 says, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." Even more to the point is John's comments in his first letter. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life; the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us; that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).⁶

Christianity is corroborated by science.

More and more the findings of the sciences are producing evidence that demonstrate certain truths of Christianity. Astronomers now know that the universe had an absolute beginning a finite time ago, just as Genesis says. What is more, the universe exhibits an inconceivable amount of physical characteristics, known as fine tuning, that give evi-

dence of having been created for the purpose of sustaining life. It has only been recently that we have begun to unlock the complexities and intelligent design that constitutes living systems. Last, increasingly archeology is corroborating the narrative history of both the Old and the New Testaments.

THE ANATOMY OF CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS

Given that the biblical mandate for apologetics is clear, exactly how should the task be undertaken? Classical Apologetics is characterized by three levels of demonstration: philosophical foundation, the existence of God, and the truths of Christianity. The order is deliberate as the first level makes the second and third steps possible and the second step makes the third step possible.

Philosophical Foundation

The first level maintains that philosophy is essential in establishing the foundation for dealing with unbelievers who might bring up certain challenges, including the challenge that truth is not objective or the challenge that only the natural sciences are the source of truth about reality. Thus, when encountering the unbeliever (and sometimes even a fellow believer), the Christian must (if the occasion demands it) defend that reality is knowable, that logic applies to reality, and that morally fallen human beings have some capacity to intellectually understand (even if they morally reject) certain claims of the Christian faith. It might also be necessary, depending upon the assumptions of the unbeliever, to delve into issues regarding the nature of reality itself.⁷ The apologist would not necessarily need to deal with these matters in as much as many unbelievers (and believers) already work with these normal, rational commitments. Only in those cases where the unbeliever (or believer) has been unduly influenced by Postmodernism (the idea that truth is relative to the individual or culture or is otherwise qualified from its classical understanding)⁸ or scientism (the idea that only the hard sciences can deliver truth about reality)⁹ or some other false philosophical system would the apologist have to deal with these issues. Thus, unless your

hearer is open to the tools and principles of objective logic and reasoning, it will impossible to embark on a defense of the faith with him.

Philosophy also is essential in dealing with certain interpretive issues of the Bible. Two areas come readily to mind. The first has to do with the principles of biblical interpretation (hermeneutics), generally considered.

The second has to do with specific interpretive issues dealing with the nature of God Himself.

Every reader of the Bible has some method (whether consciously or unconsciously) of how to interpret it, which is to say that every reader of the Bible has some hermeneutic. The question is: where does one get one's principles of hermeneutics? It is impossible to get one's principles of hermeneutics from the Bible itself.

This is so because, if one could understand the Bible in order to get these hermeneutical principles, then he understands the Bible before he has his principles of understanding the Bible (which means he would not need the principles he was seeking to get from the Bible). On the other hand, if he thinks he cannot understand the Bible without some principles of understanding the Bible (I would argue that this has to be the case) then that means he could not understand the Bible enough to get the principles themselves (if he was committed to the notion that he gets those very principles from the Bible). Either way, he runs into an impossible situation. We see, then, that it is impossible to get all of one's principles of interpretation of the Bible from the Bible itself, even if he can get some of them. Instead, they have to come from somewhere else.

The reader might be expecting me to argue here that these principles must come from philosophy. This is not my position. Instead, these principles of hermeneutics are grounded in the nature of reality itself. To be sure, reality is what it is because God is who He is and creation is what it is because of how God created it. In all of this, I am not suggesting that one has to do an in-depth examination

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of reality in order to somehow excavate principles of hermeneutics so that he can then begin to understand his Bible. Rather, I maintain that, in many (if not most) instances, such principles of understanding are very natural to us as rational creatures created in the image of God (in a way analogous to how we naturally perceive the physical world around us with our sensory faculties). It remains, however, that there are occasions where a more in-depth philosophical examination of the issues is warranted. This is increasingly so as false philosophies grow in their influence on people's thinking.¹⁰

The second interpretive issue has to do with the specifics of what the Bible says about the nature and attributes of God. Without a sound philosophy, the student of the Bible would be unable to ground the classical attributes of God, including God's immateriality and infinity. This is so because many passages of the Bible speak metaphorically about God as having various bodily parts. Unless there is some way to judge that such passages are figures of speech, one runs the risk of falling into heresy.

Consider the challenge of understanding the Genesis narrative when it says that Adam heard the sound of God "walking in the garden in the cool of the day." (Gen. 3:8) How could God walk in the garden without legs? If He has legs, how could He be transcendent to the universe as Christianity understands God to be? Some might suggest that perhaps these specific descriptions are a Theophany (an appearance of God in human form, referred to by some as a Christophany, before the Incarnation). Even if this explains the narrative here, there are many other physical descriptions of God, some of which cannot possibly be explained as a Theophany.¹¹

It will not do to appeal to other verses of Scripture to adjudicate the matter.¹² As an example, one might suggest that

we can know from John 4 that God is Spirit and therefore He cannot literally have bodily parts like legs. Thus (they might say), when Genesis 3 talks about God walking, it must be speaking metaphorically (if it is not a Theophany). The problem with this response is that there would be no way to judge whether the Genesis passage is to be taken as metaphor and John 4 is to be taken as literal or whether John 4 should be taken as metaphor and the Genesis passage is to be taken as literal. We can only defend the fact that the above verses are indeed metaphors and John 4 is literal by an appeal to reality.

