

# SHINING THE LIGHT OF JESUS IN AN ENDARKENED CULTURE

## *SIXTEEN LETTERS TO THE EDITOR*



***MARK PETERSON***

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# INTRODUCTION – WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

Time is short, and the pace of change is accelerating as our nation and the world are hurtling toward the end times described in the Bible. This sense of urgency compels us as Christians to be the salt and light we are called to be by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

One of the ways to do that is to write letters to the editor of local newspapers, where we publicly participate in discourse on issues of the day – issues that impact all of our lives. Of course we will receive flak, as the forces of darkness seek to overwhelm the forces of the Light. But we are not to worry – they are defeated and we are victorious:

**“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” *Isaiah 41:10***

The letters in this e-book address a wide variety of topics, all from a Biblical world view. They were directed to editors, columnists, and other letter writers, and have received various responses. But we are not to be concerned with the responses; we should seek to carry out the Lord’s will and leave the consequences to Him. We should do no

more and no less than what the Holy Spirit would have us do.

**Action Steps:** We were born to live in this very time. So let us seek the Lord and His calling upon our lives, sharing His truth and love with all He brings across our path, all to His glory, knowing that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

**Life is short. God is great. Walk with the Lord.**

*Mark Peterson  
LifeintheSpirit.net*

# ZINGER OF THE YEAR - LIVING IN A UNIVERSE WITHOUT DESIGN

**“It is possible that the entire universe, matter, radiation, and even space itself could arise spontaneously out of nothing, without explicit divine intervention”.**

## Letter to the Editor

I am responding to the article **“Universe Without Design”** by Lawrence M. Krauss.

Krauss states that **“it is possible that the entire universe, matter, radiation, and even space itself could arise spontaneously out of nothing, without explicit divine intervention”**. He sees this as **“a kind of cosmic accident”** that apparently just happened to form. Krauss also states that the 100 billion galaxies in the observable universe were contained in a volume smaller than the size of a single atom prior to the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago.

Krauss claims that if we just wait long enough, something can come from nothing spontaneously, and then come to life; that great order and 100 billion galaxies can come from the explosion of something smaller than a single atom, **AND THAT ALL OF THIS IS SCIENTIFIC** (i.e. can be observed and measured).

**Hats off to Krauss – it takes a TRULY GIANT LEAP OF FAITH to believe this rather than believe that the incredible complexity and design of the universe reflects intelligence - that of the sovereign, living God - the creator of the universe.**

**This latter perspective is confirmed by several thousand creation scientists in this nation, and an intelligent design movement that has emerged from within the evolutionist community (including some prominent evolutionary scientists).**

**These scientists have come to the conclusion that THE COMPLEXITY OF THE UNIVERSE CANNOT BE EXPLAINED BY DARWIN'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION, but reveals evidence of design by a conscious being. All of which is totally consistent with the Biblical account of creation.**

**Best regards,**

## EDUTAINMENT MISNAMED

Lisa Miller's June 4 story entitled "**Belief Watch Edutainment**" was a great example of edutainment – an entertaining, one-sided perspective on a complex topic. Miller refers to Creation Museum founder Ken Ham as an evangelist, overlooking the scientific books he has written. Portraying the creation museum as "**Bible-based edutainment...posing as science**", Miller ignores the scientific evidence for creation.

Charles Darwin stated that the validity of his theory of evolution depended on the fossil record. And yet the gaps – lack of fossils – between species persists, thus contradicting Darwin's theory. There are over 10,000 scientists in the U.S. today, who embrace the creation perspective.

No one would look at a Boeing 747 and conclude that there was no designer, that it all happened by chance over millions of years. And yet evolutionists would have us believe that the human brain, which is much more complex than a 747, happened by blind chance, given enough time. Now that's edutainment!

Best regards,

# COLUMNIST LEAVES OUT GOD

In a recent column “**We Cannot Escape History**”, Daniel Burnett described a time of war in the U.S. (1963), in which President Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation of thanksgiving, urging Americans, to take a moment and reflect on the greatness of our nation.

## Response:

What Burnett leaves out is that **LINCOLN ATTRIBUTES OF OUR NATION TO GOD**. Lincoln described the blessings accrued to our nation and stated: “**No human counsel has devised nor has any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, has nevertheless remembered mercy.**” Lincoln then proceeded to “**set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwells in the heavens.**”

Bemoaning the fact that our college students are ignorant of American history, Burnett betrays that history by omitting the most significant aspect of Lincoln’s Proclamation of Thanksgiving – that he was urging the nation to thank God for the many blessings of our nation.

**Burnett encourages us to “be thankful for the wisdom of a president seven score and eight years ago who saw the importance of giving thanks as a unified nation,” but denies that Lincoln’s wisdom points us to the sovereign, living God of the universe.**

**Burnett asks: “Without a strong foundation, how can the leaders of tomorrow set the course for our future?”** Good question. Perhaps he should ask Abraham Lincoln.

**Best regards,**

# GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SECRET TO SUCCESS

Your February 22 editorial spoke of George Washington: **“What was the secret of his success? How did he found a nation, this self-made man, this self-taught general, this self-abnegating statesman? He did it by his concern for ‘civility and reputation, which tamed and smoothed his natural endowments, and brought his ideals into daily life’. He did it through an unbroken series of successful gestures.”**

**Response:** The editorial omits a crucial fact: that **WASHINGTON WAS A STRONG CHRISTIAN**, known for his avid prayer life. Washington stated: “You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are.

