

Απολογία

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INTELLIGENT DESIGN?

Is the “Intelligent Design” (ID) movement “real science?” Its critics, rather than trying to refute its data or analysis, often accuse it of not being science because its results are “unfalsifiable.” What gives it a chance to overcome this prejudice is the fact (never mentioned by its critics!) that its main goal is to try to identify specific markers that can be shown to be reliable indicators of design.

The most important one is “specified complexity,” the kind of complexity that is possessed by a linguistic code. If you are walking on the beach and see sand dollars spelling out the message “Beware of Shark,” you are not going to think that they just washed up that way by unguided, random wave action. Why? Because the ocean waves do not know the lexicon of the English language, its grammatical system, its phonetic system, or the English alphabet as a way of representing those phonemes. That is four separate coded systems, each of which is independent of the others. (I.e., there is nothing about English phonemes that demands they be spelled by the Latin alphabet as opposed to runes, the Greek alphabet, or the IPA, etc.)

Now, to reproduce even one of those codes by random unguided processes (say, to have the sand dollars in the form of any letters at all) would be statistically well-nigh impossible. To produce the whole intelligible sentence by unguided random processes would mean multiplying that already nearly impossible probability by three other already near-to-vanishing numbers, which gives you a number practically indistinguishable from zero. That is why it is correct to conclude that some intelligent agent arranged the sand dollars. Even New Atheists would have to conclude so, and they would be scientifically justified in doing it.

Now, the point made by ID is that DNA is precisely such a code, it manifests genuine specified complexity. The “imperfections” in that code often urged as evidence against design would be like having one of the words slightly misspelled. If you found “Beware of Sharck” instead of “Beware of Shark,” you would still be justified in using caution about going into the water. In other words, the message would still “work”—even as DNA does, since the biosphere seems to be going on quite nicely in spite of these “imperfections.”

Bottom line: there is real falsifiable work being done by ID advocates that is methodologically rigorous. They are asking what happens when you apply information theory to biological systems. Whether ID will finally stand up remains to be seen. But those who criticize it as not being real science just aren't paying attention—in most cases because they do not *want* it to be real science, for no other reason than the fact that it potentially challenges the reigning Neo-Darwinian Orthodoxy.

Donald T. Williams

FORTHCOMING ISCA PUBLICATIONS

Don Williams, "Text vs. Word: C. S. Lewis's Doctrine of Inspiration and the Inerrancy of Scripture," chp. in festschrift for Nom Geisler, Wipf & Stock, 2016; "Expressing Emotion in Poetry: Grief and Recovery in Psalm 6," *The Luther Rice Journal of Christian Studies*, Jan. 2016; "Anselm and Aslan: C. S. Lewis on the Ontological Argument" (reprinted by permission from *Touchstone*), *Global Journal of Classical Theology*, 2016; "Elizabeth Anscombe's Final Word on C. S. Lewis's Miracles, Chapter 3," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, 2016; "The Justice of Hell," *Christian Research Journal*, 2016; "Discerning the Times: Why We Lost the Culture War and How to Make a Comeback" (2015 ISCA annual meeting presidential address), *Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics*, 2016.

RECENT ISCA PUBLICATIONS

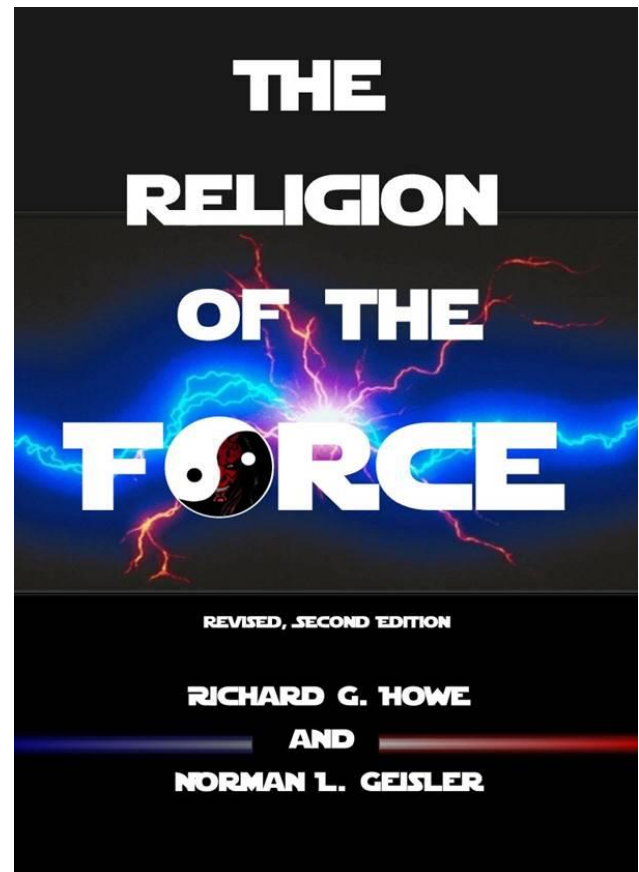
F. David Farnell, Normal L. Geisler, Joseph M. Holden, Williams C. Roach, and Phil Fernandez, eds., *Vital issues in the Inerrancy Debate* (Wipf & Stock, 2016).