To illustrate what I mean here, consider an easier example. When we read in the Scriptures "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa 55:12) we know that this is metaphor precisely because we know from reality that mountains cannot sing and trees do not have hands. Our ability to know this is because of our simple apprehension of the nature of mountains and trees by means of our sensory faculties. But our knowledge of the nature of God (i.e., whether He does or does not have bodily parts) cannot be done directly by our sensory faculties. It requires more actions by the intellect. These actions constitute doing philosophy (or, more precisely, metaphysics). We can know by sound philosophy not only (to some extent) what the nature of God must be like (and thus we can know that He cannot literally have such bodily parts) but we can also know certain solid principles of biblical interpretation (hermeneutics). This is not so say that a believer cannot understand his Bible without formal training in philosophy. It is to say, however, that sound interpretations can only be rigorously defended against heretics and critics with some training in sound philosophy.

The problem is not merely academic. There are teachers within the ostensive Christian community who embrace such heresies as God being a finite, limited being. Consider these words by Word of Faith teacher Kenneth Copeland:

"The Bible says [Is. 40:12] He measured the heavens' with a nine-inch span. Now the span is the difference, distance between the end of the thumb and the end of the little finger. And the Bible says; in fact the Amplified translation translates the Hebrew text that way: that He measured out the heavens with a nine-inch

span. Well, I got a ruler and measured mine and my span is eight and three quarters inches long. So then God's span is a quarter-inch longer than mine. So you see, that faith didn't come billowing out of some giant monster somewhere. It came out of the heart of a being that is very uncanny the way He's very much like you and me: a being that stands somewhere around six-two, six-three, that weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of a couple of hundred pounds, a little better, has a span of eight and, I mean nine inches across; stood up and said 'Let it be!' and this universe situated itself, and went into motion. Glory to God! Hallelujah!"¹³

The same problem is also exemplified by Finis Jennings Dake, the editor of the *Dake Annotated Reference Bible*.¹⁴ Dake views that God is a person "with a personal spirit body, a personal soul, and a personal spirit, like that of angels, and like that of man except His body is of spirit substance instead of flesh and bones."¹⁵ Dake also argues that "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all present where there are beings with whom they have dealings; but they are not omnibody, that is, their bodies are not omnipresent. All three go from place to place bodily as other beings in the universe do."¹⁶ He undoubtedly says this because of how he takes those verses that speak of God in bodily terms. He argues:

"God has a personal spirit body (Dan. 7:9-14; 10:5-19); shape (Jn. 5:37); form (Phil. 2:5-7); image and likeness of a man (Gen. 1:26; 9:6; Ezek. 1:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jas. 3:9). He has bodily parts such as, back parts (Ex. 33:23), heart (Gen. 6:6; 8:21), fingers and hands (Ps. 8:3-6; Heb. 1:10), mouth (Num. 12:8), lips and tongue (Isa. 30:27), feet (Ex. 24:10), eyes and eyelids (Ps. 11:4; 33:18), ears (Ps. 18:6), hair, head, face, arms (Dan. 7:9-14; 10:5-19; Rev. 5:1-7; 22:4-6), and other bodily parts."¹⁷

One should take careful notice of how many verses of Scripture Dake has cited. I suspect that if one were to challenge Dake that God does not literally have these bodily parts, his response would be that it is he who is taking the testimony of Scripture seriously since that is what the text seems (to Dake) to clearly say. The only way to answer Dake is by an appeal to sound philosophy.¹⁸

The Existence of God

The second level of the Classical Apologetics method main-

tains that God's existence can be proven by a number of lines of evidence and argument. How this step figures into the overall case for Christianity must not be overlooked. Classical Apologetics maintains that the existence of God must be affirmed before the specific evidence for the truth of Christianity in particular will make sense. Demonstrating the specific truths of Christianity involve, among other things, an appeal to miracles. This is so because God used miracles to vindicate the message proclaimed by His prophets and apostles and His own Son. But miracles are possible only because God exists. This is so because miracles are supernatural acts of God. There cannot be acts of God unless there is a God who can act. Thus, the existence of God must be demonstrated (in those instances where His existence is doubted or denied) before the specific arguments for Christianity can be put forth.

Over the centuries, that have been a number of arguments marshaled to demonstrate God's existence. These would include the cosmological argument, in terms of which God is argued as the cause of the existence of the universe (both as the cause of the universe coming into existence as well as the cause of the universe being sustained in existence), the teleological argument, in terms of which God is argued as the cause of the design of the universe as things tend toward their appropriate end, and the Moral argument, in terms of which God is argued as the grounding for human morality. But, if one employs the metaphysics of Thomism, this is not merely a general theism. Instead, such sound metaphysics is the only way to prove the classical attributes of God that the church has cherished throughout its history. What is more, it is my contention that, as sound philosophy has eroded from the general Christian philosophical community, to the same extent these classical attributes are eroding.