While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian.

I now make it my earnest prayer that God would... most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves

**with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of the mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion."**

**That whirring sound you have been hearing is George Washington, turning over in his grave upon learning that his success was attributed to his own virtue without the hand of almighty providence, the real secret of his success. One of his successful gestures was to always tell the truth.**

**Best regards,**

# TIN-HAT CONSPIRACY THEORISTS

**Letter to the Editor:**

I am responding to your recent newspaper column ridiculing conspiracy theories and “**tin-hat conspiracy theorists**”. It is a common ploy of governments and the complicit mainstream media to label those who don’t buy the official story line as “**conspiracy theorists**”, i.e. as not telling the truth. After all, what do these folks know about what really took place? However, it is more difficult to dismiss a U.S. president, particularly one who died under suspicious circumstances:

“**For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day. It is a system that has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific, and political operations.**”

***John F. Kennedy's speech to the American  
Newspapers Publishing Association on  
April 27, 1961***

If we define a conspiracy as two or more people planning/plotting in secret to do something (usually bad), then hundreds of prosecutors set out every day to prove conspiracies of people who have planned and executed crimes. History and the Bible are full of conspiracies. In the Old Testament, it was usually false prophets and rulers conspiring against God's true prophets.

**“Then Hoshea the son of Elah led  
a conspiracy against Pekah the son of  
Remaliah, and struck and killed him; so he  
reigned in his place in the twentieth year of  
Jotham the son of Uzziah.” II Kings 15:30**

In the New Testament, it was the Pharisees and the Sadducees plotting against Christ and His apostles. Given that Satan is lord over the world, and he is known as the great deceiver, we should be expecting conspiracies and be surprised when there isn't one.

There are many current examples of official story lines, supported by the mainstream media, that were later proven to be false. Examples include U.S. government representative Susan Rice claiming that the attack in Benghazi was caused by a video, denials about IRS targeting certain

**organizations, and Operation Fast and Furious arming Mexican warlords.**

**Those who dismiss conspiracy theories as being not valid are really COINCIDENCE THEORISTS, who look at the myriad of events taking place, of multiple players with strong vested interests and no moral compunctions, and conclude that it is all a coincidence. STUFF JUST HAPPENS – key leaders get killed just like anyone else, wars arise spontaneously, and rebel groups like ISIS are self-supporting with arms, food, and supplies. Perhaps they have gardens, cottage gunsmiths, and bake sales to raise funds. Your column doesn't pass the smell test.**

**Best regards,**

# ONLY SCIENCE CAN EXPLAIN THE WORLD AND REALITY?

Columnist: “Only science can explain the world and reality. Everyone else, particularly those who believe in religion, are holding on to mythological systems, without adequate proof.”

Response: Very interesting. You have staked out a world view that is different from everyone else's, and at the same time claim it is not a belief system, and that everybody else is holding to “mythological systems” without adequate proof. So in reality, you hold to a set of beliefs, like everyone else's. You just claim it is not a set of beliefs. Like having your cake and eat it too.

Perhaps you have heard this story of the end times: everyone is on this big field, with Satan on one end and Jesus on the other. There is a fence that goes through the middle of the field. Satan says: “**That one is mine**”, and picks a person out of the crowd. Jesus says: “**That one is mine**”, and picks another person out of the crowd. This continues until there is one guy left, who is sitting on the fence. Satan says: “**You're mine.**” The guy protests, claiming that he is sitting on the fence, and therefore Satan has no claim over him. Satan replies: “**I own the fence.**”

You are the guy on the fence, claiming to be unbiased (by “**mythological systems**”). And people are starting to gather in the field...

Best regards,

# **NO NATION CAN SPEND ITS WAY OUT OF DEBT**

**Dear Editor**

**I would like to respond to an editorial you wrote several days ago, in which you talked about the Republicans caving on their pledge to stop tax increases. Good point – sounds like they will cave on the principles they espoused.**

**I like Bradley Gitz's astute observation that if the Democratic party positions itself as Santa Claus and is giving out goodies to all of the children, it is hard for the Republican Party to be scrooge, reduce the goodies, and be popular among these same children. By the way, I am an Independent.**

**While you rightly pointed out the hypocrisy of the Republicans and their inability/unwillingness to stand up for their principles, you gave a pass to the Democrats – the party of the big spenders. While they give lip service to addressing the budget, their policies, such as the significant increase in spending brought about by Obamacare, are basically to keep spending, spending, and spending.**

**They sound like they are in league with the Federal Reserve, whose chairman stated that they will keep quantitative easing until unemployment**

**decreases to 6%. Sounds like the sign in a corporate office: “The beatings will continue until morale improves”.**

**You passed on a golden opportunity (and responsibility) to address the fiscal issue head on, to point out that there is no nation in history that has ever been able to spend its way out of debt, particularly if the money being spent is being printed in the back room of the national bank.**

**Why don't you talk about Zimbabwe, Argentina, the Weimar Republic, and what happens when government expenditures significantly exceed the revenues year after year?**

**Surely you are not foolhardy enough to believe that the laws of economics and fiscal discipline can be bypassed, that this could never happen here, because America is special. Come on – take the high road. Tell people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. The light of truth signs brightest in the midst of great darkness, and you have the matches.**

**Best regards,**

## TRUE GUILT VS. FALSE GUILT

In his column "**How we use guilt**", Mike Masterson describes guilt as "**the greatest emotional manipulator of human choices and actions**", used to control our behavior and those of others. He then provides good suggestions of how to speak directly to issues rather than by using guilt.

