

# Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement  
For The Real World

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*"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.  
For if they fall, one will lift up his companion."—Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

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## **Building a Solid Foundation—Part 3**

By Jean Jantzen

*Current television fare compromises true family values such as respect for authority and elders and displays violence and sex as the norm. But, as parents, we possess tools we should utilize to provide a decent foundation for our children.*



**A**S WE BECOME BUSIER AND BUSIER, we see more and more little bodies hunched up in a dreamlike state, their emotions being manipulated before pervasive blaring black boxes. Young children find themselves drawn as a captive audience to its colorful imagery, fragmented movements, music and unrelenting hullabaloo. They can easily be influenced by the powerful mass advertising and commercialism of television. So, just as important as teaching children good table etiquette and instilling them with moral values is teaching and showing by example

intelligent television viewing habits. And last, but not least, in our efforts to build a solid foundation, we should remember an important and often overlooked source of help and support—the extended family.

Leonard Eron, Ph.D., and his associates at the University of Illinois, “found that children who watched many hours of TV violence when they were in elementary school tended to also show a higher level of aggressive behavior when they became teenagers. By observing these youngsters until they were 30 years old, Dr. Eron found that the ones who’d watched a lot of TV when they were eight years old were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts as adults” (American Psychological Association, [www.apa.org/pubinfo/violence.html](http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/violence.html)).

Media violence is especially damaging to children under age 8 because “they don’t have enough real-world experience to have a good sense of what’s realistic,” writes educational development psychologist and media-violence expert Ron Slaby in *Children’s Advocate Newsmagazine*. (Television does not generally show negative consequences of violent acts.) By age 18, children have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence; three to five acts per hour in prime time; 20 to 25 acts per hour in Saturday morning cartoons and. . . don’t forget the news hour.



Violence on television is not all we have to worry about. There is also the problem of seeing the foolish interactions, repulsive manners and offensive behavior of children and adults. I wouldn’t let my children watch *The Jeffersons* (disrespect, rudeness), and my grandchildren are not allowed to watch *Power Rangers*, *Ninja Turtles* (violence), *Roseanne*, *The Simpsons* (rudeness, disrespect for authority), *Goosebumps*, *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* (scary) or *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (witchcraft portrayed as harmless).

Seeing and listening to child actors dressing, acting and talking like an adult (*Two of a Kind*, *Spice Girls*), being more clever and sophisticated than their parents or elders (many commercials), talking sassy to other children and to adults, as well as seeing and listening to quarrels between fathers and mothers (*Roseanne*, *The Simpsons*), all make long-lasting impressions. Children mimic what they see. If they watch inappropriate television shows, your efforts to teach respect, responsibility and restraint may be undone.

*By age 18, children have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence.*

In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Neil Postman raises another interesting question about television viewing: “What does it mean that our children are better informed than ever before? That in having access to the previously hidden fruit of adult information, they are expelled from the garden of childhood?” I did not want my children to grow up too soon, or have them exposed to faulty sexual information, habits, customs, behaviors or actions of which I did not approve. I wanted to teach them spiritual values, morals, codes of behavior and sexual ethics in a time and manner appropriate for our family.

Not all television viewing is harmful though. *Sesame Street* tries to teach important values, as do other instructive programs, such as *Mr. Dress-up*, *Fred Penner*, *The Magic School Bus*, *Wishbone*, *Arthur* and a few others. We should always be aware of our children’s viewing habits and as they get older we can watch television with them and discuss issues as they arise.

## Invite the help of grandparents

While we want to limit our children's exposure to the negative influence of television, we should invite our parents, siblings and other relatives, to participate in the lives of our children and make child rearing a joint effort. We all need help and support. So do our children. Grandparents have a wealth of experience to share. They can help lift the heavy burden of parenting alone. They can help reinforce our child's concepts of love, trust, honesty, hard work, kindness, dependability, neatness and politeness.



If you want grandparents more involved, teach your children to be respectful toward them. Involve your parents early on in the lives of your little ones since this helps establish a bond that will hopefully last forever. Grandparents can enjoy leisure activities with them, such as sitting on the floor to build a block skyscraper, taking a "leisurely stroll" in the park or just sitting back and watching the little ones grow and develop, hugging and kissing their hurts away. If grandparents are not accessible, approach older reliable friends who

might like to do "grandparent" activities with your children.

Even if your parents do not always agree with your child-rearing practices, or do not live close to you, they can still play an important part. They can write letters to their grandchildren. They can include stories about their heritage; these serve to create a connection between grandparent and child, and between the child and the past. They can relate memories of the child's great- and great-great-grandparents. And they can share anecdotes about their own parents as youngsters, as well as sharing the many lessons they have learned. These letters can be kept as chronicles of their forebears, cherished memories to be read over and over again. Even if your parents are dead (or unavailable), you can relate stories to your children, hang old family pictures on the wall, show them where Grandma and Grandpa used to live—keep their memory alive.

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*In a world where parenting skills are constantly being eroded, we, as parents, need a concrete plan of action.*

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## Hard work and joy

In a world where parenting skills are constantly being eroded, we, as parents, need a concrete plan of action. We need to ask ourselves: Is a good foundation being laid? Are we setting reasonable boundaries and consistent loving guidelines? Do we discipline our son or daughter when they need it? Solomon tells us in Proverbs 3:11-12: "My son, do not despise the LORD'S discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (New International Version throughout).