The Truth of Christianity

Once the existence of God is proven (and, thus, the possibility of miracles is thereby established), specific arguments are given for the truth of the Christian faith, including, arguments from manuscript evidence, archeology, and from other corroborating historical evidence for the historical reliability of the Bible, arguments from the Bible and other sources for the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, and arguments from the teachings of Jesus for the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

We see that there is, indeed, a mandate from Scripture to engage in apologetics. According to the Classical Apologetics approach, demonstrating the truth of Christianity necessitates the tools of sound reason and logic that can be employed to build the case that God exists and has certain attributes, and that God has revealed Himself in history through His prophets, apostles and ultimately through His Son Jesus Christ. This mandate has been incorporated into the very DNA of Southern Evangelical Seminary. ▲

Endnotes

¹Some material in this article appeared in my “Classical Apologetics and Creationism,” *Christian Apologetics Journal* 11, No. 2 (Fall 2013): 5-31.

²All citations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). The context of this passage is important. Peter is encouraging his readers to bear up under suffering and persecution. He seemingly expected the godly response to such suffering on the part of his readers to engender inquiries from others as to what it is that enables them as Christians to endure suffering. Peter expected that those watching would ask what is the reason for their hope. In response, the Christians were to be ready to defend their answer.

³I am indebted to Simon Brace for helping me see the apologetic application of this verse.

⁴Acts 9:22, 15:2, 17:2-4, 17:17, 18:4, 18:19, 19:8-10, 28:23-24.

⁵Thomas Hobbes thus attributes it, slightly reworded. “[N]o living creature is subject [to absurdity] but man only. And of men, those are of all most subject to it that profess philosophy. For it is most true that Cicero says of them somewhere that there can be nothing so absurd but may be found in the books of philosophers.” [Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan-Parts One and Two*, Pt. 1, V (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 48] Hobbes goes on to explain why he thinks this is the case with philosophers, accounting for it by their failure to use the proper methodology of precisely defining their terms at the outset of their reasonings.

⁶Other verses attesting to the fact that Christianity is a historical reality are Deuteronomy 29; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 7:2-50; and 1 Cor. 15:3-8.

⁷Such issues would include the nature of universals, the essence/existence distinction, hylomorphic (form/matter) composition of sensible objects, and the relationships of the metaphysic constituents of sensible objects, including substance, accidents, and properties.

⁸Some postmodernists mistakenly think that any contemporary emphasis on logic and reason (as one might find, for example, in contemporary contentions regarding the inerrancy of the Bible or in Classical Apologetics) is due to the unfortunate influence of Modernism (as they mistakenly understand it). Robert Webber claims that “the issue of modernity has revolved around reason.” [Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 98.] The fact is, Classical Apologetics’ commitment to sound reason finds its roots going back to (and indeed, beyond) Aristotle who said (regarding the definition of ‘true’ and ‘false’) “To say of what is, that it is not, or of what is not, that it is, is false, while to say of what is, that it is and of what is not, that it is not, is true.” [Metaphysics, IV, 7, 1001b26-29, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941).]

⁹Atheist Richard Dawkins maintains, “The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence [i.e., God] is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one.” He goes on: “There is an answer to every such question [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and

it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods.” [Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 58, 59.]

¹⁰For an essential reading on the philosophical issues underlying hermeneutics see Thomas A. Howe, *Objectivity in Biblical Interpretation* (N.c.: Advantage Inspirational, 2004). See also Thomas Howe’s article in this NCCA 2015 workbook.

¹¹Consider Ruth 2:12: “The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge,” or Psalm 17:8 “Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings.”

¹²Some take the principle of the “analogy of faith” to mean that Scripture interprets Scripture. For a brief discussion of the proper way to understand this principle, see Thomas A. Howe, “The Analogy of Faith: Does Scripture Interpret Scripture?” *Christian Research Journal* 29, no. 2 (2006): 50-51. The article is available for download at <<http://www.equip.org/articles/the-analogy-of-faith>> (accessed 07/30/13).

¹³Kenneth Copeland, *Christianity in Crisis* Audio Tape (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1993).

¹⁴Finis Jennings Dake, *The Dake Annotated Reference Bible* (Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, 1991).

¹⁵Dake, *Reference Bible*, New Testament, 97.

¹⁶Dake, *Reference Bible*, in the “Complete Concordance and Cyclopedic Index,” 81.

¹⁷Dake, *Reference Bible*, New Testament, 97.

¹⁸Lest someone think these examples are extreme, this issue of the attributes of God is becoming increasing more troubling even within evangelical circles. A perusal of systematic theologies and other sources dealing with Theology Proper over the last 150 years shows a marked drift away from the classical attributes of God. This drift (or in some cases, deliberate migration) is illustrated by the dispute over Open Theism. Gregory Boyd, in discussing certain passages of Scripture that describes God as experiencing regret or uncertainty about future outcomes, comments, “It is, I submit, more difficult to conceive of God experiencing such things if the future is exhaustively settled in his mind than if it is in part composed of possibilities.” [Gregory A. Boyd, “Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God,” *Philosophia Christi* 5, no.1 (2003): 192.]