His column raises the question - is all guilt bad? Wherever there are standards of behavior, as in our laws, isn't guilt necessary and in fact what our courts are charged with determining every day?

The second dimension is that from a Christian, Biblical perspective, God also has standards of behavior, as described in the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament, and the higher standard of loving our enemies in the New Testament. In addition to comforting and guiding us, the Holy Spirit also convicts us of our sin.

From a Biblical perspective, true sin is disobeying God's laws. So when the Holy Spirit convicts us (pricks our conscience) of true sin, we experience true guilt. In contrast, false guilt is when another person tries to get us to do something that is ungodly or merely fleshly.

So if a high school student tells his parents that they should give him a car because everyone else has one, that would be false guilt, designed to

**manipulate his parents into getting him a car. We can live lives free of guilt by dispensing with false guilt because it is false, and repenting of our sin to eliminate true guilt.**

**Best regards,**

# THE AMERICAN HOLOCAUST

In “An Abortion Memo”, Columnist David Brooks describes how “babies are now viable outside the womb at 22 weeks”, and that the unborn “prefer to look at face like images while in the womb. Early in the pregnancy they can recognize and distinguish between tastes. Late in the term they can recognize words, tunes, and languages. They seem to begin crying, for example, by the 28<sup>th</sup> week”.

Brooks states: “We need to acknowledge our vulnerability here”. Unbelievable. Instead of talking about the lives of the most vulnerable in our society, the unborn, he callously goes on to describe how Democrats are losing political support because “Parents can see their babies’ faces earlier and earlier.”

Incredible – Brooks acknowledges that unborn babies are viable at 22 weeks, and that the Democratic Party is in danger of losing political support because the Americans are discovering that the fetus in the womb is a baby with feelings and the ability to recognize words, tunes and languages.

The American holocaust is the 70 million unborn babies that have been murdered in the womb, 10x the number of Jews, Catholics, and gypsies

**reported to have been killed by the Nazis. As a pro-abortion strategist and consultant, David Brooks (and America) has blood on his hands, and the voices of the unborn cry out for justice.**

**Our nation should be on our face in repentance before the sovereign, living God of the universe, because God is just and His forbearance will not last forever.**

**Best regards,**

# YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE

## Letter to the Editor

In his August 12 column, Philip Martin stated: “You are going to die... And though you may believe you know what will happen after you die, I don’t believe you do. I believe we all tell ourselves things to mediate what otherwise might be a constant whir of pain and doubt”.

Why would a guy who is lost in the jungle assume that everyone else is also lost in the jungle? The most brilliant person in the world may know 5 percent of all knowledge that exists. Is it not possible that knowledge of the sovereign, living God could be in the other 95%?

In his book “[The Math of Christ](#)”, retired Army Colonel Stephen Bauer calculated the odds of just 40 of the fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament to have happened by chance to be one chance in  $1 \times 10$  to the  $136^{\text{th}}$  power. If you covered the earth with silver dollars, including a red one, and asked a blind man to find the red one, his chances of success are one chance in 10 to the  $17^{\text{th}}$  power.

Dr. Emile Borel, who created the basic law of probability, stated: “[The basic law of probability](#)

**states that the occurrence of any event in which the chances are beyond 10 to the 50<sup>th</sup> power is an event that we can state with certainty will never happen.”**

**I think it is fair to say that the logical end of evolution is nihilism – the notion that no one knows what happens when we die, that nothing matters beyond what we identify as our own self-interest, and that any means are justified by this end (self-interest, or in evolutionary terminology, self-preservation).**

**If evolutionary theory is true, then we are just animals, albeit smart animals, tender feelings are in fact phantom pains, and life has no higher purpose other than self-interest and survival. By the way, I think it takes much greater faith to believe in evolution than creation by an intelligent being.**

**Philip, there is someone who knows the way out of the jungle – a life of purposelessness and despair, and HIS NAME IS JESUS.**

**Best regards,**

# WHEN RELIGION FOSTERS EVIL

**Letter to the Editor:**

In “**When Religion Fosters Evil**”, North Carolina scholar Charles Kimball claims that religions may fall prey to five corrupting influences, each the result of human corruption. He states problems (of evil) may arise when “**zealous and devout adherents elevate the teachings and beliefs of their tradition to the level of absolute truth claims.**”

**Fascinating – Kimball, an ordained Baptist minister, claims that:**

- Christianity is not really true, but is merely a tradition,
- truth claims in Christianity are due to human corruption, and
- authentic faith [in what?] is the only means to combat the ensuing evil and violence.