Are we making the most of our mealtimes? Are we using that time to teach manners and as a joyful opportunity to get to know our children better? Are we actively involved in directing our child's play? Are we monitoring our children's television viewing habits?



There are no magic solutions in the serious business of child rearing. What is required is much love, hard work, dedication and perseverance. When I looked into the innocent face of my firstborn many years ago, I had no idea of the work ahead, nor of the joy and tears we would share and still do. I didn't know I'd have 27 grandchildren, some close, others far away, and have the opportunity to share in their lives. My hope, and I am sure yours is too, is that our children will continue to have a solid foundation and listen to the instructions and examples found in the pages of the Bible where we are lovingly admonished, encouraged and promised: "[God] will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure" (Isaiah 33:6). Hopefully we do not need a *Super Nanny* or a *Dr. Phil*.

### Recommended reading

For more biblically based information on building a strong marriage and family, be sure to read our free booklet [Making Life Work](#).

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## Choosing Music, TV and Movies: What's Going Into Your Mind?

By Larry Greider

*Young people just want to have fun. But how should one decide what kind of music to listen to and which movies and television shows to watch?*



“LET'S GO TO A MOVIE!” These familiar words are repeated countless times around the world on weekends. But which movie to see? The choices are almost endless. Science fiction, action, westerns, comedies and love stories all abound. Does it really matter which forms of entertainment we choose?

Today there are 31.6 million 12- to 19-year-olds in the United States—the largest teen generation ever—with plenty of buying power. Last year, U.S. teens spent an estimated \$105 billion and

influenced their parents to spend an additional \$48 billion. The choices made by teens are thus very relevant to merchants. We've never seen an era in which so many young people have had the leisure time plus the money in their pockets to simply have fun.

Choices, choices, choices. What movie, CD or video game should I spend my money on this time? What is cool and what is going to be exciting and fun?

### Not all options are good

Is popular entertainment good for you? According to one author, "Most television programming is insipid, illicit, and idiotic" (Douglas Groothuis, Ph.D., "How the Bombarding Images of TV Culture Undermine the Power of Words," *Modern Reformation*, Jan.-Feb. 2001, p.39).

It is obvious to those who have been watching TV and movies for more than a few years that they contain more violence and sex than ever before—actually, *quite a lot more*. Every major network has a show, often in prime time, featuring a gay character.

Are these shows, which admittedly entertain and stimulate people, really good for you? Are the big screen's latest features appropriate for Christians to watch?

In 1940, Rhett Butler, talking angrily to Scarlet O'Hara in the cinematic blockbuster *Gone with the Wind*, appeared without his shirt and also used the word "damn." Audiences across the country were shocked. This epic movie about the Civil War was considered controversial because of this one word and an actor who appeared shirtless. Today, nudity or partial nudity is normal, and the use of expletives is so commonplace that some characters would have almost nothing to say if curse words were deleted.



Today, casual sex, graphically depicted, is almost expected between the main characters in many movies. Movie ratings (seldom enforced, as most teens know) have been steadily getting looser—meaning less and less is being censored. Full frontal nudity, plenty of blood and gore and generous quantities of vulgar profanities are not that big of a deal anymore.

Does it really matter which forms of entertainment we choose? Media analyst Marshall McLuhan once remarked that "we become what we behold" (*ibid.*, page 33). Dr. Groothuis goes on to state, "When we become habituated to a particular form of communication, our mentalities and sensibilities bear its mark" (*ibid.*).

Communications Professor Joshua Meyrowitch complains that his students tend to have an image-based standard of truth. "If I ask 'What evidence supports your view or contradicts it?' they look at me as if I came from another planet" (*ibid.*, p. 35).

The apostle Paul wrote, "Evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Is it any less true of words from a song, an image from the big screen or from the television? Don't we also corrupt our minds by taking in words and images that are evil?

## Considerations for choices about music, television and movies

When we consider what we will listen to or watch, we need to ask several important questions:

- **Is this appropriate? Are the words of the song or the plot of the movie or TV show good for me?** It is true that options are often few, even at a major theater with multiple screens. One recent marquee that I saw had three R-rated movies dominated by adult language, nudity and violence, two movies dealing with the paranormal (the spirit world, including demon possession) and one thoroughly gross picture that was considered a comedy. Sadly, that didn't leave much to view.



- The powerful combination of surround sound and high-definition, digital technologies allow for stunning imagery. It seems we get addicted to special effects and need more and more to be thrilled. But what about the mind? Do we need to guard this important gateway to our character and thinking?

The answer is *yes*.

- **Will this be uplifting and positive?** It's great to have powerful music that lifts your spirit and makes you feel good. Recently I visited the Epcot Center in Disney World. Toward the end of the day a colorful parade with puppets 20 feet high, dancers and rolling drums was accompanied by some of the most intriguing and inspiring music that I've ever heard. I was so taken that I had to find the CD for my collection.

Music should fit the mood but not *create a negative or destructive one*. You can select from a huge variety of music today. Make wise choices. Choose music that inspires and uplifts you, not music that creates feelings of anger, anxiety, confusion or depression.

- **What are the options?** Sometimes it might be more fun and rewarding to do something else instead of taking in a movie if you can't find anything worth watching. Why not go *do* something instead of passively watching, or get together with a group and talk about ideas, plans and such things?

- How about going to a park and throwing a Frisbee or football around? You are only limited by your imagination—think of things to do that are fun and creative that can also help you build friendships. Going to a movie is continually growing more expensive and often puts ideas in your mind that are not clean and pure. Simply talking with good friends in a peaceful environment might actually be the most fun of all. Learning from others while sharing your concerns and fears can be healthy and helpful in building lasting relationships.