Time and space will not permit me here to examine the status of other attributes of God that are fading away within evangelical circles, including simplicity and impassibility. Nor will time and space permit me to go into the details of why these matter. The question one must ask, however, is how the aberrant or heretical thinking of Finis Jennings Dake and others can be answered. It is my contention that it can only be answered by sound philosophy and sound principles of hermeneutics (which themselves are defended by sound philosophy). As yet, I have said nothing about what I think sound philosophical reasoning, would look like. To be sure, this is a subject that has occupied thinkers for millennia. The views of the seminary have been variously labeled as Classical Realism, Philosophical Realism, Scholastic Realism, Thomistic Realism, and Thomism. Building upon certain central points from Aristotle, Thomism (to pick one of the labels) begins with the common sense experiences of sensible (physical) reality and shows, by a process of philosophical reasonings, that certain things must be metaphysically true of reality as such.

¹⁹I am indebted to R. C. Sproul for this template (basic reliability of the New Testament, who Jesus is, what Jesus teaches about the Bible) in his “The Case for Inerrancy: A Methodological Analysis,” *God’s Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1974): 242-261.

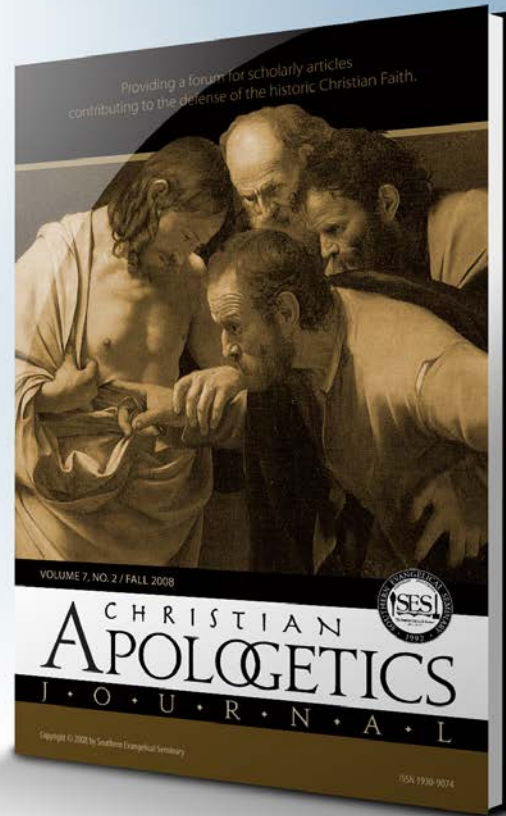
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UNIQUE ICE AGE, cont.

The North American ice sheet reached as far south as 38° north latitude (the Ohio River) while the European ice sheet reached down to 48° north latitude (southern Ukraine). The Tasmanian and Patagonian ice sheets reached up to 41° south latitude.

Additionally, several major ice sheets covered the mountains and surrounding regions of the Andes in South America, the Sierra Nevada and Sierra Madre in North America, the Alps and the Caucasus in Europe, Kilimanjaro and the Atlas in Africa, the Japanese Alps, the Altai and the Tien Shan in Central Asia, the Zagros in Western Asia, Taiwan, and the mountainous regions of New Guinea.

BENEFITS OF CYCLICAL ICE AGES

During the last ice age cycle, the global ice volume reached maximal about 21,000 years ago. By about 12,000 years ago, most of this ice (excepting that over Antarctica, Greenland, and the Arctic) had melted and global mean temperatures had stabilized. From 120,000–12,000 years ago, Earth's climate was so variable as to render the launch of human civilization impossible.²⁵ As one research team demonstrated, the “last glacial climates were extremely hostile to agriculture.”²⁶ The climate variability ending at the same time the warm interglacial began made possible a rapid launch of and increased sophistication in agriculture and civilization. Thus, humanity was poised to grow.

Fields of ice from the last ice age still continue to melt, feeding the rivers that water the great agricultural plains upon which 7 billion people and their animals depend for their food. For example, many rivers in Asia—including the Ganges, Indus, and Yangtze—flow out from the ice fields of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau. These rivers irrigate agricultural plains that sustain nearly 3 billion people. Likewise, glacier melt in several other mountain ranges throughout the rest of the world sustain many populations.

From the high plateaus and slopes exposed at the close of the last ice age, wind-blown dust (loess) provides many of the crucial nutrients that make the lowland plains fertile. The retreating of the ice fields and glaciers concentrated many mineral ores and exposed many other valuable mineral deposits. Thus, the ending of the last ice age contributed greatly to launching and sustaining metallurgy.

As the vast ice sheets covering much of the northern hemisphere's continents retreated, they scoured out numerous basins. These basins created millions of large lakes. Canada

alone possesses about 32,000 such lakes larger than 3 square kilometers. Freshwater produced by the last ice age covers about 9 percent of Canada's total surface area.

All this surface freshwater area results in evaporation and condensation that produces precipitation over large swaths of land that otherwise would be barren deserts. The lakes and rivers form habitats for marsh plants (such as wild rice) and animals, including fish, crustaceans, waterfowl, and various mammals. The lakes and rivers provided humans with efficient transportation corridors that made possible specialized agriculture and industry. Water flowing through lakes and rivers also made possible the generation of vast networks of hydroelectric power, without which aluminum likely would never have ever been mass produced and sold at an affordable price. The last ice age also carved out a large number of safe, deep-water harbors all over the world.

