



Creation Matters

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A "Closet Christian" Steps Out

by John Cimbala, Ph.D.



A Christian professor explains how he was motivated to begin sharing his faith with students and colleagues

I began my teaching career in July of 1984, fresh out of graduate school. I was already a Christian at that time, having accepted the Lord several years before. During my first few years of teaching, however, I kept my Christianity quite separate from my job. Christianity, although the most important thing in my life, was something to be practiced at home and at church; my Christian beliefs were not displayed in the office or in the classroom. This is not to say that I acted immorally or in any way condemned Christianity while at work. It's just that my Christian beliefs were not openly displayed or discussed. You might say that I was a "Closet Christian." It would be fair to assume that none of my students and few of my colleagues even knew I was a Christian, except for those few who happened to attend the same church.

My "closeted" condition lasted until January of 1987, when I attended a seminar sponsored by Christian Leadership Ministries entitled "The Christian Faculty Workshop" (which has since been updated and renamed "Relating to Students"). This workshop was the catalyst that permanently changed my outlook about my role and purpose as a Christian faculty member. In particular, the workshop motivated me to begin to share my faith with my students and with my colleagues.

I started by displaying a few Christian posters and wall hangings in my office. I then began to introduce myself as a Christian on the first day of each class. After telling the students my name and educational background, I would tell them a little about my personal life, such as "I am married and have two boys, I like to swim for exercise..." Then I'd say "I am a Christian, and that's the most important part of my personal life."

I remember the nervousness and sweaty palms the first time I did this; but looking back, those few words spoken on the first day of class set the tone for the rest of the course. Once I had identified myself as a Christian, it was then very easy later on in the semester to announce lectures by Christian speakers, to state my views on certain topics, and, where applicable, to mention

continued on p. 3

CRS Board Member Invited to Siberia

Dr. David Kaufmann, CRS board member and retired professor of exercise science (University of Florida), has been invited to take the message of creation to Siberia, Russia. The trip, tentatively scheduled for early 1999, is planned to encompass several facets:

1. To teach an elective course on creation and evolution at Novosibirsk State University (where all students speak English).
2. To lecture on apologetics at the new Lutheran College in Novosibirsk.
3. To give a presentation on creation and evolution at the Bible Lutheran Church of Novosibirsk.
4. To lecture in churches and universities during a 10-day trip to several other cities in the area.

Novosibirsk, the largest city in Siberia and the third largest in Russia, is considered to be the "capital of Siberia." It is a business, cultural, and educational center for this part of Russia, and is the home of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This unique opportunity to present creation has the potential to significantly impact higher education in Russia. The coordinator of these activities, Natasha Kolosov, writes:

"Former USSR existed under the communist regime for 70 years. All religion was prohibited. Many survived churches became underground or exists under total control of government. Since revolution in 1917 Soviet government tried to

continued on p. 2

Contents

A "Closet Christian" Steps Out	1
CRS Board Member Invited to Siberia	1
Third Annual Creation Science Fair	2
A Letter from Grandpa	4
CRS Board Meets at ICR	4
Speaking of Science	
Ancient DNA Update	3
RNA-Based Origin of Life?	5
Horse Chestnuts	5
"Skullduggery"?	5
Creation Calendar	6

Third Annual Creation Science Fair

Press release from the science fair host, Linda Harris, of the Creation Discovery Project

All praise and honour go to our Lord and Creator. He alone does marvellous things; indeed it is awesome to see His glory displayed. Together with the co-sponsors (l'Association de Science Création de Québec and International Christian Crusade), Creation Discovery Project is pleased to report on the results of our third annual Science Fair which was held at Crawford Academy in Toronto on April 17th, 1998. It was thrilling to see students from four Christian schools, public and separate (Roman Catholic) schools, home-schoolers, and even a grade 12 entry from a collegiate institute. This year we were blessed with a total of 133 exhibits, a significant increase in number over the 39 exhibits last year. Our God is truly amazing in His blessings. Of the 148 exhibitors (some exhibits were group projects), there were 114 from Christian schools, 29 from home schools, 3 from public schools, 1 from a Collegiate Institute and 1 from a separate school. Of the age ranges there were 5 kindergarten and preschool, 38 grades 1-3, 38 grades 4-6, 49 grades 7-9, and 18 grades 10 and above.

We hope that this experience will help the students to become more established in their understanding of God's creation, more established in the faith of Christianity, and more confident in the evidence that shows that when God said He did it this way, He meant it. It certainly encouraged us on the boards of the sponsoring organizations. Below is a listing of the science fair winners.