Douglas Groothuis's newest book is *Philosophy in Seven Sentences* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016).

Dr. **Richard Howe** recently gave Norm Geisler's 1983 book *The Religion of the Force* a much needed refresh. Now it covers six of the Star Wars movie installments! We want to get the word out and maximize exposure to it just before the next Star Wars episode comes out in theaters (December 18th, 2015). The Star Wars fan base has become an enormous mission field. This book is both apologetic and evangelistic. It is available in PDF format [here](#) and Kindle format at Amazon [here](#). Please consider giving it a rating and/or comments at Amazon.com. If you would like a free PDF copy and are willing to consider spreading the word about the book by social media, you can email dr.normangeisler@outlook.com. We are

expecting at least one run of paperback versions to be printed soon but have no ETA so far.

Kirk MacGregor, Luis de Molina: *The Life and Theology of the Founder of Middle Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).



PAPERS PRESENTED

Ed Payne, "Quo Vadis Christian Philosopher. Some Concerns Among the Successes," National Theological Society Meeting, Atlanta, Nov. 2015.

PREACHING AND OTHER SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Douglas Groothuis, Professor of Philosophy at Denver Seminary, was one of the featured speakers at the annual Defend conference held at New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary from January 2-6. He also was a plenary speaker and gave two workshops at the annual L'Abri conference in Rochester, MN on February 12-13.

Don Williams led the service and preached the sermon for the funeral of Alexander Stott “Scotty” Gordon, age 95, on Dec. 9, 2015. He also preached at University Church, Athens, GA., on Sunday, Jan. 24, and at First Presbyterian Church in Toccoa, GA., on Sunday, Jan. 31.

WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT

Ed Payne has three apologetically relevant websites: www.bmei.org, on medical ethics from past journals, and newsletters, www.biblicalworldview21.org, and www.biblicalphilosophy.org

CAMP TO CONDUCT WOMEN'S SEMINAR

Kathryn V. Camp will be conducting a Women's Leadership Seminar at Virginia Beach, VA on February 20-21, and would like to request prayer for the women attending; that they take a strong interest in apologetics and that God plant within them the desire to become true and faithful disciples for His kingdom.

Also, she asks for prayer that the Lord will open a door for her to speak in El Paso, Texas this coming June during her stay there.

STREET-LEVEL APOLOGETICS

One of the difficulties I have with the way apologetics is discussed in books and articles is that the arguments are too complicated and nuanced to work on the street. It reminds me of the difference between competition level martial arts and a street brawl. Understand, I am not arguing that Christians don't need or benefit from the high level work done by academic apologists and their writings, it's just that I

rarely found those arguments very useful on the street.

In martial arts, we have techniques known as “One-steps”. One steps are simple moves that are repeatedly practiced so that when an opponent throws them, you will automatically respond. I have learned that street-level apologetics has to be fast (i.e. succinct), easy to say and understand, as well as emotionally and/or intellectually impactful. They should be capable of disrupting the arrogance or ignorance of the opponent.

I suggest that we need to ensure that our students get some “Apologetically useful “one-steps””. Here are some that I suspect will work or have found that they do work. Keep in mind, that what I mean by work is that they cause the person to stop and think. I don't think these comments cause the person to change his/her mind. I simply want to silence the person and make him/her think more carefully about his/her comments (cf Mt 22:34).

1. If the unborn child is not a person, have you ever criticized a woman for treating her unborn child as a person? Why not?

2. I know everyone has an interpretation of Scripture, what is yours?

3. If there is no god, then who decides what is morality?

4. If there are no absolutes, are you absolutely sure of that?

5. If you don't know if God exists, how hard have you been looking to see if He does?

6. I can't speak for the eternal destiny of the African tribesman, but you don't have the excuse of ignorance concerning Christ.