**Taking Kimball’s advice on how to avoid further problems of evil, it follows that Kimball’s own views merely reflect his own tradition, and are not really true.**

**Best regards,**

# POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS

A recent letter to the editor stated: “**If we could only get the right people in Washington, our nation could be turned around.**”

## Response:

There are many pundits and political animals who contend that the real battle today in our nation is between Democrats and Republicans, or perhaps the establishment parties vs. the Tea Party. Is it really true that the profound challenges facing our nation are merely political in nature, and therefore can be solved by getting the right people into office?

Perhaps, but ultimately the leaders of our nation reflect the values of our citizens. We elect people who espouse our vision for America, and we vote out those who don’t share our vision, or are inept at implementing that vision. Look at what has happened in our nation in recent years:

- The seven leading problems in public schools in the 1940s were chewing gum, talking, running in the hallways, making noise, getting out of place in line, wearing improper clothing, and not putting paper in wastebaskets. Seventy years later, the seven leading problems have become

alcohol abuse, drug abuse, pregnancy, rape, suicide, arson/bombing, and assault/burglary. We've gone from gum chewing and talking to rape and school bombing. But what do we expect when we teach our kids they are just smart animals?

- Our nation has engaged in continuous warfare against other nations, promoting regime change in multiple countries (such as Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Ukraine, Syria, and Iran) and killing millions of innocent people (over 1 million people have died in Iraq because of "weapons of mass destruction").
- Our political leaders have created a federal debt that is so massive, it will never be repaid, and will burden our children and grandchildren for generations to come.
- Over 60 million unborn babies have lost their lives since Roe vs. Wade in 1973. This is the equivalent to an atomic bomb wiping out the population of the states of New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and New Jersey.
- Under President Obama, our nation promoted abortion and homosexuality in our foreign policy, often tying foreign aid to other nations' willingness to adopt policies supporting these practices (Kenya is just one example).

- President Obama also stated that we are no longer a Christian nation, and “the future must not belong to those who slander the Prophet of Islam”.
- Over 30 states (and many churches) have now embraced homosexual marriage, in spite of the strong Biblical admonitions against homosexuality.
- When the planes hit the World Trade Towers on 9-11, the response from the American people was righteous indignation, almost a demand that “God bless America”, and a religious service for our leaders in the Washington cathedral that featured leaders from Christian, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim faiths.

Incredible. The most prestigious center of commerce and our defense establishment are attacked by unknown forces, and we respond with the religion of universalism! What did not happen was the people of our nation crying out to God, repenting of our sins, and seeking the protection and guidance from the sovereign, living God of the universe.

So it appears that we have the leadership that we want, and are moving along the path we have chosen. From the Word of God we read: “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will

**be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” *1 Peter 4:17***

**The Word does not say “if you elect the right person to be your leader”, or “if all of the people”; it says “If My people will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” *II Chronicles 7:14***

**We need to repent, to turn back to the Lord, and pray for our nation, for God is just.**

**Best regards,**

# RELIGION AND SCIENCE – TAKE THE QUIZ

**“The Bible is about religion, but science is a separate category.”** (Quote from an editorial)

## Response:

Rather than viewing Christianity and science as two separate realms that have nothing to do with each other, or even compete, it is more useful to see how Christianity and science are different, but complement one another.

Christianity states that the sovereign, living God of the universe created the heavens and earth, and many of the earliest scientists saw science as a way to learn more about God’s creation. The following questions help us see how Christianity and science intersect, and how godless evolution is in conflict with both:

Check all that apply:

1) If a frog turns into a prince, is it:

- a) Magic
- b) Science (you just have to wait a long time – evolution in action)
- c) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2) The Bible, written by 40 authors with widely differing occupations from 3 continents over 1,500 years, tells an integrated story that is woven

together in a progressive story of human life, with God's involvement over the centuries, including dozens of prophecies that are fulfilled. This unity is:

- a) by chance – the books just happen to have a common theme and story, and the prophecies just happened to have been fulfilled,
- b) because the Roman Catholic Church commissioned all of this work to be done, and pulled it together,
- c) only possible because there was a common author (the Holy Spirit), who inspired and guided the writing of the books of the Bible,
- d) other: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Over 130 cultures have stories / myths in their history that they are descendants of a family who was saved in a boat from a world-wide flood. This is best explained by:

- a) chance – it just happened that way. Their cultures also probably have stories about dogs as well.
- b) as evolution is based on the premise that every change must be advantageous to the organism for it to be adopted, there is a survival advantage to all cultures that developed the flood story versus those that didn't.
- c) Noah really did build an ark, the Bible story is true, and these stories/myths are exactly what we would expect.
- d) other: \_\_\_\_\_

4) If we were hiking through the Black Hills and came upon Mount Rushmore, we would logically conclude that:

- a) it happened by chance – just a fluke of nature and erosion over time,
- b) it is a sign of design and intelligence; that one or more persons created it,
- c) some creature from outer space created it,
- d) other: \_\_\_\_\_

5) The human brain is more complex than the largest supercomputer ever developed. It came from:

- a) A long time ago, there was this thing that exploded, and some of the stuff that exploded joined together (all by itself) into order – tremendous order. Then it came alive (also all by itself), and eventually became a human being with a brain. Of course this took a long time. This is called “science”, and just goes to show anything can happen if you wait long enough.
- b) Intelligence; design reflects intelligence, and tremendous design reflects tremendous intelligence. We were created by the sovereign, living God who was there, and tells us about it in the Bible, which He inspired. (Which would explain why an Intelligent Design movement is emerging, led by former evolutionary scientists.)
- c) We came from outer space (which raises

another question – when we were in outer space, where did we come from?)