Thanks to the last ice age, humans were able to migrate from their locale of origination and easily colonize six of the seven current continents. The last ice caused sea levels to fall to about 125 meters (410 feet) below current levels, which resulted in land bridges joining Siberia to Alaska, Britain to France, Asia Minor to the Greek Peninsula, Korea to Japan, Denmark to Sweden, and Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes to the British Columbia mainland. It also yielded easy island hops between South East Asia and Australia. These needed migration routes allowed humans to settle in all the temperate and tropical continents prior to the launch of civilization.

Of course, colonization also required that the continents be at such a distance from one another that the ice age cycle could close and open the land bridges and that mountain elevation would tend to rise the closer one got to the equator. By this means melting ice and snow could be more evenly distributed over the continental landmasses. Also, as noted already, it was crucial that the sizes, shapes, and positions of the continents at the time of human habitation be exactly what and where they are today.

There is also an aesthetic benefit from the last ice age. Earth today is blessed with the most spectacular and beautiful scenery it has ever possessed. The receding ice sheets and glaciers have enhanced the relief of Earth's mountains and valleys. They have created stunning waterfalls. They have nurtured an enormous number of meadows, forests, rivers, and lakes filled with an extravagant variety of plants and animals that display every imaginable combination of

color and texture. The ice age cycle's simultaneous occurrence with such unique tectonic events as the collision of India with Eurasia, the formation of "rings of fire" (chains of volcanoes), the formation of abundant island volcanoes, and the positioning of the continental landmasses also enhanced Earth's beauty.

I wouldn't be surprised if all this stunning natural beauty helps people maintain their sanity in today's high technology and high stress society. To put it another way, it seems that God not only optimally designed Earth and all life to provide for our physical needs, but also designed it to provide for our aesthetic needs. Table 1 summarizes the known benefits of the ice age cycle.

Ice Age Cycle Benefits for Humanity

1. Melting ice fields brought nutrient-rich alluvial silt to the plains.
2. Wind-blown dust delivered other nutrients to the plains.
3. Melting glaciers water the plains.
4. Ice field and glacier retreat formed millions of lakes.
5. Formations of lakes and connecting rivers transformed barren deserts into productive land regions.
6. Geological relief yielded abundant hydropower resources.
7. Retreating ice sheets formed land bridges warm enough to facilitate human migration.
8. Glacial retreat formed many safe harbors.
9. Retreating ice sheets, ice fields, and glaciers formed rich ore deposits.
10. Retreating ice sheets, ice fields, and glaciers made possible enhanced abundance of plants and animals during the warm interglacial episodes.
11. Retreating ice sheets, ice fields, and glaciers created spectacular scenery.

THE LONG COOL SUMMER

Figure 6 shows the variation of Earth's temperature throughout the past four ice age cycles. This graph reveals a cycle of long glacial epochs (80,000–90,000 years) followed by a brief warm interglacial era (10,000–20,000 years). The interglacial is characterized by a rapid temperature rise to a level about 3–4° Centigrade above the current level followed immediately by an equally rapid temperature drop that brings on another long glacial eon. This pattern is seen throughout the entire Quaternary era (the past 2.59 million years), throughout all the ice age cycles, with just one exception.

The one exception is the warm interglacial we currently are experiencing. For our interglacial the temperature indeed

rose rapidly following the last glacial maximum (see figure 8). From 9,000 to 12,500 years ago, the global mean temperature rose 8° Centigrade (14.5° Fahrenheit). However, rather than continuing to spike up another 3–4° Centigrade, Earth's temperature plateaued. All the ice cores from central Antarctica and north central Greenland show that, for the past 9,000 years, the planet has experienced a steady global mean temperature that happens to be maximally optimal for human civilization. Climatologists refer to the past 9,000 years as the long cool summer, the long warm spring, or simply as the long summer.

Scientists have yet to determine the causes of the long cool summer with any degree of confidence. However, there is no doubt that this climate's nature is exceptional. In the context of everything else that is essential to support human civilization, it is a unique event in Earth's history that cannot be sustained much longer and is unlikely to reoccur.

WHY ARE WE HERE NOW?

The remarkable circumstances in which we presently find ourselves raises the question of why we are here with such a bountiful array of resources at such an amazingly optimal moment in life's long history. The Bible provides answers.

A big clue comes from noting that God's work of redemption preceded His work of creation. As Paul declares in his letters to Timothy and Titus:

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. (2 Timothy 1:9)

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time. (Titus 1:1–2)

All of God's works of creation are in the context of His greater works of redemption, the recipients of which include "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9). The numbering system of the first-century Greeks extended to the hundreds of millions. Thus, it could be that the "great multitude that no one could count" implies that at least several billion humans will be redeemed. This number in

turn implies that Earth's carrying capacity today would need to support billions of people.

The answer to the question of why we're here now is to encourage as many individuals as are willing within every ethnic and cultural group to receive God's redemptive offer. God's desire to quickly and efficiently bring redemption to a huge population explains why Earth's recent history looks the way it does. ▲

Endnotes

¹At its birth, the Sun accumulated mass and brightened quickly—but during its youth it lost 20 percent or more of its mass, enough to cause more than a 100 percent loss of its luminosity. As it aged, the Sun's nuclear furnace converted more and more hydrogen into helium, causing its luminosity to increase. The Sun continues brightening to this day and will one day generate enough heat energy to make Earth uninhabitable.