7. I am willing to wait till I die to find out if my belief in God is wrong (a variant of Pascal's wager).

8. The most important question is, “What do you think of Christ?”

9. Christianity is not a genetic disease.

10. In response to someone who says they don't go to church because of the hypocrites, I respond by saying, “That's why I don't go to hospitals, too many sick people.”

11. Ridicule the new atheists as “Preachers of the gospel of No God.”

12. Isn't it strange that the animal rights activists/global warming

alarmists/environmentalists talk like a fundamentalist preacher?

13. If Islam is a religion of Peace, then how many people did Mohammed kill during his life?

14. I don't go to church because the preacher is always talking about money. I have responded, "I have the same criticism of the University President."

Some of you may cringe at the ugliness of these comments and arguments. I understand completely. But street fighting is not elegant. It requires sound bites. The best ones ask questions and challenge the person to defend his/her point or reframe the issue to expose the person's hypocrisy.

Stephen M. Vantassel is tutor of theology at King's Evangelical Divinity School (kingsdivinity.org) and author of *Dominion over Wildlife? An Environmental-Theology of Human-Wildlife Relations* (Wipf and Stock, 2009).

ISCA JOURNAL ARCHIVE AVAILABLE

A complete archive of the Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics is now available at the following web address: http://theologicalstudies.org.uk/articles/jisca_01.php.

WEBPAGE EXPANDS

Recently, **Douglas Groothuis's** web page has expanded and deepened in content. www.DouglasGroothuis.com.

GEISLER SKYPES AT SHORTER

On 11/10/15, ten seniors and juniors at Shorter University were privileged to interview world-renowned author, teacher and apologist, Dr. Norman Geisler via Skype. These students were in the *Christian Apologetics* class taught by Dr. Randy Douglass, Assistant Professor of Christian Studies at Shorter. "Apologetics is not

about arguing," Douglass said, "but rather about answering the questions people have about Christianity. Unbelievers have good questions, but we have good answers. Norman Geisler has been the source of answers in Christian apologetics for over 60 years. The students were privileged to have an opportunity to ask him any question on their minds."

Senior Noah Henson said, "I thoroughly enjoyed hearing from Dr. Geisler! It was a great experience to hear from a world renowned apologist. He was able to share insights on everything from apologetics to Christian politics. It was truly a class period that I will never forget!"

Senior Joshua Adams said, "It was a pleasure to be able to interview such a notable and credible scholar as Dr. Norman Geisler. I was floored at how he was able to answer all of the questions posed to him by the entire class with ease and memorization, and I am glad Dr. Geisler was able to clarify my understand of the relationship between Christianity and America."

Junior Patrick Sanders said, "Being about to interact with an apologist of Dr. Geisler's caliber was an honor and a privilege for an inspiring apologist such as myself. Dr. Geisler's knowledge about the Bible and the world around him is so evident even after speaking with him for just a few moments. He was gracious and humble, making the experience truly memorable.

The Skype interview session concluded with Geisler saying a prayer of commissioning over the ten men and asked for God's leadership and blessing in their lives. When asked what he thought about the Shorter students, Geisler said, "I was very impressed with the Shorter students who recently interviewed me. They knew the issues and asked good questions. They have been well taught by Dr. Douglass and were a real tribute to the school."



BOOK REVIEW:
Vital issues in the Inerrancy Debate
(Wipf & Stock, 2016).

Why is such a book necessary? Isn't this thrashing the proverbial dead horse? When the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) was functioning in the late '70s and '80s, there was a lively discussion among the members of the board about the future of the organization. Some saw the need for it to exist in perpetuity. Others of us feared the prospects of its becoming another parachurch ministry furthering the departure of talent and resources from local churches. We suggested a ten-year limitation with a sunset clause in place to guarantee a concluding date. An incredible number of critical texts penned during those ten years contributed heavily to the reversals in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church and most dramatically in the Southern Baptist Convention. While I remain confident that a limited period was appropriate, this is a testimony to two things. First **the need for continued vigilance is unmitigated.** Second, **the amazing tendency on the part of "evangelical scholars" to follow the line of least resistance and drift away from biblical theology is continuing to the sorrow of the church of God.** I used the word "amazing" because the history of the effects of biblical scholarship hinged to historical-critical interpretation is the history of decimated congregations and evangelistic and mission stagnation. This is so obvious as to need no elucidation.