      d) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6) The assumption that the origin of the universe and life as we know it is from material causes:

- a) is scientific – we can prove that natural causes were the forces that led to the universe, and that there was no super-natural cause involved.
- b) is a philosophical presupposition that cannot be proven scientifically because the origins of the universe and life were not observed by human beings and cannot be replicated.
- c) is false. The origin of the universe and life can only be truly known by observation, and only God was there to observe it. He then revealed this in the Bible.
- d) is fundamental to Marx's theory of scientific materialism, which has led to the deaths of hundreds of millions of people.
- e) other: \_\_\_\_\_

7) Jesus was:

- a) a great teacher, and perhaps even a prophet, but not the Son of God.
- b) either who He said He was – the Son of God and part of the eternal triune God, or a false teacher and imposter, who claimed to be someone who He was not,

\_\_\_ c) who He said He was – the son of the sovereign, living God (which is why Simon Greenleaf, the nation's greatest legal scholar on rules of evidence, ultimately converted from Judaism to Christianity, compelled by the evidence before him.)

\_\_\_ d) other: \_\_\_\_\_

8) Life or existence beyond the grave is:

\_\_\_ a) clearly beyond the reach of science,

\_\_\_ b) not beyond the reach of science if we could just figure out how someone could observe it and come back and tell about it,

\_\_\_ c) beginning to give us clues. Dr. Maurice Rawlings was a non-Christian cardiologist who lost many patients. As his medical skills improved, he was able to bring many of them back from the dead. About half of them did not want to come back, as they were experiencing great bliss. The other half were absolutely terrified that they were die again and once experience what they described as hell.

\_\_\_ c) other: \_\_\_\_\_

Best regards,

# WE ARE ALL ONE AND WE ARE DIVINE

**Column with the Title: “We Are All One and We Are Divine”:**

**“Perhaps Jesus wouldn’t have others see him as Jesus, either, but rather as an embodiment of Truth. Perhaps when he told his followers to go and do as he had done, he meant to likewise embody the divine as he did.**

**It seems that for this to happen, it calls for a letting go in some way, of one’s claim to one’s own separate identity, even while the appearance of separation may persist. Finally, what would you see peering into anyone’s soul, including Jesus? Perhaps each soul is a unique expression of the divine.”**

**Statement #1: “Perhaps Jesus wouldn’t have others see him as Jesus, either, but rather as an embodiment of Truth.”**

**Response:** I think Jesus gradually revealed who He was to his disciples and to the public over time, perhaps because that was the most effective way to reveal who He really was. It is clear from scripture that He saw himself as the unique son of sovereign, living God, and not merely an embodiment of Truth.

He said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father but through Me.” He could have said: “I am one of the ways, part of the truth, and some of the life”, but He didn’t.

It was also clear that the Pharisees understood that He claimed to be God, as the chief priest tore his clothes after quizzing Jesus about who He was. Chief priests don’t just tear their clothes as a habit – it is a specific action indicating that the chief priest heard blasphemy (someone claiming to be God, not merely an embodiment of Truth), the penalty of which is death.

**Statement #2:** “Perhaps when he told his followers to go and do as he had done, he meant to likewise embody the divine as he did.”

**Response:** Jesus did promise them that they could become one with Him and with the Father if they were totally repentant and seeking a close relationship with God. But they would never be God. That was the first lie in the Garden of Eden from Satan to Adam and Eve – “**Ye shall be as gods**”.

It was also Satan’s claim to godhood – to be the same as the sovereign, living God that led to his downfall. From a traditional Biblical perspective, Jesus’ followers could become a part of the body of believers, who would enjoy fellowship with God on this earth and in heaven.

**Statement #3: “It seems that for this to happen, it calls for a letting go in some way, of one’s claim to one’s own separate identity, even while the appearance of separation may persist.”**

**Response:** Jesus called the children of Israel, and His followers called the Gentiles to let go, but not of their separate identity. He called them to let go of their self-centeredness – of their sin – of everything that keeps them from loving God and their fellow man with all of their heart, mind, and soul.

**He was not preaching self-improvement, but self-abandonment to a life in Christ. We are to become new creatures with new identities, not the abandonment of our separate identities to become a part of The All. The separation of us as individuals in the physical world is obvious, and is not merely an appearance.**

**In the spiritual world, Jesus and the prophets of the Old Testament describe two worlds – God and His dominion, and Satan and his demons, and the two do not meet. Jesus told His disciples that when they died, they would go to heaven, and that He will go before them, “to make a place for them”.**

**They would retain their identities, they would be in an incredible place where they could fellowship with each other, with other believers, and the**

sovereign, living God. They would not lose their identities as drops of water that enter the ocean.

**Statement #4:** “Finally, what would you see peering into anyone’s soul, including Jesus? Perhaps each soul is a unique expression of the divine.