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*“We become what we behold.”*

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### Watch out for the hook

You're probably not aware of it, but companies that see the youth market as a real financial bonanza produce many of the things considered cool. They are extremely effective at convincing millions of teens that they need these new products to be cool and popular. Make no mistake, their intention is to make money, not do what is good for you.



MTV, which seems to have turned into one continuous commercial, does not always have the purest of motives. In a PBS *Frontline* documentary entitled “Merchants of Cool” (which first aired in February 2000), media analyst Douglas Rushkoff spoke with teens at a concert by the group Insane Clown Posse, which popularized a genre of music known as “rage rock.”



When they were asked to describe why they found such music appealing, the teens responded that it “belongs to them”; it hadn’t yet been taken from them and sold back to them in the shopping malls. Rage rock—full of profanity, violence and vulgarity, is a challenge thrown up to mass-marketers—let’s see you find a way to market this!

But marketers not only accepted the challenge, they won. Rage rock has grown to be big business for them. Insane Clown Posse has become mainstream, and even bigger, equally profane acts like Eminem and Limp Bizkit have broken sales records and won Grammy nominations and other major music awards.

*Learning from others... can be healthy and helpful in building lasting relationships.*

In the documentary, Rushkoff detailed how MTV and other teen-oriented commercial outlets orchestrated the rise of Limp Bizkit—despite the foul lyrics of the group’s songs—and then relentlessly promoted them to American teenagers.

He raised an important question: Is MTV merely reflecting the desires of its teenage audience or is it aggressively promoting a cultural infatuation with videos and music that glorify sex, violence and antisocial behavior and attitudes?

Rushkoff described the process as “one enclosed feedback loop.” He continued, “Kids’ culture and media culture are now one and the same, and it becomes impossible to tell which came first—the anger or the marketing of the anger.”

In other words, marketers pitch to teens a ready-made identity of what is cool at the moment, and in so doing they often cross the lines of decency and morality.

### **Make wise choices**

We live in fascinating and electrifying times in which young people have more free time and money than ever before. What you take into your mind is very important. King David, as a young man, was a musician. His skills were such that he was called on to calm the troubled spirit of King Saul (1 Samuel 16:23).

Many troubled people today could use a friend with qualities to show the way to true peace. The frenetic pace of today’s world, with so many broken families and shattered lives, creates a need for those who can calm troubled spirits.



If you are like most people, music is a powerful influence in your life. *Why not choose music, television and movies that uplift your spirit and draw you closer to God?*

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## Are You Feeling Overwhelmed?

By Mark Weaver

*Do you have too many problems staring you in the face? Too much to do and not enough time and energy to tackle what needs to be done? If so, you're probably feeling overwhelmed. But there are ways out.*



**A**S A SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGER with a major company, part of my job is to coach employees. In recent years I've seen an increase of people being overwhelmed with all that is going on in their lives both at work and at home.

Many of the thoughts I've heard from the people I work with can be summed up in three general themes:

- Problems seem more prolific than they used to be.
- Problems seem bigger and tougher than they used to be.
- Life simply seems much more complex than it used to be.

In general, people seem to have a sense that the world is tilted out of control (personally, I never thought it was in control, but that's beside the point).

People get overwhelmed with all of the tasks staring them in the face. To them, the work appears to be too large, too insurmountable. At my company we work on major projects, some of which can take multiple years. The scope of some projects scares even some of the hardest workers. To them, the task simply feels bigger than they are.

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*In general, people seem to have a sense that the world is tilted out of control.*

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Do these feelings describe you? If so, continue reading to learn several ways that can help you focus on how to keep from feeling so overwhelmed with all that is going on in your life.

## Why do we feel overwhelmed?

In the instances I've seen, this sense of being overwhelmed revolves around one or more of the following:

- Feeling that the magnitude of the task at hand is too big for you to handle.
- Being put into the position of doing something that you have not done before.
- Being put in or caught up in circumstances where you don't know what to do. (This is especially aggravated when you have had no training to deal with it, and there appears to be no plan.)
- Fear of failure.

All of these involve one central anxiety—fear.

Being overwhelmed is fear—being afraid of the unknown or one's abilities. But we should not let fear and anxiety freeze us. We should apply the following guidelines to get a grip on feelings of being overwhelmed and not let them gain control over us.

### Watch your health

One of the most important factors in gaining the upper hand on feelings of being overwhelmed is to watch our health. Usually that anxious, defeatist sensation comes over us when we are tired and worn out.

We need to be aware that our physical health and exhaustion has a major impact on how we feel about things. Most of the instances of being overwhelmed that I've seen have been when someone was very tired or exhausted.

Our modern way of living puts a lot of demands on our time, and it's easy to neglect our health if we aren't careful. Be sure to make time for proper rest, relaxation, exercise and sleep, and eat a nourishing, balanced diet. You'll be surprised how much better you'll be able to cope with life's challenges.



### Make the overwhelming manageable

We normally tend to look at a project as a whole rather than a batch of smaller parts. Yet by doing so we can begin to feel overwhelmed at the magnitude of the task.

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*I found that the only way I could cope with the job was to break it down into one pile at a time, one wheelbarrow at a time, one shovel at a time.*

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There is a simple solution: Work out a way to break the task into smaller doable parts. Take it one little piece at a time.

