

What Other Doctrines Do You Ignore?

by John D. Morris*


Recently I was talking with an evangelical pastor about his view on creation. Please understand. Creation is not the only Biblical teaching I care about. There's more to Christianity than creation. But often it signifies one's attitude toward the Bible in general.

Unfortunately, the pastor's attitude toward creation is typical of many evangelicals today. "Oh, I don't get into that. It's too controversial. Besides, science has proven millions of years. It doesn't matter what one thinks about creation and the age of the earth. There are other parts of Scripture which are more needed today. Let's just talk about Jesus." This may sound spiritual, but creation doctrine is foundational to the rest. It really can't be ignored without damage to the others. The next question asked could be: "What other doctrines will you ignore, too?"

Creation is the "worldview" concept which places God as the sovereign Controller over all. His role as Creator gives Him the authority to set the guidelines for life and the penalty for breaking His law. Just as the manufacturer has the right and responsibility to author the owner's handbook dictating how to properly operate and repair a manufactured device, so the Creator of mankind has authority over our lives and choices.

By the way, the Manufacturer's handbook identifies Jesus, Himself, as the Creator (see, for example, Colossians 1:16). One cannot "preach Jesus" while denying His role as Creator. As Creator He taught the doctrine of marriage as coming from creation, not from modern convenience. He spoke of the recent creation, of the worldwide Flood, of the separate kinds of animals, etc., creation teachings all. He also based His teachings about His Second Coming on the facts of creation and the Flood.

The thought that creation is not in favor among many scientists should not concern us, for the opinions of some scientists have often been at odds with true science, commonly reflecting an anti-God agenda. Science has shown that the virgin birth is impossible, as is the resurrection. Are we to erase them from our teaching as well?

Creation is the foundation for the worldview of Christianity. Without it we lose the logic of the doctrines of God, of sin, of man, of the penalty for sin, of salvation from sin based on the Creator's death on our behalf, of His coming Kingdom, and others. If we can so easily abandon the doctrine of creation, the basis for the others, which of the others are we prepared to ignore? 

*Dr. John D. Morris is the President of the Institute for Creation Research.

Hummingbirds at ICR

by Frank Sherwin, M.A.*



The staff at ICR trusts you enjoy the hummingbird picture taken outside a window of our main building. It was noticed months ago that an adult bird was weaving a nest on a palm frond. Being a science organization and lovers of God's living creation, we closely followed the maternal events as they unfolded. The tiny eggs hatched and in due time, the two rapidly-growing hatchlings were literally bursting from the confines of their nest. It was interesting that the mother, perched on a nearby branch (always the same one), would intently watch her little ones in the nest. She would occasionally zoom around the nest, showing her crouching, bewildered offspring that "this is how you do it!"

Hummingbirds challenge the neo-Darwinian paradigm. Their size, flight characteristics and patterns, metabolism, all point to our magnificent Creator who designed these amazing animals and created them on Day Five. Secular scientists reject this and state,

So, in fact, birds are not some separate biological entity, distinct and apart from "reptiles." Birds are dinosaurs.¹

It is really scientifically accurate to say

that the ferocious *T. rex* evolved into birds, that it did not become extinct but sprouted feathers and is now able (in the hummingbird's case) to hover and fly rapidly backwards?


Speaking of flight, such agile flying requires power and coordination. One evolutionary publication said in regard to hummingbird flight,

Hypobaric challenge is met behaviorally through compensatory changes in wingbeat kinematics, particularly in stroke amplitude.²

Translated, this means the tiny creature has been wonderfully designed to compensate for low pressure problems encountered in flight. But did such "wingbeat kinematics" just evolve by mutations, or is there a Supreme aero-engineer? Unbelievably rapid muscle contraction is the power source of the rapid wingbeats. Skeletal muscle fibers (cells) may be divided into red (sustained use with a greater supply of blood) and white (designed for short, rapid bursts). Not surprisingly, hummingbird muscle, such as the paired supracoracoideus, are of the red type and at least 30 percent of the bird's weight—about 10 percent more than other birds.

The amazing feathered acrobat, the tiny, fearless hummingbird!

Endnotes

1. Fastovsky, D. E. and D. B. Weishampel, 1996. *The Evolution and Extinction of Dinosaurs*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 320–321.
2. Altshuler, D. L. and R. Dudley, 2002. The ecological and evolutionary interface of hummingbird flight physiology. *The Journal of Experimental Biology*, v. 205, pp. 2325–2336. 

*Frank Sherwin is a zoologist and seminar speaker for ICR.

Out of Ararat?

by William A. Hoesch, M.S.*

Paleoanthropologists are not usually known for shying away from discord, debate, or disagreement. Yet for several decades there has been near-unanimity on two fronts: (1) the so-called *fact* of evolution, and more specifically that, (2) an African ape, sometime in the last few million years, gave rise to the first African human. There is no sign of yielding on the first front, but on the second, new findings have made continued agreement impossible.