The science fair organizers may be reached at:

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<http://www.creation.on.ca/cdp/>
lharris@creation.on.ca
(416) 286-4282 Fax (416) 286-0661

Age Category	Placing	Name	Grade	Project Title
kindergarten	1st	Stephen Taylor		On the 6th day God Made Rabbits
	2nd	Ryan deRoos		Creation Week
	3rd	Katie Riihimaki		Birds
grades 1-3	1st	Justin Marques	3	The Solar System
	2nd	Phillip Joseph	3	Early Earth, The Flood, Post Flood
	3rd	Rochelle Fraser	2	The Garden of Eden
grades 4-6	1st	Kim Workman	4	Birds' Nests
	2nd	Joyce Meneses	5	Frog in Hibernation
	3rd	Andrew Lushington	4	Cycle of Life in Soil
	3rd	James Cleary	6	Acoustic Levitation
grades 7-9	1st	Daphne Leung	8	Lights! Plants! Grow!
	2nd	Adrianna Lewis	8	Can Plants Survive Without Rain?
		Carolyn Simon	8	
	3rd	Dora Logan-Watts	7	Plants
grades 10-12	1st	Brenda Binette	11	The Original Diet
	2nd	Meriam Youannas	10	Why I Don't Believe Evolution
	3rd	Reed Liang	11	Detecting Vitamin C in Fruits and Vegetables
	3rd	Trevor Schmidt	11	A Scientific Sketch of Music

Siberia

continued from p. 1

erase all knowledge about God from the face of the earth. For all these years it was prohibited to proclaim Gospel to the people. Many of them did not have any chance to hear about God, they were taught that it is all lie and that they should believe materialistic doctrines. One of the cornerstone of materialism is proclamation of evolution as ultimate truth. People in Russia for many years have been taught this dogma as the only alternative.

"Only in 1990 by the miracle of God Russia received freedom of religion. Many people were faced with new truth - the Gospel. But it is very difficult to start something new, to proclaim Good News to people who for many years were taught lie. One of the main stumbling block is the evolution. People ask time and again: "How can I believe God if there is theory of evolution?" We may ask: "Why this so weak unscientific theory is still rooted in minds of millions people?" The answer is because there is little or no opposition at all, especially in Russia, former communist country. There is only few scientists who believe and teach creation, almost no books on this matter in Russia. It is often hard for Christians to defend the truth because they have little or no resource of knowledge at all."

No financial support is available from the Russian Christians, so all money must be raised privately in the U.S. and Canada. If you would like to contribute to this project, you may send contributions to the following address. Checks should be made out to "CRS Russian Project."

CRS Russian Project
Concordia Theological Seminary
6600 North Clinton
Ft. Wayne, IN 46825-4996

For more information you may contact Rev. Timothy Quill at the above address, or by email at quilltim@aol.com.

A "Closet Christian" ...

continued from p. 1

God in my lectures. For example, when I teach the second law of thermodynamics, I explain how the entire universe is winding down like a giant windup clock. "How did the clock get wound up in the first place?" I ask the students, and continue, "Does this prove the existence of God?"

In the past couple years, I have developed a lecture of my own on science and the Bible, stressing in particular the conflict between creation and evolution, and the evidences for the existence of God. I generally present this lecture several times a year to various churches or campus Christian groups. I always announce these lectures to my classes, and several of my students have attended. In many cases, the mere announcement of the lecture prompts some students to ask questions after class. I can recall several instances when I've had the opportunity to explain my faith and to witness to nonChristian students after class. I feel that the Lord is using me as His ambassador to engineering students; this is my ministry, and the classroom is my mission field.

I have some simple advice for Christian faculty who may be in the same situation as I was in 1987, wanting to start to share your faith in the classroom, but not knowing exactly how to begin.

First, pray for boldness to announce your Christianity to your students.

Second, and most importantly, be a good teacher. I have learned that in order to become an effective witness to your students, you must first become an effective teacher. You must be willing to put sacrificial time into course preparation, with well-organized lectures. Students can really sense when this is (or is not) done. If your teaching is poor, students will not look to you as a role model, nor will they take your Christianity seriously. It is critical that you show genuine concern for the students, learn their names, and show them that they are important to you.