I learned the importance of this approach years ago when we had a new home built in Wisconsin. Being the cheap person I was (and sometimes still can be), I thought it would be good exercise if we did our own landscaping, so I arranged to have 12 truckloads of topsoil brought in for our lawn, which I would then spread by hand. Even after exhaustion set in and the feeling of being totally overwhelmed got to me, my stupid manly pride kept us to the

task. I found that the only way I could cope with the job was to break it down into one pile at a time, one wheelbarrow at a time, one shovel at a time.

I could handle that. We did well. We spread eight of the 12 loads of topsoil manually.

Around that time, I think God had mercy on my wife and presented us with an opportunity to have someone spread the remaining four truckloads via a bulldozer. It only cost \$50 and probably saved our marriage!

I also learned the valuable lesson that it is important to break large jobs down into smaller pieces. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are projects.

When faced with a major task, don't worry and get anxious about it. Realize and plan that it will take time. Lay out the tasks to be done each day. Set smaller goals and actually work those goals. If there is still too much, break it into even smaller pieces and extend the schedule. This approach will make many large jobs much more manageable.

### Look for alternatives

I learned another valuable lesson from all those truckloads of dirt in my yard: Sometimes we must seek out alternatives. In my case, that turned out to be extra help (in the form of a bulldozer).

If you find that you have too many responsibilities, remove what is not important.

Ask yourself the question: Does this really need to be done? You may find that you are spending considerable time and energy—and too much worry—on things that aren't really necessary. Concentrate instead on the things that are necessary, and make them your priorities.



You may need more help from family members, coworkers, managers or supervisors. Thoughtfully examine your situation, consider potential solutions and present your case to them.

### Seek God's help

When life seems overwhelming, we have God's promises that He will work with us.

Talk things over with Him in prayer. Such communication with God is helpful in several important ways. Prayer helps us focus on what is most important. It enables us to have a clearer mind. Prayer can also "reset" the mind and allow us to find alternative ways of dealing with our challenges. Most importantly, God often inspires the solutions that come to mind when you pray. Just be sure that when you pray, and He inspires answers, you don't take credit to yourself. Give credit where credit is due—to God.

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*Prayer allows us to  
find alternative  
ways of dealing  
with our challenges.*

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Sometimes we need to learn a lesson about taking on too much. Hopefully we'll learn that lesson quickly. Otherwise we'll have to deal with the consequences, putting some of this other advice to use.

Regardless, remember that fear is at the root of much of our anxiety and we shouldn't let it stand in our way.

Remember what Paul tells us in Romans 8:31: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

With God behind us, we should be able to throw away fear and anxiety. We should be able to focus on what is possible to do—and then do it.

Several scriptures give us good advice as to how to deal with fear and anxiety.

Proverbs 12:25 tells us, "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad." This verse acknowledges something we all know, but could do better at putting into practice.



We all need encouragement, particularly when facing an especially daunting task such as a new project or new responsibility involving new skills and challenges. Make it a part of your job to give encouragement and provide a feeling of confidence among those with whom you work. Take the same approach within your family, too, spreading the kind of "good word" about which Solomon wrote.

Jesus Christ pointed out that, in the end, worry and anxiety really accomplish little. "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

"Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:25-34).

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*Because of this confidence in God, we need not worry or feel anxious.*

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Christ is not advocating irresponsibility in caring for our families and ourselves. He is pointing out that if we are doing as we should and striving to please God, we can have faith that He will

take care of us and see us through life's many challenges and struggles. Because of this confidence in God, we need not worry or feel anxious.

The Scriptures also assure us that God will never allow us to be burdened with more than we can endure. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it" (New Revised Standard Version).

When we are feeling overwhelmed, we should review these and many other encouraging scriptures to remind us of God's promises and love for us.

### Recommended reading

To see another way you can "take a break" from your day-to-day life, refocus, and reprioritize, please see [Sunset to Sunset—God's Sabbath Rest](#).

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## Coming Soon to a School Near You

By David Treybig

*If you believe the biblical account of creation and the origin of man, what strategies can you as parents and students use when confronted with the theory of evolution?*



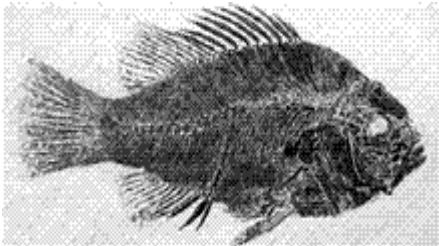
**E**VERY YEAR, MANY HIGH SCHOOL and college students encounter teachers and courses that advocate the theory of evolution to explain the origin of mankind. Although some schools may permit a brief mention of the biblical account as a competing explanation, many instructors teach evolution as though it were a proven fact.

If you believe the Bible's explanation of the origin of the universe and mankind—that God made humans in His image—what should you do as a parent or student? What can you do to deal with teachers who require students to learn Darwinism?

From the outset, it is important to do your homework, so to speak. Understand that proponents of the theory of evolution often pit the Bible against science. They describe science as the logical,

intelligent, rational choice because of its systematic attention to observation and experimentation. The contrasting implication is that the Bible is merely a fable generated by primitive peoples to explain their existence. Some will subtly, but mistakenly, imply that science disproves the Bible.

Actually, between the Bible and Darwinism, the evidence is decidedly in the Bible's favor. Darwin and his early supporters admitted that they lacked hard evidence, but they believed that evidence would eventually be discovered to support their beliefs.