Regrettably, the younger generation does not read nearly as prolifically as former generations. So most are simply unaware of Gerhard Maier's *The End of the Historical-Critical Method*. They have not read the arresting articles from Norm's edited volume titled *Inerrancy*. They remain blissfully unaware of Laird Harris' work on *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*. Although the book is enough for anyone to read, few have heard of the early Clark Pinnock's magnificent 1967 treatment of *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility*. D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge examined *Scripture and Truth* in 1983, but a fair number of the young future pastors were just being born

about that time. And hardly any of the younger set has carefully considered Carl F. H. Henry's fifteen wonderfully crafted theses articulated convincingly in the first sixteen pages of *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 2. And this is to name but a few of the convincing tomes penned on this subject.

There are better reasons to revisit the subject. The earliest attack in Eden appears to be directed at the possibility that God had spoken a clear, definitive, cogent, and permanent word: "Has God said?" What began there continues relentlessly through the ages, whether it be an early attack on the historicity of Daniel by Porphyry or the most recent attack on the historicity of Matthew 27:52-53 by Michael Licona in *The Resurrection of Jesus* (2010). Of course, Licona wants to have his cake and eat it also, but the verse cannot at the same moment both describe a reality and be dismissed as Midrash. **The point is that every generation has to answer this issue for itself.**

This current treatise engages the postmodern with the claims of inerrancy and documents in a kind but firm way those evangelical voices damaged by compromise with the culture and the academy.

All associated with this book wish that it were not necessary. Like Jude, much rather have written concerning "our common salvation." Unfortunately, in every generation, Satan must attack the doctrines of revelation, creation, the person and work of Christ, and the consummation of the kingdom. as believed and taught by the apostles, then Satan's efforts to destroy the church surely fail. The authors of this volume understand that they must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. **And that faith begins with a sure and certain word from God.**

May God be pleased to bless these pages for the edification of the young church today. And may the end result be the opportunity for all seven billion of this world's teeming population to hear the message of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Paige Patterson

See more a

ISCA TO MEET AT TOCCOA FALLS!



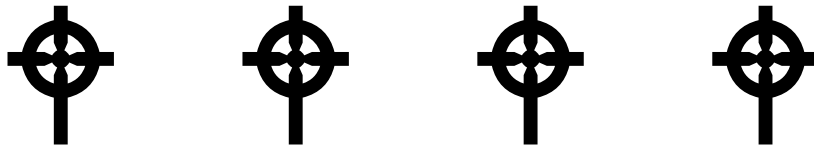
The next annual meeting of the International Society of Christian Apologetics (ISCA) will be held at **Toccoa Falls College** in NE Georgia April 1-2, 2016. Theme: “Apologetics in an Increasingly Hostile Age.” **Warren Cole Smith**, former editor of *World*

Magazine, currently Vice President of The Colson Center and Lecturer for Summit Ministries, and **Dan Crescenzo** of the University of Georgia will be the plenary speakers.

Housing will be at Country Hearth Inn & Suite, 1.5 miles from campus. Rates are \$59.00/night for a room with two double beds, or a room with a single twin bed, \$69.00/night for a room with one king bed, and \$79.00/night for a suite with a hot tub. Rates are per room, whether single or double occupancy. Call 706-297-7799 and ask for Karen or the manager to make your reservations. Mention that you are with the conference at Toccoa Falls College to get these rates. We have a block of rooms reserved at these rates until March 1, so make sure you make your reservations by then.

For further information or to register, go to the ISCA website: <http://www.isca-apologetics.org/>.

The Executive Council of the International Society of Christian Apologetics includes Donald T. Williams, President; Richard Howe, Vice President; Dan Guinn, Treasurer; Phil Fernandez, Secretary; Tim Adkisson, Webmaster; Bill Roach, Journal Editor; Norm Geisler, Phil Roberts, Kerby Anderson, and Win Corduan, Past Presidents.



Ἀπολογία is a newsletter published quarterly for the members of the International Society of Christian Apologetics, *Donald T. Williams, PhD*, editor. Please send news of publications recent or forthcoming, papers, debates, etc. presented, preaching or other ministries, etc., to the editor (Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, 11 pt., single-spaced) at dtw@tfc.edu. Short news articles, essays, or book reviews (400 words) on issues relevant to your fellow apologetists are also welcomed. The deadline for submissions to the next issue is January 15, 2016.