In closing, I quote from some letters I received from students in one of my classes in the fall semester of 1992, after I had asked for feedback about my lectures, homework, etc. One student wrote the following:

"Your class is the only class I enjoy day in and day out. I feel that your lectures are easy to follow, neatly outlined on the board... You are the first instructor I've had at PSU in three years who openly leads a Christian way of life. That means a lot to me, since most of my professors don't."

Another student wrote: "Your lectures are great! They are very clear and easy to follow (which is a big compliment because not all profs are good at this). The home-

work requires thought, yet is not impossible... Actually I'm glad you gave us a chance to comment, because I have been wanting to since the first day when you said you were a Christian. I am, too, and I thought it was quite a courageous thing to do. You see, students often get frustrated and annoyed with teachers, and to continue the rest of the semester as a testimony knowing that we all know you're a Christian I thought would not be easy. But you are excellent, and people respect you. Thanks, because my friends know I'm a Christian. Actually I'm probably the only one they know besides you, and I'm glad they know you are too, because we can tell you're fair and care about us."

Such letters have encouraged me to continue to share my Christian faith in the classroom, and I hope they are as motivating to other faculty as well.

John, whose Ph.D. degree is in Aeronautics, is an associate professor of mechanical engineering at Penn State University. During the academic year 1993-94, he worked at NASA Langley Research Center, where he advanced his knowledge of computational fluid dynamics and turbulence modeling.

Used by permission of the author. This article is slightly modified from its first appearance at <http://www.leaderu.com/real/ri9601/cimbala.html>.

Speaking of Science

Commentaries on recent news from science

Ancient DNA Update

Some scientists have hoped that snippets of DNA from ancient (multimillion-year-old) organisms might be recovered from organisms preserved in amber. A recent letter in *ASM* (American Society for Microbiology) *News* succinctly summarizes the current state of affairs. First, an earlier article published in *ASM News* (Gerhardt, 1998) cited the claims by some scientists that they have recovered and sequenced ancient bacterial DNA, and that they have even cultured bacterial spores from amber-preserved fossil bees. Gerhardt issued a challenge to other investigators to verify these reported findings.

In their well-documented response, Kane and Braun (1998) remind readers that such reports of ancient DNA have first of all been questioned "because of theoretical concerns on the rate of DNA degradation." [This objection was earlier reviewed in *Creation Matters* (Wood, 1996).] Secondly, they point to the "inability of other groups to replicate these results." And finally they note the erroneous gene sequencing methods and results employed in some of these ancient DNA reports.

It has been suggested that contamination from modern sources has been responsible for these reports of ancient DNA. Holden (1997) reported on the efforts by scientists to replicate these results. They started with a brand-new laboratory, used specimens of amber-encased organisms from the same collections, and worked for two years — but to no avail. Holden said that "many scientists had already doubted these claims" since DNA usually begins to degrade within hours of death." An exception might be DNA that has been preserved in areas that are dry and frozen, such as was the case for the 5,000-year-old "Ice Man" discovered in the Tyrolean Alps.

Gerhardt, P. 1998. Survival of ancient bacteria desiccated within amber: Believe it or not? *ASM News* 64:68.

Holden, C. 1997. "No go" for *Jurassic Park*-style Dinos. *Science* 276:361.

Kane, M.D. and M.J. Braun. 1998. Microbes in amber. *ASM News* 64:250.

Wood, T. 1996. Ancient DNA? *Creation Matters* 1(6):1.

— contributed by Glen W. Wolfrom

A Letter from Grandpa

by John R. Meyer, Ph.D.

Dear John Paul,

I suppose that from time to time you must wonder about who this guy is that you call "Grandpa" and why he does what he does.

I don't expect that, at your age, you will understand a lot of what I am saying, but perhaps you will understand enough that reading it will be worthwhile. I hope the day will come when you understand in more depth the issues I discuss.

My motivations for being involved in the origins issues are in part as follows:

1. **I am a Christian.** It does make a difference to Biblical Christianity as to the age of the universe, the age of the earth, and the reality of a universal, worldwide flood at the time of Noah. After many years of trying, I finally realized that I could not fit the major features of macro-evolution (I have no problem with most aspects of "micro-evolution") into the Genesis account without destroying it. It (Genesis) is the historical, foundational,

and fundamental basis for all that follows in Scripture. The profound relationship between atheism and raw evolutionism can hardly be denied.