For example, they believed that fossil evidence would be discovered that would show the mutations that had allegedly evolved various species of animals into new species. But, in spite of more than a century of diligent searching, such “missing link” fossils are still missing. The flaws in Darwin's theories, some of which Darwin acknowledged himself, remain. His hypothesis has remained unproven ever since it was first proposed.

Meanwhile, during the century since Darwin, many scientists—including Louis Pasteur (developer of pasteurization and vaccines for anthrax, chicken cholera and rabies), Wernher von Braun (former NASA director) and Sir Ernst Chain (cowinner of the 1945 Nobel Prize for isolating and purifying penicillin, as well as director of Rome's International Research Center for Chemical Microbiology)—have publicly attested to their belief in the Creator.

Some of them have plainly stated that Darwinism is impossible, that the theory is based on nonexistent evidence and is therefore incompatible with the scientific facts.

Other scientists have tried to support Darwinistic reasoning by offering new, equally unprovable theories. Although the credibility of Darwin's theory has languished at best, the Bible's credibility has steadily increased.

Continuing archaeological discoveries confirm the Bible's validity. Critics who claimed the Bible is full of fictionalized stories have repeatedly been proven wrong as archaeologists made discoveries that confirm historical figures and cities previously known of only from the Bible. (If you would like to learn more about archaeological discoveries confirming the Bible, read the series of articles titled “Archaeology and the Bible” available for download from our Web site at [www.gnmagazine.org/archaeology/.](http://www.gnmagazine.org/archaeology/))

### **A popular argument**

One of the most popular arguments to supposedly disprove the Bible is the claim that scientific research shows the earth to be millions of years old while the biblical account would indicate that the earth is only 6,000 years old. Yet, under careful scrutiny, we can easily reconcile this apparent discrepancy.



Genesis 1:1-2 says: “In the beginning God created the heavens and

the earth. The earth was without form, and void...” The Hebrew phrase translated here “The earth was without form, and void” can also be properly translated “The earth became without form, and void” (see the footnote to Genesis 1:2 in the New International Version).

This explanation allows for a gap in time between verses 1 and 2 and permits recognition that the earth may be much older than the approximately 6,000 years of recorded human history, of which a 4,000-year span is outlined in the Bible.

Although many creationists believe the earth is only some 10,000 years old and reject the idea of a time gap between the first two verses of Genesis, at least a few biblical scholars have noted this understanding for almost 2,000 years—long before Darwin formulated his theory of evolution. (If you would like to learn more about the validity of the Bible and the explanation alluded to here of the earth being older than 6,000 years, please read our free booklet *Is the Bible True?*)

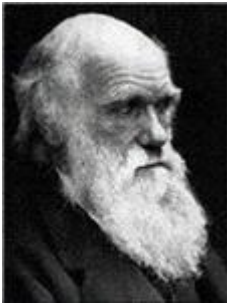
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## Defining evolution

Understanding *definitions* of evolution can be helpful to students facing Darwinism in their studies. Such varied definitions are why many times in this article we use the term *Darwinism* for the theory rather than simply *evolution*.



The word *evolution* can mean many things. Although many people are familiar with its most common meaning, the changing of simple life-forms to higher life-forms as theorized by Darwin, this word can also refer to the process of change and adaptation within a species—or even a progression of knowledge or understanding that has nothing to do with the origins of species.

The latter definitions of evolution describe processes and phenomenon that do, in fact, take place. For example, because of temporary environmental conditions such as smog or pollution from burning coal, one color of moth may become predominant (conditions make one color of moth easier for birds to see, so the birds eat more moths of that color).

Another example is bacteria and drugs. Certain medicines are designed to kill harmful bacteria and viruses. But occasionally a few cells of a bacterium or virus are found to have developed an immunity to a drug. When these particular cells reproduce, they can be said to have evolved into a drug-resistant strain. Although this limited form of evolutionary change does occur, it does not mean these bacteria or viruses could eventually become elephants or humans. They will always be bacteria or viruses.

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*Other scientists have tried to support Darwinistic reasoning by offering new, equally unprovable theories.*

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As our body of knowledge on a variety of subjects continues to increase, it is correct to say our knowledge base is evolving. Here again this definition does not prove Darwin's theory regarding how humans came into existence.



The reason it is important to understand these varied definitions is simply that, when some scientists say evolution is a fact, not an unproven theory, they are referring to these latter definitions. By implication they would like to have you believe that Darwinism—the theory that new species can evolve and have evolved from others over time—is also true.

However, that is simply not the case. Intellectually honest scientists will admit Darwin's theory is still an unproven attempt to explain life without a Creator. In spite of decades of effort, they can nowhere point to real evidence that Darwinism is true.

### Why Darwinism lives

When rational people consider the intricacies and perfect balance of nature in the world around them, it should become strikingly obvious to them that the marvelous creation requires a creator. As King David put it: "The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship" (Psalm 19:1, New Living Translation).

In light of the lack of physical evidence for Darwinism, and abundant evidence against it, why does Darwinism survive? Why hasn't it been discarded like other empty, inaccurate, failed theories?

The apostle Paul answers this question in Romans 1:20-22: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools" (New International Version).



This passage tells us that the fundamental reason many people reject the biblical account of creation is that they, in fact, reject God. Although such people may be intelligent and understand many things, when it comes to acknowledging God, their thinking is foolishly unsound. The Bible explains, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalms 14:1; 53:1).

People who believe we are merely a part of the animal kingdom reject an important concept that gives us our unique human identity and destiny. The Holy Scriptures reveal that God created us in His image, the "image of God" (Genesis 1:26-27), and gave us the opportunity to become His children (John 1:12). God calls us to become part of the Kingdom of God, not the animal kingdom.