²About 40 million years ago, Antarctica separated from Australia and drifted south. About 23 million years ago, a wide strait began to form between Antarctica and the southern tip of South America, resulting in an open ocean surrounding Antarctica. The Antarctic circumpolar current and the settling of Antarctica upon the South Pole led to a thick ice sheet replacing the forests that once covered the continent.

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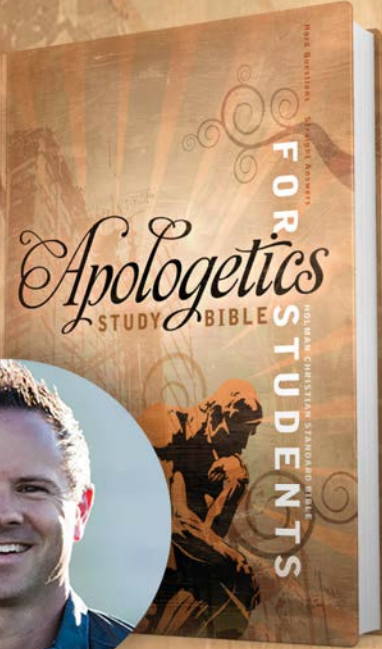

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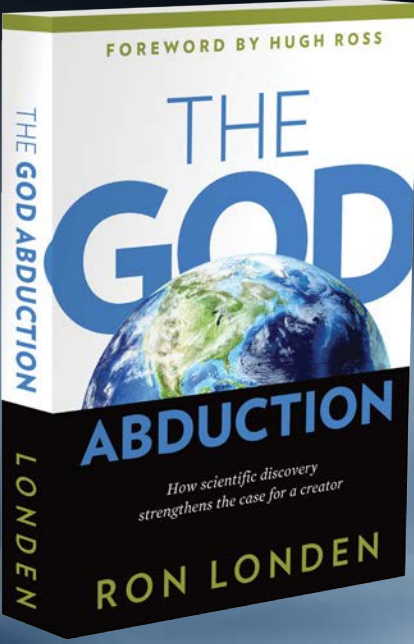