2. **I am a scientist.** Einstein once said that what it really took to be a scientist was an intense curiosity about the natural world. Unfulfilled curiosity is a powerful motivating force in what may otherwise be long, hard, and tedious research. I am simply intensely curious about the origins of the physical world and the origin of life. Few people outside of the scientific and engineering realms understand this drive. But if you have it you are not satisfied without at least some fulfillment of it.

3. **I am a biologist.** It does make a difference to the profession regarding the age of the earth, the origin of life, the origin of information in molecular biology, and the possible genetic relationships among all organisms. Thus, if I see weaknesses in the general theory of evo-

lution, in order to be true to my chosen professional career, I have an ethical obligation to set the record straight. This is an obligation that serious scientists must hold with regard to their chosen discipline. This is true regardless of the presence or lack of religious implications.

4. **I am your grandfather.** Secular humanism is the most insidious and pervasive philosophy that you and my other grandkids will have thrown at them in an anti-Christian culture. The primary cornerstone for secular humanism is evolutionism. I thus have an immense responsibility to my grandkids and to generations yet unborn.

I hope the above is helpful.

With all of my love,
Grandpa

John is director of the CRS Van Andel Creation Research Center located at Chino Valley, Arizona.

CRS Board Meets at ICR

On May 21-23, the 35th annual meeting of the Creation Research Society Board of Directors was graciously hosted by the Institute for Creation Research. [1] This provided a unique opportunity for the CRS Board and the ICR staff to interact informally at a Friday night reception sponsored by ICR. For several Board members, this was their first visit to ICR. The evening's events culminated in a personal tour of ICR's excellent museum. On Saturday evening Dr. Henry Morris, founder and President-Emeritus of ICR, and his wife were invited to join the CRS board members and their wives for dinner.



Standing (l to r): Gary Locklair, Lane Lester*, Ted Aufdemberge*, Dave Boylan*, Wayne Frair*, Emmett Williams*, Glen Wolfrom*, Don DeYoung*, John Meyer. Seated (l to r): Dave Kaufmann*, Duane Gish*, Henry Morris, Gene Chaffin*. Not pictured: Bob Gentet*, George Howe*, Russ Humphreys*, Bob Goette*, Dave Rodabaugh*. *CRS Board members. Photo by Becky Wolfrom.*

Though this was his last Board meeting, it was very special for Dr. Duane Gish. In the CRS' 35-year history, he has never missed a Board meeting. Drs. Morris and Gish were among the original "team of ten" who founded the CRS in 1963. Dr. Morris resigned from the Board in 1982 due to his expanding speaking and administrative responsibilities at ICR.

The Board convened on Thursday evening to review the agendas of the various committees. Then, throughout the day on Friday the committees met and prepared their recommendations for Board action. Finally, the Board met together on Saturday to hear the various committee reports, act on motions, nominate Board members, and elect officers for the following year. The minutes of the meeting will be published in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*.

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Speaking of Science

Commentaries on recent news from science

RNA-Based Origin of Life?

In a recent article in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Stanley Miller and a colleague report their investigation of the stability of the nucleobases (components of RNA and DNA) to high temperatures (>100 degrees C) and low temperatures (0 degrees C). Evolutionists often suggest that early in earth's history, various gases gave rise to the building blocks of life, including the nucleobases. For such a theory to be valid, the proposed building blocks of life must be stable at high temperatures. It was reported that at 100 degrees C the decomposition half-lives of the RNA bases were approximately 1 year for adenine and guanine, 12 years for uracil, and, in the case of cytosine, 19 days — much too short to sustain life at high temperatures.

The article states, "Therefore, unless the origin of life took place extremely rapidly (< 100 yr), we conclude that a high-temperature origin of life may be possible, but it cannot involve adenine, uracil, guanine, or cytosine." This is an extremely important finding! When mainstream scientists find tangible, testable evidence disproving this far-fetched theory of the abio-genic origin of life, it is certainly worth noting. An abstract of the article is available at:

<http://www.pnas.org/cgi/content/abstract/95/14/7933>.

Matthew Levy and Stanley J. Miller. 1998. The stability of the RNA bases: Implications for the origin of life. *PNAS* 95(14):7933-7938.

— contributed by Joe Blumer

Horse Chestnuts

No, not the ornamental shade trees which produce an inedible nut. Rather, I am referring to the markings located on the inside of the horse's legs. Since their size and shape are unique to each horse, they have been used traditionally by some horse breed associations to assist in identification of individual horses. However, because these can be surgically altered, modern means such as freeze branding and microchips are sometimes recommended as more sure means of identification.