**Response:** I would agree that each soul is a unique expression of the divine as a created person with body, soul, and spirit. However, the Bible makes clear the distinctions between God, His created beings, and the rest of creation. So only God is truly divine (absolutely holy, without sin), and His created beings were created in the image of God, although that image was tarnished by Adam and Eve.

The rest of creation reflects God’s nature and order, in contrast to the evolutionary perspective that life - extraordinary order - evolved out of nothing, or perhaps even an explosion.

**The hourglass will be empty**

One of these years, our time will have been up – all of the sand in our hourglass will have flowed to the bottom. At that time, each of us will cease to live on this earth, other than in the memories of families and friends. Unlike each day that stretches before us, once that happens, we are out of control – our destiny is set.

**Lee Strobel, former Legal Editor, Chicago Tribune, and author of The Case for Christ, undertook an exhaustive investigation to disprove the claims of Christianity.**

**His conclusion: “In light of the convincing facts I had learned during my investigation, in the face of this overwhelming avalanche of evidence in the case for Christ, the great irony was this: it would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth!”**

**Robert Greenleaf, a renowned Jewish legal scholar and the foremost expert on rules of evidence, came to the same conclusion.**

**I lovingly challenge you to do the same – to examine the evidence with a critical but open mind. The stakes couldn’t be higher – your eternal destiny. And eternity is a very, very long time.**

**Best regards,**

# IS LOVE REALLY ALL THERE IS?

Columnist: “Although I was raised as a Christian, I have explored other spiritualities and believe that the Universe, God, the All That Is, whatever name we attribute to a greater creative power, conspires to help us succeed, if we know how to tap into that power within ourselves.”

Response: Very interesting. You have described a world view that is becoming increasingly popular in our nation. In contrast, the Biblical Christian perspective would see the sovereign, living God and creator of the universe as a spiritual being distinct from the universe, His creation. The God of the Bible is not only holy, just, and merciful; He is also personal – having a personality - as opposed to the universe, which is impersonal.

Biblical Christianity would say that within ourselves, we only have human power. We have a body, heart, emotions, mind, and spirit, with the latter having the ability to connect with spiritual powers – good or evil. Christians can become filled with the Holy Spirit, and I know of many miracles that have taken place as the Lord has worked through His people, just as Jesus promised.

Furthermore, individuals can become possessed by demons, sometimes attaining supernatural

strength. But they are in service to their master, the great deceiver named Satan.

Unlike New Age beliefs about tapping into power within ourselves (the higher power), the Christian perspective is that Christians are sinners saved by Christ, and that the power of the Holy Spirit can flow through us. But it is His power, and not our own.

**Columnist:** “My own beliefs and faith are rooted in the commonality and community between all spiritual beliefs - the core belief that Love is all there is.”

**Response:** While this notion is appealing, it overlooks the fact that “Love” is interpreted defined through the lens of each religion. For example, I understand that devout Hindus believe that to help a poor person interferes with his/her karma, so it shouldn’t be done. The poor person is living out the consequences of his past life, so he has to go through this in order to be born into a better station in his next life.

Love for a Muslim would entail converting non-believers to Islam, which requires their repudiation of all other religions. While Christians also seek to win non-believers to Christ, we are also admonished to love all people, including our enemies.

**How different religions see life after death is a clue that the “commonality of all spiritual beliefs” is more theory than sounds good than being real:**

- **Devout Muslims believe that if they die in jihad, they go to Paradise, with access to 73 virgins (I don't think Muslim women fare so well).**
- **Devout Mormons believe if they call out their wife's name when they die, they get their own planet, where they can procreate spirit babies that are then born on earth as persons.**
- **Devout Hindus, if they are good enough, eventually escape the Wheel of Samsara (reincarnation) and become one with all that is, like a drop of water falling into the ocean.**
- **Devout Christians believe they go to heaven, where they dwell in eternity in the presence of other saints and the Lord.**

**By the way, a cardiologist named Maurice Rawlings received a lot of patients in bad shape over the years. Many of them died under his care, and he was able to revive many of them with modern medical means.**

**He discovered that about half of them did not want to come back to life, as they were having a very pleasant experience which some described**

as being in heaven. The other half came back screaming that they did not want to die again as they were experiencing hell. This would not be the case if there was a “commonality of all spiritual beliefs” and “Love is all there is”.

**Columnist:** **"As the Dalai Lama said 'Loving kindness is my religion', I too believe. But this also entails, for me, embracing the duality of our nature and understanding that you can't have light without darkness, beauty without ugliness - all very subjective, human-based concepts anyway."**

**Response:** Biblical Christianity would define duality of our nature from two perspectives. First would be the distinction between the physical world we inhabit vs. the spiritual world, which is just as real, but largely invisible to us. Christians are citizens of heaven and ambassadors for Christ into this world.

The second duality would be life in the flesh vs. life in the Spirit. The fruit of life in the flesh is selfishness, deceit, violence, etc., while the fruit of life in the Spirit would be love, peace, joy, concern for others, etc.

An example of this would be when the early Romans threw their unwanted babies on the trash

heap, they were rescued by Christians, who knew they were created in the image of God.

We are all subjects/persons (as opposed to objects), so from one perspective, we encounter the world subjectively. On the other hand, historic Christianity is based on the premise that the world as we know it exists objectively, and is not an illusion. Its existence does not depend on our awareness of it. (If the bear craps in the woods, it is real, even if no one else knows about it).