The key findings are summarized by archeologists Robin Dennell and Wil Roebroeks (*Nature*, 438:1099–1104) in an article entitled: “An Asian perspective on early human dispersal from Africa.” By “early humans” the authors mean the genus *Homo*, either as the east African species *H. ergaster*, or broadly speaking, *H. erectus*. Many, but not all creationists will recognize *Homo* as tool-wielding, upright-walking, and relatively large-brained *sons of Adam*. Here is the problem. In a half-dozen sites across Asia and Europe, *Homo* remains are being found that are nearly as old, or older, than their oldest supposed *Homo* ancestor in east Africa. For example, *H. erectus* specimens from Dmanisi in the Republic of Georgia dated at an alleged 1.7 Ma; at Mojokerto, Java, dated at 1.81 Ma; and Sangiran, Java, dated at 1.8 Ma, are comparable in age with the oldest *H. erectus* in Africa, at 1.9 Ma. Laying aside the absolute value of these dates for a moment, it looks as if *Homo* popped into existence all at once in a multitude of places! By the way, the Dmanisi site, which has become a major focal point for anthropology and is thought to represent an important dispersal point for early man, lies

within a mere 200 kilometers of Mount Ararat. It is now widely believed that humans evolved in an as-of-yet undiscovered site in Asia and then migrated into Africa!

So abrupt is the appearance of the earliest true humans (*H. ergaster*) in the fossil record of east Africa that Dennell and Roebroeks remarked, “Not for nothing has it been described as a hominin ‘without an ancestor, without a clear past’” (p. 1099). Hominin is the category shared by humans (*Homo*) and their assumed ape (*Australopithecus*) ancestors. The absence of a clear past for *Homo* finds these two excited archeologists “on the threshold of a profound transformation of our understanding of early hominin evolution” (p. 1103).

The search is now on for a locality that records the key transition from ape to human. “It is hard at present to identify its immediate ancestry in east Africa,” say Dennell and Roebroeks (p. 1099). Nor apparently is it in East Asia, nor even in the promising new site in Georgia. Northern China or perhaps the difficult-to-access Muslim nations of central Asia are now being targeted as good prospects. I applaud the courage and persistence of these evolutionary researchers. But what if, at the end of the day, no ancestor can be found *anywhere* for *H. erectus*? It is not hard to see this is the direction the data are pointing. An absence of evidence is not evidence for absence, true. But if it is also true that man always was man, as God indicated to us in Genesis, the truly courageous researcher must face the possibility that a search for human ancestry will end in vain. Do not wait until the end of the day, my friend, to go back to Genesis! 🌀

*William A. Hoesch, M.S. geology, is Research Assistant in Geology.

SETI: Design in Spite of Itself

by David F. Coppedge*

Researchers involved in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) use scientific equipment, collaborate with scientists, attend scientific conferences, publish scientific articles, and generally look and smell like scientists, lab coats and all. Most have degrees in science. This has not made them immune from accusations, though, that they are engaged in a quasi-scientific religious quest.

Novelist Michael Crichton and science historian George Basalla have been among the critics. Leaders in the Intelligent Design (ID) movement also have taken great glee in pointing out SETI's assumption that intelligence is detectable with scientific methods. Twice recently, leading SETI spokesmen have fought back against these charges, defending their work as scientific and materialistic. But did they succeed?


A better defender could hardly be found than Seth Shostak, Director of the SETI Institute. He appeared briefly in the ID film *The Privileged Planet*, not defending Intelligent Design, but explaining that "unless there's something very, very special—miraculous, if you will . . . about our planet Earth . . . then what happened here must have happened many times in the history of the Universe." Apparently irked by the suggestion that SETI uses the same assumption as ID that coded messages indicate an intelligent cause, he attempted to rebut this claim head-on in an essay for Space.com (12/01/2005).

Shostak argued that SETI is not looking for a complex code or message, but a "persistent, narrowband whistle" in a context that would make it appear artificial instead of natural. Yet SETI is clearly

not restricted to such a narrow goal. From the beginning, SETI devotees have wished to communicate with other intelligent beings and learn from them; does this not explain repeated attempts to send messages out, whether on radio waves, Pioneer plaques, or Voyager records?

Shostak also made a false distinction between complexity and artificiality. ID argues that *specified complexity* is detectable by scientific means. The point is that if an intelligent agent wishes to communicate, it can use natural materials to convey a message, and humans can discriminate such attempts (e.g., smoke signals) from natural processes.

More recently, David Darling of the SETI Institute responded on Space.com (06/01/2006) to charges that SETI is a religion. He tried to contrast the scientific-looking appearance of SETI researchers and their equipment to religious believers praying in a worship service. He compared SETI to other research endeavors that took time to prove. He also claimed that we already know about non-human intelligence: apes and dolphins. These responses, however, create false dichotomies and comparisons. They attempt to hide the reality that no evidence for extraterrestrial intelligence has ever been found.

Opponents of creation argue that belief in God (or a designing intelligence) brings science to a halt. They say scientists should seek for underlying natural mechanisms, not just throw up their hands and say "God did it." If SETI researchers ever do detect a signal and conclude "aliens did it," could we not counter-argue they are bringing science to a halt by inferring design? 

*David F. Coppedge works in the Cassini program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.



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