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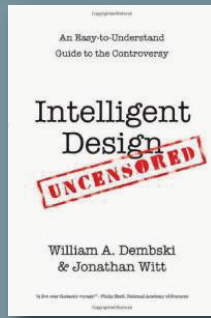
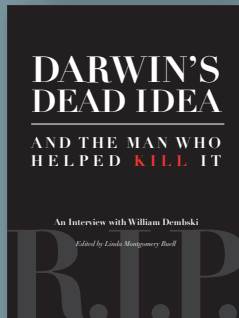
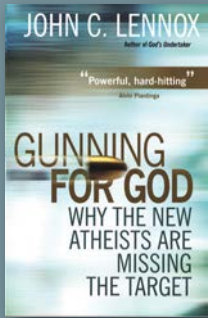
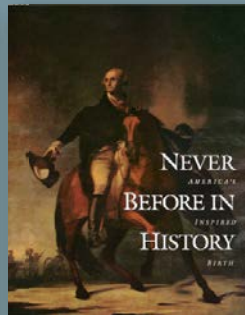
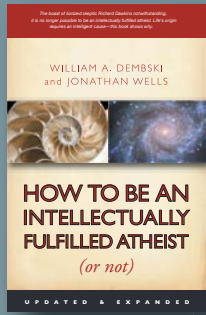
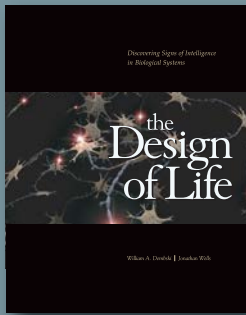
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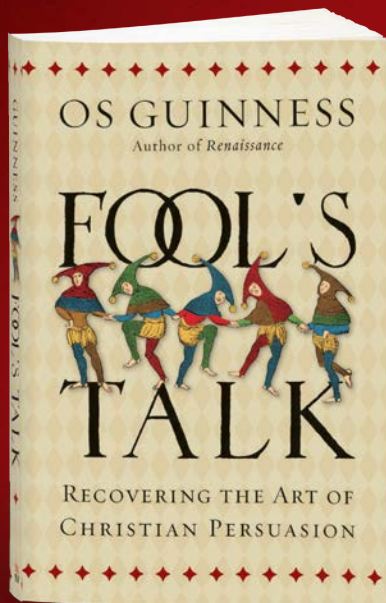
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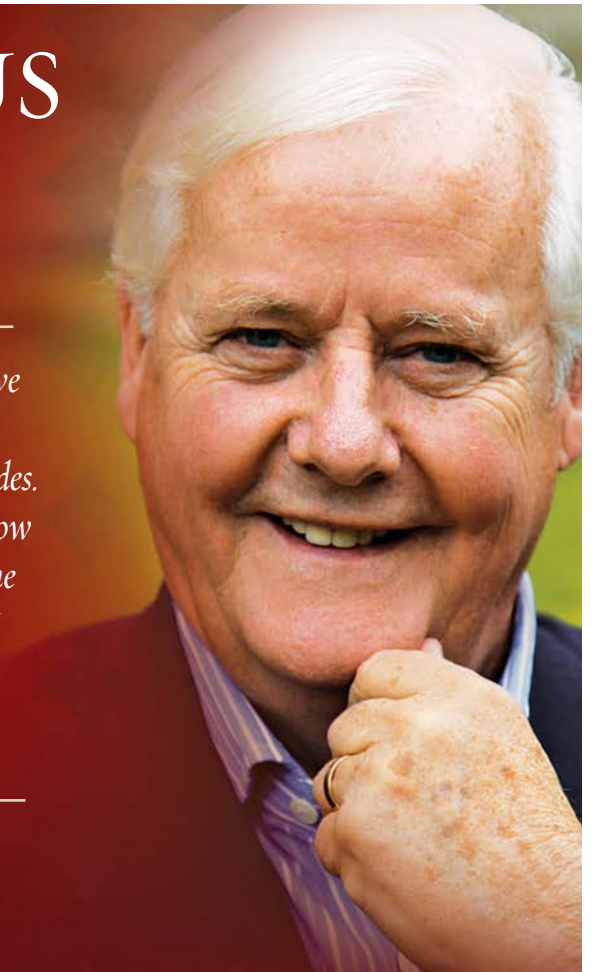
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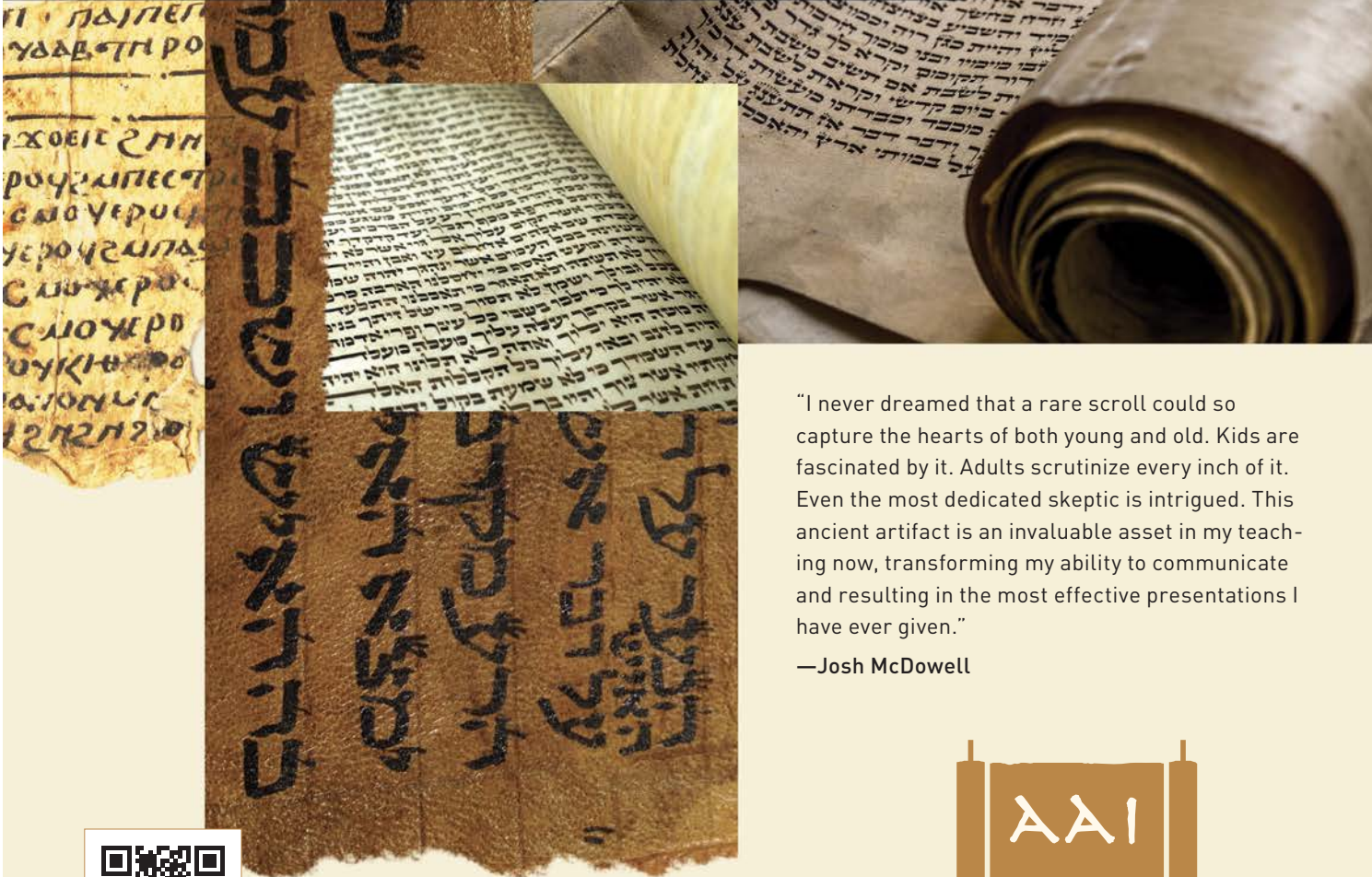