There is substantive evidence supporting the Biblical world view. One example is the fact that the Bible was written by 40 authors from many stations in life, on 3 continents, in 3 languages, over 1,500 years, and yet has a single theme that runs through it, testifying to a supernatural author. The fulfillment of over 40 Old Testament prophecies is another.

**Columnist:** “Transcending duality is really the objective of Buddhism - to reach the point of the great emptiness, which isn't an easy concept to grasp, but once in a while, in my meditations, I get a glimpse.”

**Response:** It sounds like “transcending duality” is to deny/transcend one's physical reality and to dwell in the spiritual realm. But rather than encountering the sovereign, living God of the

universe as a Christian would, the Buddhist, in his/her highest state, seeks to find and experience nothing.

Perhaps it is similar to a drop of rain falling into the ocean; it loses its identity as a drop and becomes part of the ocean.

Finally, the Biblical perspective is that the spirit realm is inhabited by angels and demons.

Seeking to enter the spiritual realm without the protection of the Holy Spirit may even be dangerous, as it opens a person up to demonic influence and possession.

**Columnist:** “If we accept that the world's dramas are an illusion - a huge stage play - and we all have a starring role, it becomes easier for me to feel equanimous when things seem to be spinning out of control. That's my spirituality in a nutshell.”

**Response:** Yes, and if we accept that the moon was made of cheese, we would never starve if we could just bring a chunk of it back to earth. While what you describe is an intriguing intellectual exercise, it poses some real questions:

- Then food would also be an illusion; so how would you account for hunger if life is just an illusion?

- **What would your loved ones feel or think of you if they knew we perceived them as just an illusion?**
- **If life is illusory, then moral constraints would also be illusory, would they not? So anything goes, including mayhem and murder.**

**We had dinner with some friends recently, and the husband stated that life was an illusion. His wife seemed a little startled, so she pinched him – hard, and asked if that was real. He stated that it was.**

**Finally, when things seem to be spinning out of control in our lives, we can call on the Lord, who promises to be with us through thick and thin.**

**Best regards,**

# **Humanism Has Greater Faith and Is More Challenging**

**In your column, you stated: “Naturalism or secular humanism is superior to Christianity as a belief system because it is less hypocritical, has greater faith, is more challenging, and is more daring”.**

## **Response:**

- 1) I agree that Christianity has the greatest hypocrisy, or at least the greatest potential for hypocrisy, compared to humanism.**

**The standards set by the Lord for Christians are very high. We are called upon to love our enemies, to go the extra mile when called upon to go a mile (as you may know, this refers to the Roman soldiers commanding citizens to carry their heavy packs a mile), to feed the poor, and be willing to die for our Lord and for our spouses.**

**We are also called upon to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. How many Christians really love their enemies? So the gap between the standard of behavior set by the Lord for Christians and those who profess to be Christians is large, at least in the U.S.**

**On the other hand, it seems that THE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR SET BY HUMANISTS ARE CERTAINLY LOWER. Secular humanists talk**

about fulfilling their potential, which seems like it would be easier to do – even a natural process. If there is no external standard – no standard set by an external entity, then we are free to set our own standards. Furthermore, what is a standard of behavior for one person need not be accepted by another.

A consensus on how to live by some group does not hold sway over another group or individual. And there are many groups – which one should we choose? So if I am to develop a set of standards for my life – my moral code, I will likely set it low enough to be reached in my lifetime. Hence less hypocrisy.

I might add that the standard set by the Lord for Christians can only be achieved through supernatural means, as the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His followers. To carry this a step further, the Lord can work through us to do things that defy natural reason and transcend typical norms.

**2) “Naturalism/humanism is a religion of greater faith than Christianity.”**

I agree with this statement as well. I agree – it takes more faith to believe that the incredible complexity and design of the universe, which is even more complex than a Boeing 747, came about by pure chance, than from some intelligence.

**The Intelligent Design movement within the evolution community is problematic for evolutionary scientists, with prominent evolutionary scientists embracing intelligent design because the data drives them to it, and that nature, like Mount Rushmore, reveals evidence of intelligence, and intelligent design.**

**3) “The most daring persons are naturalists – humanists.”**

I agree with this statement as well. I always think of Christopher Columbus, or Lewis and Clark as daring explorers, because they traveled to unknown lands with limited supplies and imperfect maps. The most they could lose were their lives on this earth. However, the journey beyond the grave is the ultimate journey.

Naturalists facing death with no certainty of what lies ahead, other than perhaps through speculative philosophy, are truly acts of daring. And if naturalists are wrong, they will experience an eternal life of suffering in the Lake of Fire, which I would wish on no person.

Christianity not only describes the next life and the different destinations in the next life; it also describes how to get to heaven. This is confirmed by many fulfilled prophecies and the disciples who were transformed from cowards to bold witnesses for the Lord, all of whom except one were killed for their faith.

One clue about life after death comes from Maurice Rawlings (<http://www.freecdtracts.com/testimony/hellandback.htm>), a cardiologist who has brought many people back from death. He discovered that about half of them experienced a light with great joy, and half were absolutely terrified, as they experienced hell. Did they make this up? How can a person make something up when he/she is clinically dead?