The issue for us, however, is that some people assert that these structures are evolutionary "leftovers." I phoned an acquaintance, who is an equine veterinarian, about these structures called chestnuts. The standard line taught to vets, she said, is that these are rudimentary (i.e., vestigial) digits, left over from the multi-toed ancestor of the horse. Yes, I know it sounds strange that something near the knee (forelimb) or hock (hind limb) can be considered the remnant of a toe, but she read it to me from one of her books.

According to Evans, *et. al* (1990), the chestnuts are semi-horny growths derived from the epidermal layer. Similar structures, called ergots, are located on the posterior-ventral (back, lower) surface of the fetlock (the joint just above the hoof). The size of ergots, generally hidden by tufts of hair, is breed-dependent. These authors clearly state that:

"...there is no evidence for the theory that [chestnuts] represent vestiges of missing digits from extinct species of horses." (p. 128)

"There is no scientific evidence to suggest that the chestnuts or ergots are reduced vestiges of toes." (p. 688)

No specific function of these structures is noted by the authors. A veterinary student has pointed out that the chestnuts have an odor that is similar to that of the secretions that surround the genitals of male horses, and that builds up between the teats of mares. In any event, it is clear that they do not represent vestiges of multi-toed ancestors.

Bergman, J. and G.F. Howe. 1990. "*Vestigial Organs*" Are Fully Functional. CRS Books, St. Joseph, MO.

Evans, J.W., A. Borton, H.F. Hintz, L.D. Van Vleck. 1990. *The Horse*, 2nd Ed. W. H. Freeman Co., New York.

— contributed by Glen W. Wolf from

"Skullduggery"?

No malfeasance is implied by the title to this note. However, the reconstruction of a human face based upon a fossil skull is, in fact, one of those areas where science meets artistic license. One immediately thinks of the famous (or not so famous) series of reconstructions of Zinjanthropus, now known as *Australopithecus* (Custance, 1968; see Figure 1).

The "difficulties" of the art of reconstruction were illustrated in a recent news report (Holden, 1998). Because the man's race was not known, the thickness of facial muscles was the average of that for Caucasians and Asians. The size of the nose was calculated from measurements made on the skull, but it "looked too big" and was made smaller. The type of mouth, eyelids, and ears was determined by guessing.

One could stipulate, as is done in the article, that a general shape can be derived by reconstruction. This should be especially true when the species is *known* (human in this case) and the skull is *complete*. With respect to the details, however, the report indicates that "[s]uch reconstruction is 'still a cross between art and science,' especially with a fossil this old." The skeleton in question is dated by conventional methods at *only* 9300 years. Imagine, then, how accurate reconstructions are when the species is one that has never been seen before, and when the skull is alleged to be hundreds of thousands of years old, and is incomplete or highly fragmented.

Custance, A.C. 1968. Fossil man in the light of the record in Genesis. *CRS Quarterly* 5:5-22.

Holden, C. 1998. Kennewick Man realized. *Science* 279:1137.

— contributed by Glen W. Wolf from



Figure 1. Three different reconstructions of the same fossil Zinjanthropus. Reprinted by permission.

Creation Calendar

Note: Items in "Creation Calendar" are for information only; the listing of an event does not necessarily imply endorsement by the Creation Research Society.

August 20-26

Bob Marshall Wilderness Trail Ride (Montana)
Creation Quest Expeditions, Creation Research Society
John Meyer, (520)636-1153

August 28-29

Southern California Creation Conference
Cal-State Fullerton University
Speakers: K. Gentry, M. Butler, D. Gish, and B. Davidheiser
(714)572-8358

September 25-27

Ozark Cave Safari
CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)
Tom Willis, (816)618-3610

September 28 - October 3

San Juan Mountains Trail Ride (Colorado)
Creation Quest Expeditions, Creation Research Society
John Meyer, (520)636-1153

October 17

Creationist Research Opportunities by Dr. George Howe
Bible-Science Assoc., San Fernando Valley Chapter (Los Angeles)
Mark Armitage, (805)499-9634

November 21

Origin of Life by Dr. Duane Gish
Bible-Science Assoc., San Fernando Valley Chapter (Los Angeles)
Mark Armitage, (805)499-9634

November 21

Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge
CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)
Tom Willis, (816)618-3610

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Creation Research Society Website:
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/crs/crs-home.html>

Don't forget to renew your membership in the Creation Research Society

There is a membership renewal form
printed in each issue of the
CRS Quarterly

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