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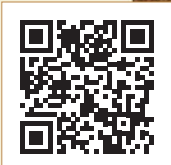
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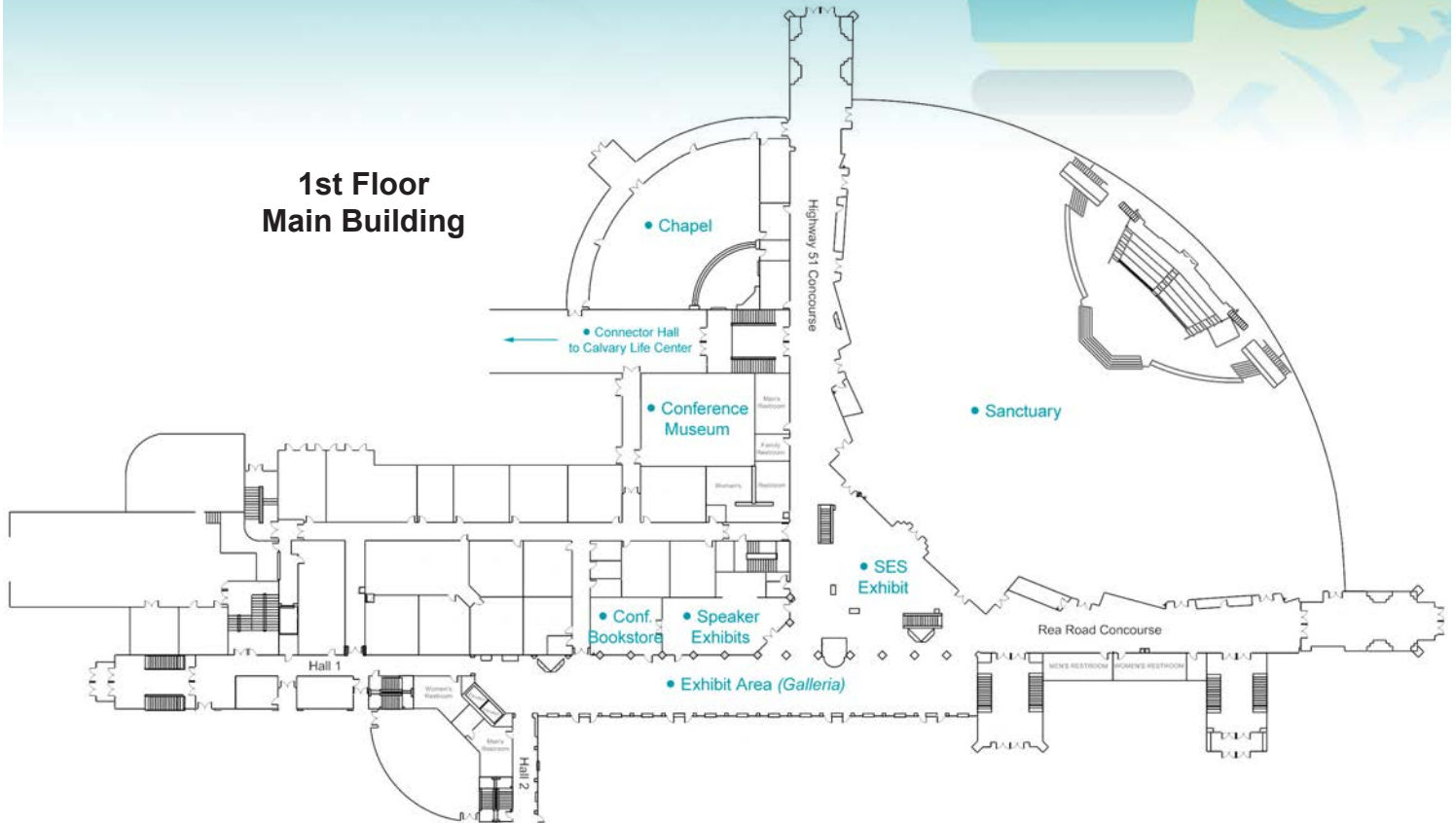
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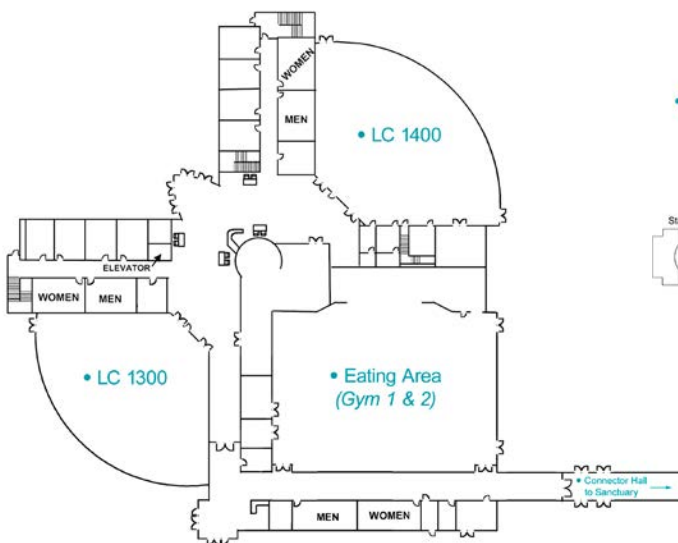
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