4) **“Naturalism / humanism is the most challenging.”**

I agree – living a life with no purpose or meaning is certainly more challenging than living a life of purpose and meaning. If there is no purpose or meaning to life, how do you get through the day? Toward what end? It seems destined to lead to an unfulfilled life at best.

Richard Dawkins, a famous evolutionary scientist, stated:

**“Nature is not cruel, pitiless. This is one of the hardest lessons for humans to learn. We cannot admit that things might be neither good nor evil, neither cruel nor kind, but simply callous – indifferent to all suffering, lacking all purpose.”**

So the challenge is – if one’s world view does not allow for purpose – if we came about by the survival of the fittest, why live? Why are we here?

**If we are smarter and/or meaner than all the rest of the animals, so what?**

**We will just live a little longer perhaps – a life of emptiness. What can you tell a friend who is considering suicide if we, like a pebble or rock, have no purpose in our lives?**

**If we are just animals, seeking to survive, what can we tell a mugger who wants to take our money and bump us off? Who are we to say what he is doing is wrong? Is he not just fulfilling Darwin's mandate – to survive?**

**Other than scapegoats (Hitler's attack on the Jews), it means that the productive are kept, and the crippled and elderly are expendable. If human life, like animals, has no purpose other than material production, older folks are in trouble, as are the sick and handicapped.**

**In contrast, the Christian world view describes our creation by a sovereign, living God to carry out His work in the world. We are not merely animals but special creations, created in the image of God. Discovering His will for our lives is the first task, but the second is perhaps more difficult – yielding to His will and being obedient to His call on our lives.**

**“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and**

**not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”**  
***Jeremiah 29:11***

**Best regards,**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Life is a great adventure, and I have discovered that just around the corner will be another chapter of my life, with new insights, people, and experiences that I did not anticipate. I was raised in a traditional Lutheran church in southwest Iowa, then abandoned those beliefs when I went to college.**

**Since then, I have been a subjectivist, classical humanist, Marxist, and finally a Christian again after many years. My mother was right when she emphasized the importance of reading the Word, and that the God-shaped vacuum in my life could only be filled by Jesus Christ, son of the living God.**

**Martin Luther became a great role model for me, for he stood fast on the primacy of scripture at the Imperial Diet of Worms on April 18, 1521 at the risk of his life. I could not reconcile human reason with Christian faith until I started reading Frances Schaefer, who wrote of a God who created us in His image with the capacity to reason, as well as the capacity and desire to have a relationship with Him.**

**More recently, I have taken to heart the several passages in the New Testament that speak of the work of the Holy Spirit to teach, convict, comfort,**

**and direct our lives if we will but yield to and seek Him with all our heart, mind, and soul. And furthermore, that we can not just KNOW ABOUT God, but KNOW HIM through the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit.**

**With this awareness of the Holy Spirit comes a greater awareness and recognition of evil in the world, and how any unconfessed sin in our hearts or those of our loved ones provides an open door for demonic influence into our souls. But our Lord provides us with the weapons we need in Ephesians 6, and instructs us how to use them.**

**Satan and his minions come to steal our faith, kill our bodies, and destroy our souls, but Christ has overcome Satan and all evil, and we are on the winning side. But it is critical each day for us to spend time with the Lord each morning in His Word and prayer, repenting of our sins, seeking His will for our lives, and carrying it out with boldness and courage, all to His glory.**

**I was fortunate to have a career in academia, but my Ph.D. is wood, hay, and stubble compared to the Truth of the Word of God. The most spiritual person in our building (full of educated people), was a short African American woman who was a janitor.**

**I have been greatly blessed with a wife, two daughters, a son-in-law, four grandchildren, four siblings and their families, other brothers and**

**sisters in the Lord, and a Spirit-filled church that nurtures my soul.**

**Finally, it became evident to me that we are entering into the End Times described in the Word of God. So it is important to share with others the truth and love of Christ, so that we can prepare for these events - spiritually, physically, financially, and among loved ones. For time is short and we are not guaranteed tomorrow.**

**To God be the glory,**

***Mark Peterson***



## **LIFE IN THE SPIRIT BLOG**

**(LIFEINTHESPIRIT.NET)**

**Preparing Christians for Major Events That Will Take Place in the United States in the Near Future**

We are now entering the End Times described in the Bible, so it is critical to understand what is taking place so we can prepare and respond accordingly. The purpose of the Life in the Spirit blog is to prepare Christians – the remnant bride of Christ, and all who seek the truth, for major events that will take place in the U.S. in the near future.

Information comes from multiple sources and includes forhtelling – speaking God's truth into our lives and culture, and foretelling - messages from watchmen and women who the Lord has called to speak to this generation.

Topics include the “Global Reset” now underway – a reinvention of our political, economic, financial, and religious systems in the United States and in the world. Our Lord tells us to have no fear, for:

**“In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” John 16:33**

We were born to live in this time, so let us seek the Lord and His calling upon our life, and fulfill it with boldness and joy. He will never leave us nor forsake us; so let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Call to Action:** please pray for discernment, share this with other interested individuals, and click on “Join my E-mail List” at [LifeintheSpirit.net](http://LifeintheSpirit.net) to receive notices of new blog posts as they are uploaded. I hope you can join us.

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