God's purpose and plan for humanity are to give every human being the opportunity to acknowledge Him as Creator (Psalm 14:2) and live forever with Him as members of His family (John 3:15-16; 2 Corinthians 6:18).

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*God calls us to become part of the Kingdom of God, not the animal kingdom.*

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The biographies of some proponents of Darwinism freely explain why they reject God: They don't want to be subject to God's laws. They want to be free to do whatever they want to do, even act like animals if they so choose. Such thinking leads to and promotes sexual immorality including homosexuality, envy, murder, strife and hatred of God, just to name a few items of a long list

of negative qualities inspired by this kind of perspective (Romans 1:28-31).

By contrast, those who aspire to be children of God strive to practice righteousness (1 John 3:10), which means respecting and living by God's instructions.

(If you would like information that conclusively demonstrates God's existence, be sure to read *Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* If you would like to learn many surprising scientific truths about Darwinism and the Bible, read *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*)

### Strategies for overcoming

Now that we have reviewed a few of the fundamental issues of Darwinism and the Bible, what can a student who believes in God do when he takes classes that teach Darwinism? Here are a few strategies:

- Realize that you are studying a theory. Theories are simply attempts to explain something people don't understand. Darwin didn't understand how human beings came to exist. *On the Origin of Species* was his attempt to explain how humans and thousands of perfectly designed species could have come into existence apart from God. You can read his work and study his arguments without agreeing with them. On a test or paper you can write, "Charles Darwin's theory of evolution says...." or a similar statement that verifies you know what the teacher or textbook has taught.
- It isn't necessary for you to publicly debate teachers or professors who believe in evolution. Through greater experience, they usually have clever, though erroneous, arguments to smooth over the weakness of Darwinism or to make disbelievers in the theory appear ignorant. Remember, the Bible reveals that those who reject God are the ones who are truly foolish and ignorant (Psalm 14:1; Romans 1).
- If someone genuinely wants to know what you believe on this issue, tell him (1 Peter 3:15). But you don't have to set yourself up for public or private ridicule. Thinking out your strategy in advance can be quite helpful. Often silence is golden.
- If you are asked to do additional research on this subject, consider several possibilities. You might want to read Darwin's book or works on modern variations of his theory and draw attention to the areas in which he and others acknowledge flaws in the theory. Another possibility is to write a book report on material written against evolution.
- Use this opportunity to strengthen your relationship with God and your convictions that He is your Creator. Compare the ultimate rewards represented by belief in Darwinism with belief in God. According to the former, when you die you're permanently dead, having no hope of living again. With God, you have the marvelous opportunity to live forever in His Kingdom. Don't throw away that opportunity just to fit in with what is currently popular in today's culture.

### Recommended reading

What are they not telling you about the theory of evolution? We've covered only a few of the high spots in this article, but you can learn more by reading [\*Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?\*](#) Download this booklet, or request your free copy today!

## The Case Against Evolution

Many excellent books have appeared in recent years detailing scientific findings and conclusions that compellingly demonstrate the impossibility of evolution as an explanation for the existence of life on earth. It is helpful to remember that evolution cannot offer an explanation for the origin of our magnificent universe; evolution seeks to explain only how life might have begun in a universe that already existed.

If you would like to dig more deeply into the case against Darwinism, we recommend the following books, many written by authors with backgrounds in the sciences:

*Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, Michael Behe, associate professor of biochemistry, Lehigh University (Pennsylvania), 1996. Demonstrates that the tiny building blocks of life—cells and their myriad components—are far too complex for their codependent parts and processes to have evolved without an outside, intelligent design at work.

*Mere Creation: Science, Faith & Intelligent Design*, edited by William Dembski, 1998. A collection of academic writings from physics, astrophysics, biology, anthropology, biology, mechanical engineering and mathematics that challenge Darwinism and offer evidence supporting intelligent design in the universe.

*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Michael Denton, senior research fellow, University of Otago, New Zealand, 1996. Examines features of the natural world that mutation and natural selection cannot explain and shows the impossibility of transitional forms required for Darwinian evolution to have taken place.

*Creation and Evolution: Rethinking the Evidence From Science and the Bible*, Alan Hayward, 1985. Written by a British physicist, an insightful book on the pros and cons of the evolution-vs.-creation controversy.

*The Neck of the Giraffe: Where Darwin Went Wrong*, Francis Hitching, 1982. Points out many of the problems in the traditional view of evolution.

*Darwin on Trial*, Phillip Johnson, professor of law, University of California, Berkeley, 1993. Examines scientific details that argue convincingly against the theory of evolution.

*Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education*, Phillip Johnson, 1995. Discusses the cultural implications of belief in evolution; that is, that the philosophy behind Darwinian evolution has become in effect the dominant established religion in many societies.

*Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*, Phillip Johnson, 1997. Written specifically for older students and their parents and teachers to prepare them for the antireligion bias inherent in most advanced education.

*Objections Sustained: Subversive Essays on Evolution, Law & Culture*, Phillip Johnson, 1998. Compilation of essays ranging from evolution and culture to law and religion.

*Bones of Contention: A Creationist Assessment of the Human Fossils*, Marvin Lubenow, 1992. Documents the serious problems with the supposed links between man and apes.

*What Is Creation Science?* Henry Morris and Gary Parker, 1987. Two creation scientists provide a critical examination of the major arguments used to support evolution.

*Shattering the Myths of Darwinism*, Richard Milton, 1997. Mr. Milton, a science journalist and noncreationist, reveals the circular reasoning Darwinists must rely on for their arguments while

discussing data widely acknowledged in scientific circles.

*Tornado in a Junkyard: The Relentless Myth of Darwinism*, James Perloff, 1999. A self-professed former atheist offers an easy-to-read view of evidence contradicting Darwinism, including many quotations from evolutionists and creationists. (The title is taken from a British astronomer's assessment that the likelihood of higher life-forms emerging through random mutation is comparable to the chance of a tornado sweeping through a junkyard being able to build a Boeing 747 airliner.)

*Not by Chance: Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution*, Lee Spetner, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1998. Dr. Spetner shows that one of the fundamental premises of neo-Darwinism—that random mutation created the kinds of variations that allowed macroevolution to take place—is fatally flawed and could never have happened as Darwinists claim.

*Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?* Jonathan Wells, Yale University and University of California at Berkeley, 2000. Dr. Wells, a postdoctoral biologist, documents that the most-used examples Darwinists call on to support evolution— including those commonly found in recent textbooks—are false or misleading, raising the question of whether evolutionists deliberately misinform students and suppress scientific evidence that contradicts their theory.

Although the publishers of *Virtual Christian Magazine* do not agree with every conclusion presented in these books, we think they present a persuasive and compelling case that the theory of evolution is fundamentally and fatally flawed.

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## Belief in God Is a Choice

By Cecil Maranville

*Have you heard of the flower that is pollinated by “tricking” bees into taking a bath or of the flower that “shoots” its pollen onto a bee’s back? We can see the design of the Creator—if we choose to.*



**C**ONSIDER THE POWERFUL WORDS of the apostle Paul: “Ever since the creation of the world [God’s] eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (Romans 1:20, New Revised Standard Version throughout).

Paul's words remind us that we can look at the miracles of the world around and see evidence of God's handiwork, understanding not only that He is the Creator but also glimpsing some of His nature and character.

Let's take a look at a particular flower, an orchid with the scientific name of *Coryanthes*. Although the scientist's language is a little technical, it is important that you read the account in the author's own words as he describes his findings and those of another scientist, a Dr. Cruger. It is well worth reading!

### An orchid with a bee bath

"This orchid has part of its labellum or lower lip hollowed out into a great bucket, into which drops of almost pure water continually fall from two secreting horns which stand above it; and when the bucket is half full, the water overflows by a spout on one side. The basal part of the labellum stands over the bucket, and is itself hollowed out into a sort of chamber with two lateral entrances; within this chamber there are curious fleshy ridges. *The most ingenious man, if he had not witnessed what takes place, could never have imagined what purpose all these parts serve* [emphasis added throughout].



"But Dr. Cruger saw crowds of large humble-bees [bumblebees] visiting the gigantic flowers of this orchid, not in order to suck nectar, but to gnaw off the ridges within the chamber above the bucket; in doing this they frequently pushed each other into the bucket, and their wings being thus wetted they could not fly away, but were compelled to crawl out through the passage formed by the spout or overflow.

"Dr. Cruger saw a 'continual procession' of bees thus crawling out of their involuntary bath. The passage is narrow, and is roofed over by the column, so that a bee, forcing its way out, first rubs its back against the viscid stigma [the sticky part of the flower that receives pollen] and then against the viscid glands of the pollen-masses. The pollen-masses are thus glued to the back of the bee which first happens to crawl out through the passage of the lately expanded flower, and are thus carried away...

"When the bee, thus provided, flies to another flower, or to the same flower a second time, and is pushed by its comrades into the bucket and then crawls out by the passage, the pollen-mass necessarily comes first into contact with the viscid stigma, and adheres to it, and the flower is fertilized. Now at last we see the full use of every part of the flower, of the water-secreting horns, of the bucket half full of water, which prevents the bees from flying away, and forces them to crawl out through the spout, and rub against the *properly placed* viscid pollen-masses and the viscid stigma."



### The design reveals the DESIGNER

These design details are fascinating, for they show us the complexity, variety and even a touch of humor in God's creation. Several scriptures confirm that we can learn of God through His

creation. One such reference is found in Acts 14. The apostles Paul and Barnabas made quite a stir in the city of Lystra by healing a man who had been crippled, unable to walk, since birth. Idolatry was rampant in Lystra, and the instinctive reaction by the citizens of the city was to worship these ministers. God's servants gently corrected the people and directed their worship to the Creator God.

*We can look at the miracles of the world around and see evidence of God's handiwork.*

“Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good—giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:15-17).

### **An orchid that shoots straight**

Here's another remarkable example of carefully planned design in the natural world from the same author cited above:

“The construction of the flower in another closely allied orchid, namely the *Catasetum*, is widely different, though serving the same end; and is equally curious. Bees visit these flowers, like those of the *Coryanthes*, in order to gnaw the labellum [lip]; in doing this they inevitably touch a long, tapering, sensitive projection, or, as I have called it, the antenna.



fertilization is effected.”

“This antenna, when touched, transmits a sensation or vibration to a certain membrane which is instantly ruptured; this sets free a spring by which the pollen-mass is shot forth, like an arrow, in the right direction, and adheres by its viscid [sticky] extremity to the back of the bee. The pollen-mass of the male plant (for the sexes are separate in this orchid) is thus carried to the flower of the female plant where it is brought into contact with the stigma, which is viscid enough to break certain elastic threads, and retaining the pollen,

Isn't that a marvelous illustration of God's handiwork? However, not everyone sees the evidence of creation in the same way. The scientist who penned these observations of the wonders of the world around him was none other than Charles Darwin, and the quotations are from his book, *Origin of the Species* (The Modern Library, Random House, Inc., pp. 142-143).

Does this surprise you? It should! Darwin used these examples to show the ability of plants to adapt and to vary rather than to show the variety in God's design. Why?

### **Same evidence, different conclusions**

Charles Darwin is not the only scientist in his time who interpreted what he studied in creation as evidence of life without a creator. There were many others. Why is it then, that what we see as

inspiring, undeniable data of God's handiwork they see as evidence that God was not involved? We find the answer to that question in the first chapter of Romans.

“So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles” (Romans 1:20-23).

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*Why is it that what we see as inspiring, incontrovertible data of God's handiwork they see as evidence that God was not involved?*

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Here we read that viewing creation is a portal through which we can see the Creator. While everyone sees the same evidence, each of us makes a choice as to how to use it. The early proponents of evolution made a conscious choice not to believe in God. They chose to interpret their studies in a way that would exclude God.

We all have an important choice to make about the evidence of a Creator God. Even though the evidence is strong, each of us must choose whether or not we will believe it. Our choice will have a profound effect on our lives.

If we see God in what He has made, then we have a constant reminder of His ability, His care, His humor, His purpose. If we do not see God, then we are not reminded of any purpose He has for us and are subsequently “freed” from a potentially troubling conscience that might cause us to question a wrong thought or action.

### **To choose belief is to choose behavior**



The rest of Romans 1 makes it clear that there are serious consequences for failing to see God in His creation. Human judgment becomes the substitute guide for a person instead of God's Spirit and His Word. Human judgment leads to bad choices on how to live and decisions that lead to degenerated lifestyles. Confirmation of this fact is found in the Psalms, “Fools say in their hearts, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good” (Psalm 14:1). This verse, like Romans 1, implies that people who choose not to believe in God see no need to abide by a divine code of conduct.

However, as the next verse tells us: “The LORD looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God” (verse 2).

God is able to guide and bless those who wisely choose to accept the evidence and believe in Him. Let's make the right choice!

### **Recommended reading**

Choosing to see God within His creation, or even acknowledging His existence, can be a difficult issue for many people. For further reading, please see [Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?](#) and [Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?](#)

*Virtual Christian Magazine Editorial*

## **Working Together**

By Patrick Kansa

*We all need a little help sometimes. We hope this issue's articles will work together to provide our readers some useful assistance.*

**I**N TODAY'S SOCIETY, it is becoming increasingly difficult to "go it alone." Educational institutions, as well as businesses, are well aware of this—hence their focus on teamwork and team-building exercises. And the fact of the matter is, working with one another is not some great new idea—it can be found in the very pages of the Bible (see Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

In much the same way, this issue of *Virtual Christian Magazine* reflects this concept of working together. The articles themselves could, and do, stand on their own merits quite well. When read in conjunction, however, their benefit increases.

In "[Building a Solid Foundation—Part 3.](#)" we conclude a series of articles that relate to child rearing (please refer to the June and July issues for the previous installments). All three installments combine to show the tools and support structures in place to guide children as they grow and develop.

Eventually, we (or our children) will take that very foundation, and begin making decisions for ourselves. In the world in which we live, choosing the correct entertainment from our pop culture can be a tricky task. "[Choosing Music, TV and Movies](#)" provides you with some basic guidelines to help you make right decisions.

Entertainment, in all its various forms, can be used to help us relax at the end of the day. In moderation, this rarely presents an issue. However, if you find yourself using these "escapes" on a regular basis, you may need to seek better ways to deal with the pressure. In "[Are You Feeling Overwhelmed?](#)" several options for managing and coping with stress are covered, as well as a major cause of much of the anxiety we experience.

These three articles are quite edifying—and education itself can be a very rewarding pursuit. As with all things, though, issues can arise in school that can cause frustration or confusion—especially when it comes to the debate of creation versus evolution. In "[Coming Soon to a School Near You.](#)" some of the popular underpinnings of Darwinism and how to refute them are presented.

Nevertheless, this is something you must prove for yourself, and you will need to draw your own conclusions. In "[Belief in God Is a Choice We Must Make.](#)" we see how God's hand can be seen every day in His creation—and was even remarked upon by a surprising source!

Much as these articles work together, supporting one another through the various topics, it takes the work of dedicated volunteers to bring it together—and the final member of that team is you. Take these articles, share them with others and help to sharpen one another. As you do so, remember Jesus Christ's promise to us: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).



## Letters to the Editor

### [“Never Let Your Guard Down!”](#)



I have great respect for Mr. Hasselborg and feel a need to defend his historical writings since he cannot. Hasselborg lived in southeast Alaska and all the bear hunting stories that go with him happened in the southeast, with an exception of some hunting he did in south-central Alaska in Prince William Sound. Kodiak brown bears are not the bears he hunted and Kodiak is not in the Aleutian Islands. Basically the article has flaws in its geography. The bears [Hasselborg hunted] were Admiralty Island brown bears, not Kodiak; and Kodiak Island is not in the Aleutian Islands. The words “Kodiak” and “Aleutian Islands” should be omitted from the article and “Admiralty Island brown bears” should replace “Kodiak brown bears.”

— J.U.

*Thank you for your message. While the point of the article is sound, it had some facts wrong. We regret the error.*

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity