

Article Commentary and Links 2021

***Please note that all quotes (" ") are from the linked articles unless otherwise referenced.**

December 2021:

- [“It’s not rocket science” and “It’s not brain surgery”—“It’s a walk in the park”: prospective comparative study](#)

"In situations that do not require rapid problem solving, it might be more correct to use “It’s not brain surgery,” but in situations where rapid information recall is needed this phrase should be avoided. It is possible that both neurosurgeons and aerospace engineers are unnecessarily put on a pedestal and “It’s a walk in the park” or another phrase unrelated to a career might be more appropriate. It is also possible that other professions might deserve to be on that pedestal, and future work should aim to determine the most deserving group."*

For 2000 years Christians have held the view that everyone has something to contribute to society. With a decline in the church, we run the risk of such ideological influences receding. Granted, the church has neglected its role in intellectually defining culture to become a consumer of the culture in which it lives. We too pander to our constituents, left and right, rather than seeking the road less traveled of "both/and" in dialogue about social, religious, and scientific questions. Maybe 2022 will be better? I guess there is something to be said for even denominations dying.

12.15.2021

- [Universes from Nothing?](#)

"But never mind the book sales, Krauss is suggesting quantum vacuum fields are so nebulous as to be close enough to nothing to establish the point. ...

It should be obvious you can’t come close to nothing by talking about something regardless of how nebulous and vacuous that something is. Nothing and something are, and always will be, direct opposites and logically exclusive of one another. ...

The universe isn’t something over and above everything we know of, it isn’t some distinct thing. The universe is just a word to describe the collection of all the stuff we know of. All of which has causes."*

12.14.2021

- [Elon Musk says there are "not enough people" and that the falling birthrate could threaten human civilization](#)

"Please look at the numbers — if people don't have more children, civilization is going to crumble, mark my words,' he said. ...

'I think it is important for us to die because most of the times, people don't change their mind, they just die. If they live forever, then we might become a very ossified society where new ideas cannot succeed,' he said."*

While not a Musk fan, I do think that he's spot on with this article. Well worth the read. I suspect that in the 1960's we began the movement toward the "me" generation. Having kids is a sacrifice: financially, socially, and personally. If my focus is on me, well, to hell with kids.

Too bad. My daughter is the most wonderful thing in my life. She is more pleasure and joy than a full bank account, a bunch of friends, or the latest gadget I don't really need. She is a very selfish act on my part.

12.07.2021

- [Xenobots: Researchers Claim to Have Created New Form of Biological Self-Replication](#)

"The claim that the researchers created self-replication is highly exaggerated. The aggregation of cells into spheroids was almost entirely due to the innate capacities of the progenitor cell clusters. The researchers only arranged the cells into a configuration that maximized its performance. Their intervention was analogous to a house owner rearranging sprinklers to water more evenly his or her lawn. Most of the work depended on the design of the sprinklers and the plumbing supplying the water."*

In essence, "nothing to see here, move along". I agree with the cited article in the piece that:

"But the paper buried this in language that, at best, is overhyped, and the researchers aren't even being technically accurate when describing this work to the press. At a time when trust in science seems to be at an all-time low, this isn't likely to be helpful."

[Timmer, J. (2021, November 30). *Interesting research, but no, we don't have living, reproducing robots*. Ars Technica. Retrieved December 5, 2021, from <https://arstechnica.com/science/2021/11/mobile-clusters-of-cells-can-help-assemble-a-mini-version-of-themselves/>.]

So, even as with evolution itself, we are merely plagiarists and tinkerers in the creation of new life forms. Abiogenesis and true creation elude us, even though we know so much. This is not the major problem. The big problem is that science, acting with forethought and malice, deludes and obfuscates reality. Again, follow the massive amounts of research funding and you will see the motives clearly. Russia and China are advancing beyond us in key technologies because they focus and prioritize research and development away from "red herrings". Abiogenesis is such a pursuit. As for biological nanobots, well, I fear the day we release such things into the wild. We don't know that COVSars2 is not the product of our meddling. But I read an article that such manipulation will become more and more the pursuit of homegrown terrorists. Evil persists as a real and destructive presence. We ignore this to our own demise.

12.05.2021

- [Assaulted in robbery, victim develops 'sudden genius syndrome'](#)

"But after going back to school, Padgett says he sees math in everything, from the clouds in the sky to the roads we drive. Every shape, every circle, part of an equation we can all learn from."*

Watch the video at the bottom on why there is no such thing as a perfect circle. This, I think, is what drove Buckminster Fuller crazy about PI. I think that it could also be an argument against Jason's assertion that the world is just math. Not true. Math is an approximation of the world, and Jason's injury may just have shut off his ability to perceive its fullness. Math is only part of reality and truth. It is in the correlation and coalescing of the analog and the binary that is the real genius. Heck, we can't even come up with a random number unless we incorporate nature, and even then our math betrays us. Creation is the only true randomizer. Kudos to Jason for perceiving the edge of math around PI. PI is one example, but all the cosmic constants are fractional, only being as accurate as they can be measured and correlated. More than a little hubris here, we would rather doubt the universe and the intelligence that created it rather than doubt our mathematical perceptions of that reality.

Probably the ultimate proof we do not live in a "Matrix" is that nothing really adds up...
12.03.2021

- [Long Story Short — A Strikingly Unnatural Property of Biopolymers](#)

"Every biology textbook depicts the familiar double helix structure of DNA. This produces the false impression that the double helix structure is the preferred way for the components to align naturally. In reality, the monomers can bond with each other in a large variety of ways and unwanted molecules can interfere with the required purity. ... According to what we know about natural laws, the biopolymers of life are extraordinarily unnatural."*

The miracle is that we don't have more gobbledygook DNA rather than intelligible DNA. Again the odds are against random mutation.
12.2.2021

- [Is the Age of the Living, Self-Replicating Robot at Hand? No.](#)

"The biologists, Douglas Blackiston et al., did not create the stem cells. The stem cells *already showed* self-reproducing behavior, as is the nature of stem cells. The biologists contributed only the fact that a computer cranked through many configurations of these stem cells to find one that was a bit better at self-reproduction — and not very much better."

Yup, saw this coming. All the biological machinery is already there in the stem cells. Like so much else in modern science this is sleight of hand, and, personally, disingenuous. These scientists, or as they are represented by the popular press, are using the lion's share of work they are not crediting: the Creator who made the self-reproducing stem cells without which they would just be left with an empty petri dish at best, rotting organics at worst.
12.2.2021

- [New Episode of Long Story Short — Is the Origin of Biopolymers a Snap?](#)

I absolutely love these videos. My attention span tends to wander, and the producers of these videos know that. They keep the action going. The case against abiogenesis continues to grow. I keep being amazed at how complex our cellular biology really is. It is not a wonder that there is cancer, the wonder is that there is so little randomization and mutation that actually happens. Remember the agents of supposed new functionality, new information, and new biology, random mutations, is actually more a destructive than a creative process: there are more ways to go wrong and die than to go right and live.

Happy December 1st!
12.1.2021

November 2021:

- [Toxic deer? 'Do not eat advisory' issued for contaminated deer in central Maine](#)

"Tests showed the animals had "high levels of PFAS," a human-made chemical that is "resistant to heat, water, and oil," the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife reported."*

It is really too bad that we are still just adapting and not seeing the bigger picture of where our individualistic, consumer-driven, instant gratified culture is taking us. There is no human, or maybe even animal, alive today whose urges, instincts, and biology have not been warped and contaminated by the modern lust for luxury and individual comfort at the expense of, well, everything really. I don't even think that I can make an argument for justice anymore for

we are all complicit in normalizing the abnormal for the sake of individuals over the common good of all creation. Worse yet this sin will be visited on our children's, children's, children to heaven only knows what generation. Irresponsible. All because everyone should feel good about him or herself. After all, as long as there is no apparent hurt to anyone, what's the harm? In the end, God will let us have our way, and we will knowingly and willingly walk off the cliff of our own design. If it is not hypersonic nuclear war, it will be a wasting away of humanity because we will not only be unable to reproduce, but we really won't have an urge or drive to reproduce, and we will call it normal...

11.30.2021

- [Good morning. The Ahmaud Arbery trial offers lessons for American politics.](#)

I have to say that all I could think about was seeing myself running on a nice summer evening only to find myself being hunted like some animal because someone feared I was running away. The defense, like a good author, helped me connect to the humanity and the lack of humanity in the crime being recounted. I could see and identify myself in it. A rare moment in much of the talking past one another that seems to be the socio-political norm of today. I wish we all could learn to connect on that most basic level of common humanity. Come to think of it, wasn't that the intent of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution? Are we not after all lives that want to live in the midst of other lives that want to live? (Schwitzer)

11.30.2021

- [Scientists discover potential cause of Alzheimer's disease](#)

"Autophagy can be induced by fasting. When cells run short on proteins from an individual's diet, they fill the void by recycling proteins already present in cells. Exercise also increases autophagy."*

Hmm, a new use for a time-proven spiritual discipline: fasting is not just good for the soul, but also for the body. The article asserts that 20% of the population has an asymptomatic buildup of plaques, so that can't be the problem. We also all have tau protein that does not tangle, so that isn't the problem. Their hypothesis is that the buildup of tau that results from cells not being able to clean themselves (autophagy) produces the tangles and the clumping of the plaques. I wonder if this works hand in glove with the presence of deep sleep and the resulting flow of fluid cleaning the brain? It sounds like there are two ways to force autophagy, fasting, and exercise. I have not tried to fast as a discipline, maybe 2022 is the year to build this in on a day I am not working out.

11.30.2021

- [Can quantum mechanics explain consciousness?](#)

"Could thoughts exist in some sort of quantum superposition in an unconscious level only to become conscious when there is a specific selection — akin to a measurement of the electron's position? This is what Nobel Prize laureate physicist Roger Penrose and anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff have proposed."*

I was waiting for this! Great hypothesis. I am so glad there are greater minds than mine out there that are open to the vastness of the universe of which we can only observe some, at best, 10%. That there will always be things outside our understanding is not something that a materialist can live with. Materialism has to close its mind to any kind of mystery by building in a fudge factor for what they don't know and hold to the belief that eventually they will find the transitional fossil record or the now elusive piece of the puzzle. The non-materialist can peacefully explore this garden universe not wasting time on dead ends, but striving to know

the limits of what we can know while keeping the goal of human accountability and exceptionalism in mind. Mystery is not settling for the unknown, but simply a statement of fact that we may never know all as we strive to make sense out of the world in which we live, comprehending as much of its construction and governance as we can.

11.29.2021

- [Two Recent Papers Buttress Michael Behe's Thesis in Darwin Devolves](#)

"But as Behe underscores and as this recent paper argues, it looks instead like the yeast devolved, tossing off genetic information to achieve a niche advantage while sacrificing functionality outside the niche."*

It must have been a year or so ago I remember reading that as COVID-19 evolved there is every chance that it would become more like the flu and less deadly. The suggestion was that both our immunity would increase, but also, as the virus gained transmissibility it would lose other functions. At least anecdotally this seems to be what we are witnessing with the arrival of the omicron variant. As of now, the South African doctor who discovered the variant claims that all the cases she has seen have had mild symptoms. I wonder if this is not the way of the evolutionary process that we have assumed, using our best logic, lead to greater complexity are actually leading to less complexity and greater entropy as systems equalize and distribute? There just seems to be bursts of genetic information that wind down over time. The "Cambrian Explosion" with its seemingly vast amount of life. The emergence of gigantic dinosaurs with their complex body plans requiring huge amounts of energy that seem no longer to be around. The arrow of life seems to follow a trajectory of fits and starts that is not logically one of more energy, information, and complexity. Evolution tweaks its way to malaise rather than increasing complexity. Look at the ever-decreasing speciation we witness in our day. Not all of this is due to human evil, but what if we actually look at it as a natural process toward the mundane? Just sayin', we need a broader perspective than contemporary materialism can give us.

11.29.2021

- [Lessons Not Learned from the Evangelical Debate over Adam and Eve](#)

"It's important to appreciate what you just read: We already see evidence of function for about 10 percent of pseudogenes — something that evolutionists once thought impossible. But many pseudogenes are expressed only in specific tissues and at specific times. This suggests that it may be very difficult to detect the function and purpose of these pseudogenes. Why? Because they may be active just rarely during the human life cycle. You can't keep a human being in a lab for a lifetime to see what's going on in every tissue type."*

Well, the first thing that comes to my mind is, God does not create junk. Not junk humans and not junk DNA (what most scientists thought of pseudogenes). Secondly, when we make our logic the ultimate horizon of our thought we run the risk of missing a vast amount of reality, heading down wrong roads that lead not where the data leads, but where we think it should lead. The materialist community has long held that the vast majority of DNA is outdated junk accrued over the massive time needed by blind chance and mutation to produce what we now observe. From what I have read such assumptions are based on the lack of observation and data, not on its prevalence. It also seems to be based on a really fundamental lack of respect and wonder at the complexities involved in abiogenesis: simple life is not simple. All life is unfathomably complex and worthy of our awe, respect, and patient deduction as life processes unfold before us. We should never love our logic more than truth and reality. Which begs the question of why we do. For me in my journey pride and ego have

always hampered my ability to come new insights, understandings, and therefore, rich insight in life.

11.24.2021

- [Fake It 'til You Make It — The Power Pose Parable](#)

No quote. Crazy. Follow the money science. Well, isn't it all? Even with COVID-19. The lesson, be careful who you pay \$100,000.00 to come in and speak. Today's "this suggests", turns into tomorrow's, "oops". Once again, science is "crying wolf", and the emperor has no clothes, but will the exploited and oppressed choose to exercise their free will, you know, the one science does not want you to have so that they can tell the world what to do?

11.23.2021

- [Do the laws of physics and neuroscience disprove free will?](#)

"Be thankful for free will

This should be a relief to most people, for many reasons. First, we are definitely not automatons without choice. Second, we actually do need to take responsibility for our actions, from wasting water in a long shower to shooting someone dead. There is no cosmic machinery making us do stuff, one way or the other. This means that we must face up to the way we live our lives and how we relate to each other and to the planet, knowing that our choices do have consequences that go beyond our small bubble of being."*

This is another dinner that eats itself. Let's try to get everyone to change their minds because they cannot change their minds. Really? What an unsatisfactory meal is a circular logic like a snake that consumes itself.

11.23.2021

- [It's Not Just White People: Democrats Are Losing Normal Voters of All Races](#)

"As Levison defines them, cultural traditionalists are people who don't follow the news closely but have an easy-going personality and an open mind — contrasted with cranky, short-tempered people who are more likely to fall into the "extremist" category. They believe in patriotism and the "American way of life" but also believe that diversity, pluralism, and tolerance are essential characteristics of that American way of life. When it comes to race, these traditionalists have something of a Michael Scott view, rooted in the cliché that they "don't see race" or "don't see color." They also have religious and moral values they'd happily describe as "old fashioned" but say they have no problem with people who have different views."*

Grim, R. (2021, November 15). *It's not just white people: Democrats are losing normal voters of all races*. The Intercept. Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://theintercept.com/2021/11/15/democrats-voters-virginia-glenn-youngkin/>.

First time I've written an author of an article. Very good read. Who knew that I am a "cultural traditionalist"? As such those on the left miss identify me as a staunch conservative, and those on the right see me as too liberal. What can I say?

"Ich bin das Leben, das leben will, inmitten von Leben, das leben will."

'I am life that wants to live, in the midst of life that wants to live.'

(Albert Schweitzer)

11.16.2021

- [Here's how Elon Musk's fortune has benefited from taxpayer help](#)

"Between 2008 and the first half of 2019, sales of regulatory credits generated more than \$2

billion that was crucial to the company's survival. And the increased car sales ever since have resulted in additional credits that Tesla sold for another \$3 billion since June of 2019."*

There's a problem when we focus solely on notoriety and fame in our choice of public icons. Musk has always owed his success to the taxpayers and politicians, not the products, technology, or industry of his competence. He is a showman, and we Americans love braggadocio and insane egotism. As G.K. Chesterton observed that the psych wards are full of people who believe in themselves without reservation. I might be open to the suggestion that the further one pursues such a belief, the more delusional one becomes as reality becomes detached, forming a perfect personal fictional narrative of self-deception. I've known some church leaders in that category. Just sayin'.

11.15.2021

- [The Church has failed in COVID-19 pandemic](#)

"Once COVID-19 was a defining factor of bitterly divisive partisan politics, Christians failed to honor God by honoring and respecting others. Fearmongering about the dangers of the disease clashed with fearmongering about lost freedom. Rather than see the disease for what it is, far too many Christians aligned with their own partisan tribe and bitterly defended the absolute validity of their cause. Rather than addressing the genuine human suffering and deadly spread of the disease, Christians quickly resorted to disrespectful shaming, blaming, and bitter arguing over who was right and who was wrong."*

Great on-point article. Read the whole thing.

11.14.2021

- [How SARS-CoV-2 in American deer could alter the course of the global pandemic](#)

"And then during the winter surge in Iowa, from Nov. 23, 2020 to Jan. 10, about 80% of the deer that they tested were infected. At the peak of the surge, Kapur says, the prevalence of the virus in deer was effectively about 50 to 100 times the prevalence in Iowa residents at the time.

During this timeframe, the team also sequenced the genes of nearly 100 samples of the virus. They found the variants circulating in the deer matched the variants circulating in people."*

Think about it for a few minutes and you can see the implications. This virus is freely circulating in the deer population. You can't vaccinate a deer. The increase in infection and the parallels of mutations with human populations, like Delta, mean that there is a free flow of the virus from humans to deer. Scientists don't know if it works the other way around, or, from the sound of it, how the deer are catching the virus so freely. Not only does this mean that there will always be a reservoir of the virus, but it also means that there is a huge laboratory for mutation. The deer don't seem to get sick, they just host the virus. I first heard about this back at the beginning of the summer. Interesting how long it took for the mainstream media to catch on. I spoke with a Ph.D. candidate in neuroscience in August about the blood-brain barrier breach and the mystery of the rising spread of COVID-19 in the deer population. We are not going to be rid of this anytime soon.

11.10.2021

- [Why Physicalism Is Failing as the Accepted Approach to Science](#)

"Although we can explain more and more about the human body in terms of structure and function, there is no good science-based theory of consciousness on the horizon. And if we can explain everything about a human being except consciousness, well, we haven't explained, say, the difference between Jane and Zombie-Jane, which humans generally agree

is important."*

As I read this article a habit of mine came to mind. My wife and my daughter get totally unnerved when I do this. This article has given me new insight into what they see, or maybe I should say, what they don't see that scares them so much. I, like most people, will experience times of momentary detachment. I will star off into space, my mind completely detached from my body and its physical surrounding. For me, I am wandering in thought totally vacant of the moment. It is like being awake but not present: a zombie, physical body without consciousness. I can hear everything, I see what is in front of me, and in my periphery, but I am not present in the moment. This happens when I am really tired because of intense concentration and need some time out. They will usually nudge me either physically or vocally to "stop it", and I am back in the moment.

11.08.2021

- [Gloomy landscape for Democrats in midterms as Biden's approval drops to 38% in USA TODAY/Suffolk poll](#)

I usually give politics a very wide berth, but I can't help feeling that an opportunity has been missed. I loved the promise and potential of reconciliation and healing that flowed from Biden's platform during the last election. As a politician from an older time, a time I remember well when the drive was to work across the aisle, building bi-lateral support, I looked with anticipation of not another pendulum swing, which would have been typical, but of a more centrist time-consuming slog. Those days are gone. Everyone plays to his or her constituency. I just don't know how much more we as a country can hold together through nuclear electoral polarization. I feel that a moment of redemption has passed and with its passing, an opportunity lost. The pendulum is not slowing but gaining momentum that threatens the very structure of our union. Surely this is not fated for us but can be stopped. Everyone just needs a political time out in their own corners to pause for a reset. Would that we were strong enough to make that happen.

11.8.2021

- [Meet the opossum, nature's friendly sanitation worker](#)

"One very cool fact: they are one of the oldest living species on the planet – they wandered the Earth when dinosaurs were alive. The species is believed to be more than 70 million years old."*

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(Photo from Rhoton, J. (2021, November 7). *Meet the opossum, nature's friendly sanitation worker*. Yahoo! News. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from <https://news.yahoo.com/meet-opossum-natures-friendly-sanitation-230012103.html>.)

I just had to make room for my favorite wild animal. Quiet, humble, and all-around sweet the very underappreciated opossum. Too bad they don't live longer. Would that more folks were like them!

About 4 years ago, it was a very hard winter and we fed an opossum for a couple of months. It loved apples and dried dog food. Lucy, our dog, called it the "ugly kitty", and would look forward to ignoring it on her evening romps. Misty, the real cat, would just look on in mild

amusement, shaking her head, ignoring the whole thing.

One night the apple feast brought an unwanted raccoon. The ugly kitty was not going to let that interloper steal its meal. There was a potential fight brewing on the rail of the deck. I would not risk the dog, so I took the broom and leapt to the ugly kitty's defense. It was not the brightest moment in my life, but God watches out for us even during our stupidity. We had seen the ugly kitty give birth, raise her young, and go through the winter, I was not going to see her bullied in the spring by an arrogant raccoon. Working together we drove him off. The weather had turned warmer and we felt that the ugly kitty could find plenty of food now without our intervention, so we stopped our support. A raccoon is too much of a threat to the dog and cat.

We learned our lesson and have not subsidized the wildlife since.

11.08.2021

- [Thousands line up to see, smell 'stinky feet' odor of blooming corpse plant](#)

"Clements said the plant's scent is designed by nature to attract carrion beetles and flesh flies from miles away to help with the pollinating process. The scent peaks during the nighttime hours of 9 p.m. to 3 a.m., when the air is still and the aroma can travel more easily."*

Oddly interesting use of words, don't you think, "...designed by nature..."? How does a blind, random, mutative, undirected, and intentional process design anything? But in three words we resolve the enigma for those who choose to buy into the sleight of hand. The real wonder is the immense amount of biological energy required to produce this bloom is staggering to me. I can only imagine what it must look like in person to see the growth, which means cells rapidly multiplying at an amazing rate. Such extravagance would suggest an outlier in an otherwise conservative trajectory for evolution. Would not natural selection have favored a smaller less energy consumptive solution? I know, I know, the argument could go either way, but this is pure theatre of the natural that must not only captivate thousands of us humans who have no biological necessity care about this plant, my dog would pass it by without a second glance, but yet we stop and stare in wonder and amazement because in our souls we know that something unique is happening here, wonder beyond suggested design is evoked, and queue up to smell what we detest in order to observe the mystery we desire.

Remember that art, theatre is just as designed as an algorithm. We value art less in many ways because it does not integrate well with our logical and mathematical economy of nature and the universe, but math is only a poor illusion of reality. The machinery of the universe does not consult the human concept of pi (?) before a curve is created or the next step in a planet's orbit progressed. We as humans have the grave habit of mistaking our models for reality when we should be applying the model with deference and humility to what is. Not everything in the universe is a mathematical abstraction or reduction.

11.02.2021

- [Theoretical Physicist: Colonizing Mars Is a Ridiculous Idea](#)

"The biggest problem is not that Mars is "minus 60 degrees Celsius or minus 80 Fahrenheit," she explains, but that it has no magnetic field so the atmosphere was blown away by the solar winds. So to form Mars into a second Earth, we would first need to give it a magnetic field."*

It is obvious that some of us already live in augmented reality. Musk, Besos, Zuckerberg, and

their fellow uber-rich would be better investing in improving life on earth and making humankind their business rather than literally flights of fancy.

11.01.2021

- [A.I. Is Not A-OK](#)

"Schmidt said an Oxford student told him, about social media poison, "The union of boredom and anonymity is dangerous." Especially at the intersection of addiction and envy."*

What is not to love about that quote? And now Facebook 2.0, a.k.a Meta, is going to put all that nastiness and exploitation on steroids to define the reality of your child, grandchild, great-grandchild! The sins of the parents are indeed visited upon the children, a horrible reality. How great is that!? I don't go with looking and seeing the anti-christ everywhere, but I think that one would not be too far from a living characterization of this sinister figure than the leadership of Meta. The article continues:

"All of the people who talk about metaverses are talking about worlds that are more satisfying than the current world — you're richer, more handsome, more beautiful, more powerful, faster. So, in some years, people will choose to spend more time with their goggles on in the metaverse. And who gets to set the rules? The world will become more digital than physical. And that's not necessarily the best thing for human society."

Dowd, M. (2021, October 30). *A.I. is not A-OK*. The New York Times. Retrieved November 1, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/30/opinion/eric-schmidt-ai.html>.

I think what upsets me the most is that the average old person using Facebook does not see that they are part of the problem. The reason China is as strong as they are is that I bought into those cheap jeans, convincing myself that what does it matter if I buy them? I am one of those nickels that added up to dimes that created millions leading to the exodus of industry in the U.S. and the dependency on foreign trade. The same is happening with Facebook. Learning about the grandchildren is not an innocent pastime, it is now contributing to their exploitation, shame, and all-around life dissatisfaction. Pick up the phone and reach out to individuals instead of the masses. What drives social media is laziness in an effort to try to be mass intimate with those we supposedly love but don't have time for. Unplug and let the electricity of the server farms be used for better purposes, like powering more cell towers for better ways to actually talk to each other. With every post we see, write, or like, we become complicit in the mass exploitation that is Meta, formerly known, and hoping to escape detection by changing its identification, as Facebook.

11.01.2021

- [Daylight saving time is 'not helpful' and has 'no upsides,' experts say.](#)

Too much to pick one good lead quote. This is an exercise in insanity: we keep changing our clocks hoping to realize the benefits of energy savings and life quality only to find that consistently the data shows otherwise, but wait, next year will be different! So, we legalize and monetize marijuana, gambling, etc. because they are harmless, despite the data that suggests they produce very real personal and social problems. I would vote unequivocally for ANY candidate I felt could get rid of this clock change. We now know that sleep and stress are so important in fighting disease, bad judgment, and improving life quality that any debatable gains in energy savings are offset by the increase in health care, car repair, and social dysfunction that can be laid at the feet of this logical "black swan".

11.01.2021

October 2021:

- [Toxic chemicals linked to infertility found in Big Macs and Taco Bell burritos](#)

"More than 80% of samples contained small amounts of known phthalates, a class of chemicals used to make plastic softer and more flexible. Phthalates and other plasticizers are commonly found in food packaging and gloves, despite their known effects on human health."*

And, of course, phthalates are chemicals that the data has shown to produce not only cancers but have adverse effects on human reproduction and sexuality. We have been poisoning ourselves so long that it has become the new normal. All to two things, make someone else rich and make life convenient for us, mostly so that we can work longer hours making someone else rich! Humanity has ignored the warning signs not only of climate but of population health indicators. The big sin is that we continue to embrace not the truth of how we are recreating our environment and what it means to be human. I don't know that I like this new humanity that is born in the image of broken humanity. We have the ability to reach higher and do better, but it might just be too late. The book of Revelation poignantly reminds us that humanity that is left to its own devices will get to a point of no return. For the future of those we love, both born and imagined, I pray that humanity will wake from its materialistic fog to live into its potential yet again.

10.29.2021

- [When and why did human brains decrease in size 3,000 years ago? Ants may hold clues](#)

"Studying computational models and patterns of worker ant brain size, structure, and energy use in some ant clades, such as the *Oecophylla* weaver ant, *Atta* leafcutter ants, or the common garden ant *Formica*, showed that group-level cognition and division of labor may select for adaptive brain size variation. This means that within a social group where knowledge is shared or individuals are specialists at certain tasks, brains may adapt to become more efficient, such as decreasing in size."*

First of all, when an article uses the word "suggests", well, you know, no matter how much you want it to be fact, you are in speculation land. It then goes on to use conditional language throughout. The reality is that when we look at "brain evolution", well, it is even less fact-based than abiogenesis, for there is at least some geological suggestion about the composition of the early earth and its climate, but the last time I knew we have been unable to interview and map the brain of living ancient human from 3,000 years ago, let alone older. Follow the funding on this one folks, a whole lot of research funding at stake here that is both private tuition and public funding to support publish or perish. That having been said, it reasonable, yet far from provable, and therefore fiction, to suggest that when one does not have to remember quite as much the costly running of the brain would be a benefit to downsize. But there is also the question of what benefit would other than survival memory have been to increase the brain size in the first place? Gotta love it when speculation evolves into science all depending on who is doing the speculating.

10.25.2021

- [Our Anger Problem Is Making Me Angry](#)

"One of our fundamental problems, of course, is not that people don't care, but started caring too much, just as our politics grew more polarized, meaner, and worst of all, dumber. My professional medical advice for those wishing to reduce their Anger Fever (I did not,

technically, go to med school, though I did watch a lot of St. Elsewhere as a kid), is to stop caring so much. Not about people. Or especially about people who need your help. That is worthy of our concern and attention."*

Love it. Good article for everyone to read. I mean really, don't sweat the small stuff. The Jesus I follow (note, not the one I expect to follow me) leaves the world a bit better of a place not through power politics, nuclear weapons, or Facebook posts, but through humble service, being able to walk away rather than destroy (the "sons of thunder" thing), and really not overthinking life. I have found that it is more healing to tell a joke, even at your own expense, than to pontificate. But we live in an economy where anger and negativity sell. What a shame. We live only once. Really, we should take the opportunity to enjoy each other and life more than making Mark rich by vitriol we share. Stop living a pursuit to legacy. Do what you can in your own backyard to not harm, to not exaggerate, score a point, or get your way. Fifty years after you die, you, and I will be forgotten except that person in our families who are genealogists, and that is okay. If we have done our job right we have brought good people into the world and encouraged right-thinking where we could find it. We can then go peacefully into that Kingdom Victorious and sit equally with our mothers and fathers, and all the saints without dishonor. Do what you can, and let the next person do what he or she can, and in the evening go to bed rejoicing that you have done your best for the day, and let it all go into God's hands. Sorry, preaching is what I do.

10.22.2021

- [Asilomar AI Principles: Ethics to Guide a Top-Down Control Regime](#)

"The *Asilomar Principles* envision experts designing and programming AI systems, experts choosing the human values to favor, and experts using AI information to make decisions about the direction of human affairs. The same AI systems-Experts-Government Complex that comprises the designers, lawgivers, and policy makers, will be *the very people who will believe the results of AI systems' calculations and projections.*"*

Do we really want the ethics and morals of scientific materialists, neo-Darwinists, social media experts who have proven themselves to sell the souls of the young for profit to hold the reigns of justice, equity, and the future of humanity? I can't imagine what life would be like on Mars or earth if I had to be a "Muskovite". Science and tech are not pure, they are based on worldviews that run the gambit of perspectives on human potential, worth, and meaning. Worldviews shape the questions we ask, the data we collect, the setup of inquiry, the transparency of methodology, and finally the production of interpretation for the highest dollar in what they sell as the "truth". Why do conspiracy theories persist and gain ground? Because science has proven itself to be just as much of a handmaid to politics and economics as any other institution that is human. Really only religion owns the moral depravity of every human. Owns it and claims that it has no earthly solution in collegial institutions. Only a higher authority can call for justice, provoke accountability, and deliver retribution. All else is relative and decay. AI will just bring us to the cruel ends of our limited logic more quickly and inhumanly than ever before. Who is or will be the antichrist? Who knows the timetables? But Christians must continue to be on guard and pursue what God has revealed as right and true: "never weary of doing what is good".

10.22.2021

- [What Can Mapping the Whole Brain Tell Us About Ourselves?](#)

"Human brains differ from mouse brains in more than just size. We have more different cell types and a different balances in types of neurons."*

What occurs to me is that we take this vast complexity, over 1,000 different cell types interacting and communicating in the human brain, not to mention the regenerative machinery, so for granted. We legalize marijuana and consider doing so for other substances that might, could, do alter the human brain, especially in developing brains. With this kind of complexity, there is just so much that can go wrong. Now add in the effects of chemicals and pollutants we have introduced into the environment. We are rewriting, or restructuring the brain even without trying. Now we know, and knowing good and evil makes what we are doing generationally sinful.

10.21.2021

- ['The Rage Would Come Out of Nowhere': Personality Change Has Emerged as a Symptom of Long Covid](#)

"Situations like Roberts' offer insight into what may lead to personality change in people with Long Covid — including whether it involves specific changes to the brain, or is the result of a person's lived experiences dealing with a highly traumatic illness during a pandemic. Nordvig says it's probably both. "It is likely a combination of a primary neurological deficit, and a reaction to the stress, isolation, misunderstanding, and lack of social services out there — which is known as 'lower frustration tolerance,'" she explains."*

Too scary. Long COVID-19. I do see myself having changed a bit after this pandemic. I have no clue if I have or have not had COVID-19. I do not think most of us will ever know if we have been exposed or how this whole experience will change not only us but those we love in the future generations of humanity. I am not so sure that the general church of the UMC is helping its pastors to cope with the trauma and stress that we are being exposed to daily. We on the front lines see churches that we have poured our hearts and souls into being forever impacted and threatened by this virus. My 29 years have not prepared me or equipped me to deal with what the average pastor has to wrestle with daily during times like these. There is an unhealthy push to make not just every day, especially Sundays, lived at the "top of one's game", but with a decrease in volunteers who are now 18 plus months and counting into new routines, well, trying to keep the church program and ministry unaffected is an added burden. Thankfully there aren't many jobs that I have not done in my years, yes that includes cleaning bathrooms, so I do have the skillset to be a one-man show like Bert in the opening scenes of Disney's Mary Poppins, but this is more akin to a daily cymbal crash to the skull than a symphony of sweet music.

10.20.2021

- [The Papal Paradox: is the woke Pope alienating his flock?](#)

"He's undoubtedly genuinely anxious to be receptive and welcoming to gay people in the Church, but he's never blessed same-sex unions or suggested that the Church could do so. As for giving communion to people who would be traditionally considered to be living in adultery — those who remarry while their previous spouse is alive — he has told bishops and priests to be "pastoral" and consider the people in front of them. Is that yes or no?"*

As the Moody Blues once said, "lost in a lost world". Under the leadership of materialism, in any of its stripes, the post-modern world has uncoupled itself from the nuance of Christianity that enabled it to strive toward being all things to all people. An orthodox Christian gets what the pope is doing, just read G.K. Chesterton. Christianity has never abandoned or shied away from self-contradiction. Traditional Christianity has always been nuanced with a both/and trajectory that goes right back to Jesus who could hold that adultery was a sin, yet could stand with grace in between the sinner and justice of the day, all the while not destroying the law.

Go figure. It is the sad progression of our times for both the liberal and conservative to move toward a more binary application of not only justice but of judgment. The human imagination has become less poetic and artistic in the modern age. No wonder we are drowning in our futility and wasting away in depression. God will leave us to our ends, may God never leave us to our ends. I have faith that God will always be nuanced.

10.20.2021

- [Apparently, it's the next big thing. What is the metaverse?](#)

"Facebook has made building the metaverse one of its big priorities."*

Really. The world is cascading in a downward spiral and these upper 1% folks could care less as long as they are getting theirs. Tech has been the biggest ecological nightmare for humanity. The push for renewable energy and electricity production is not about cars or air-conditioners, it is about how we are going to power the "dataome" for all of this useless information like what I ate for supper. Facebook wants us to focus more on the vaporware of augmented or virtual reality rather than bringing a better reality in for everyone, and, by the way, it wants to be tax-free while we all pay for the means of energy production. Social media and bitcoin should be the highest-taxed industries because of all the social and environmental damage they do.

10.19.2021

- [EPA unveils strategy to regulate toxic 'forever chemicals'](#)

"PFAS, called "forever chemicals" because they last so long in the environment, have been associated with serious health conditions, including cancer and reduced birth weight."*

"PFAS are a large family of fluorinated chemicals, some of which have been linked to cancer, reproductive harm, immune system damage and other serious health problems."

The Environmental Working Group. (2021, October 18). *Update: Detection of toxic pfas chemicals increases to 2,790 communities*. Environmental Working Group. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news-release/2021/07/update-detection-toxic-pfas-chemicals-increases-2790-communities>.

The warning signs have been going off for years: cancer, human sexuality issues, fertility, immune issues, and those are just some of the broad brushstrokes that science has ignored or passed along as normal in populations. And here we are, probably too late, we have done the damage to ourselves so that our eggs are easier to flip in the morning and we don't have to worry about cleaning the pan. Why should we be surprised that so many folks are putting personal preference and free choice over the common good throughout the pandemic when we have institutionalized and rationalized this for over 200 years? Just saying, my body, my choice, give me my 'forever chemical' convenience no matter what it might do to the rest of the world. Just crazy.

10.19.2021

- [The Golden Age of Junk Science Is Killing Us](#)

"Part of the problem is that we have normalized nonsense in some very subtle and some very obvious ways. Heck, there are a host of (very) successful wellness gurus who have embraced pseudoscience as a core brand strategy."*

Of course, this is all understated, dealing only with conspiracy theory in the current COVID-19 crisis. But I wonder if the degradation of scientific information does not predate the current situation? The publish or perish food chain has produced some pretty wild stuff out

there, and when noted scientists embrace fictions like the multiverse, panspermia, alien tech in an asteroid, not to mention random mutation producing complexity, well, why not nanotech in vaccines? At its heart, it is all about violated trust in multiple spheres like science and politics that make all things possible and acceptable. Credibility in general is at an all-time low.

10.19.2021

- [Why Is U.S. Media So Negative?](#)

"Breaking news! Sources say American journalism exploits our negativity bias to maximize profits, and social media algorithms add fuel to the fire. Stephen Dubner investigates."*

Stephen J. Dubner Produced by Zack Lapinski. (2021, October 8). *Why is U.S. media so negative?* (ep. 477). Freakonomics. Retrieved October 12, 2021, from

https://freakonomics.com/podcast/american-culture-negative-media/?utm_source=join1440&utm_medium=email.

It turns out that Facebook is just popular media on steroids.

10.12.2021

- [Synthetic chemical in consumer products linked to early death, study finds](#)

"Prior research has connected phthalates with reproductive problems, such as genital malformations and undescended testes in baby boys and lower sperm counts and testosterone levels in adult males. Previous studies have also linked phthalates to childhood obesity, asthma, cardiovascular issues and cancer.

...

Often called "everywhere chemicals" because they are so common, phthalates are added to consumer products such as PVC plumbing, vinyl flooring, rain- and stain-resistant products, medical tubing, garden hoses, and some children's toys to make the plastic more flexible and harder to break.

Other common exposures come from the use of phthalates in food packaging, detergents, clothing, furniture and automotive plastics. Phthalates are also added to personal care items such as shampoo, soap, hair spray and cosmetics to make fragrances last longer."*

LaMotte, S. (2021, October 12). *Synthetic chemical in consumer products linked to early death, study finds*. CNN. Retrieved October 12, 2021, from

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/12/health/plastic-chemical-early-death-wellness/index.html>.

And we wonder why we have the world we have today. Anything from gender dystopia to the horrific increase in mental illness. We are victims of our own will for convenience over the greater good, and some folks are getting very rich over humanity's demise. Won't do their heirs much good to inherit a world where human life is not sustainable, but, there again, they probably don't care because the common morality is so egocentric, as per a neo-Darwinian scientific material logical end game, that progeny must struggle to be fittest. It turns out that not only random mutation is blind with no ability to see the future or work toward a goal, but it also blinds its proponents to the same common good.

10.12.2021

- [Economic insecurity is at the heart of Netflix's Squid Game](#)

"*Squid Game*'s dramatic premise may be one reason for its success:...

The violence and compelling characters makes it easy to overlook the theme at the show's heart—the explosive growth of debt and economic inequality in contemporary Korea.

Of course, inequality isn't a uniquely Korean problem. People are coming to similar realizations in North America and Europe, not to mention in China, parts of Southeast Asia,

and even New Zealand. That may be another reason why *Squid Game* has resonated across different cultures."*

Koo, S.-W. (n.d.). *Economic insecurity is at the heart of Netflix's Squid Game*. Quartz.

Retrieved October 9, 2021, from <https://qz.com/2070957/netflixs-squid-game-reflects-south-koreas-rising-inequality/>.

Yup. Hopelessness and helplessness as we generationally wake up to years and years of social, political, economic, and educational deferred maintenance. All one can say is, what a mess, and then there is COVID-19. I must admit that I have not nor do I intend to watch *Squid Game*, not my genre of entertainment. I don't like dark themes, but I am interested in the public fascination and its connection with the mood of not just this country, but the world. Modernity is going terribly wrong. The Star Trek utopian society of scientific materialism does not reflect reality. In the end the average person is going to vote and live his or her own interest if given the chance without correction.

10.09.2021

- [Rewilding your attention](#)

"'Rewild your attention' — that's a wonderful way of putting it!... Instead of crowding your attention with what's already going viral on the intertubes, focus on the weird stuff. Hunt down the idiosyncratic posts and videos that people are publishing, oftentimes to tiny and niche audiences. It's decidedly unviral culture — but it's more likely to plant in your mind the seed of a rare, new idea."*

Thompson, C. (2021, October 5). *Rewilding your attention*. Medium. Retrieved October 9, 2021, from <https://uxdesign.cc/rewilding-your-attention-d518ede18855>.

I loved this article. There's always been a bit of a nonconformist in me. I one DS accuse me of not being a team player because I did not go along and get along quietly. I am one of those who truly believe that Aslan is not a tame lion! Herd mentality is good in moderation, but greener fields are seldom found by groupthink. I believe I said something about that below, or I should have done! Joining on the bandwagon of the merely virial is oh too safe. I must admit that this is part of what fascinates and calls me to the "Global Methodist Church" movement, it breaks out of the institutional church that so often seems too distracted by the institution to be a practical and dynamic force for Christian change in the world. At its heart, the mainline knows this problem and wishes to be more of a movement, but that, I fear, would entail the risk of "rewilding" their attention, which is more easily said than done.

10.09.2021

- [Highlight—"Junk DNA" No More: Repetitive Elements as Vital Sources of Flatworm Variation](#)

"'The days of 'junk DNA' are over,' according to Christoph Grunau and Christoph Grevelding, the senior authors of a new research article in *Genome Biology and Evolution*."

Why this is so important for me is that the "Junk DNA" claim has been touted as what one should expect from an unguided process, a lot of useless information. Well, it now seems that what is on the surface useless to us may have a function that escapes our understanding. After all, passing along useless information is a costly enterprise biologically and societally.

10.08.2021

September 2021:

- [7 Revealing Ways AIs Fail](#)

I stepped away from reading this article with a deep sense of feeling that it was written years ago rather than days ago. While AI has advanced in its speed and its complexity, it still has many fundamental issues that belie its pattern matching core, not true intelligence. There is a long way to go before self-driving cars or trucks are able to take to the road without being more than driver assist. This is not necessarily a bad thing. We humans suffer when we are not engaged in the lives we lead.

09.25.2021

- [Using statistical methods to model the fine-tuning of molecular machines and systems](#)

"A major conclusion of our work is that fine-tuning is a clear feature of biological systems. Indeed, fine-tuning is even more extreme in biological systems than in inorganic systems. It is detectable within the realm of scientific methodology. Biology is inherently more complicated than the large-scale universe and so fine-tuning is even more a feature."*

Anyone who has watched either:

Or:

could potentially have seen this theory and mathematical modeling coming. What amazes me most is that the broad spectrum of Christianity is not inoculating any of its youth or adults from infection by the highly improbable assertions of the scientific materialists. I just ordered confirmation material and there is no engagement on the front of materialism. With a daughter in college, I know that all of these kids are going to be confronted with scientific materialist claims and, well, fallacies like Darwin's "warm little pond" that is the height of fair tales both chemically and in the geological record, but accepted as truth because there is nothing better out there and we can't believe in God.

09.22.2021

- [Detecting Malicious Intent in Undisputed Design](#)

"Because AI cannot yet mimic the cultural nuances known by human writers, an AI algorithm programmed to replace words with synonyms can make a cultural faux pas. It has no problem replacing "cloud computing" with "haze figuring." A human editor can detect the humor in a paper that speaks of "signal to noise" as "flag to commotion." This lack of nuance in software can help integrity sleuths for now — until AI catches up."*

Well, it will be increasingly more difficult to spot real content from artificial content, but there is another ethical aspect. Our current academic model is to reward scientists who publish: publish or perish. There is already a whole lot of junk out there, but who is going to be the doorkeeper on the scientific community that has no higher call than the survival of the fittest for original ethical human content referencing contemporary, rather than historic, investigation? After all, the government is paying for research with little reflection on integrity. AI publishing could lead to the biggest fraud in human history as algorithms churn out cleverly reworded historic interpretations, not new science. Too bad all the latest attempts at sermon prep by AI have yielded nothing but gobbledygook and heresy, sometimes I could use a break in the creative process.

09.20.2021

- [An Odd Result From a Dark Matter Detector Might Be Something Even Wilder](#)

"Because the accelerated expansion of the Universe is only detectable on very large scales,

and gravity works on local scales, any dark matter model that suggests a fifth force would also need to adequately explain why that force isn't obvious in our astronomical neighborhood."*

One would think that such articles and observations would be both a means of wonder and a source of humility. After all, when our calculations lead us to the understanding that we are only able to observe 5% of the physical world that surrounds us, it seems to me that our corner of the universe is typical even if our circumstances are unique. I think that should we ever be able to really go out into that vast universe we will find it both familiar with our experience and yet exotic to our understanding, for it will be like our observations of our home and yet unlike our calculated predictions. But like 95% of our reality, such statements are really unknown and unsupportable.

09.18.2021

- [Leak reveals Facebook and Ray-Ban's upcoming smart glasses](#)

" As it stands now, they appear to be merely camera equipped glasses, much like models from Snap — and in the meantime, Snap has moved on to augmented reality "

Cameras in glasses should be outlawed or made to have green LEDs to show that they are on. Such an invasion of privacy. Only the oppressive government of China will like these things. As for augmented reality, well, too many of us want to live in a fantasy world as it is. We really don't need folks walking around in more oblivion.

09.09.2021

- [Huge new fossil species uncovered in Canada](#)

"The Cambrian period spanned from around 541 to 485 million years ago. It was a critical time in the evolution of life on Earth because it marked a massive explosion in diversity, with most of the major groups of animals we know today emerging, from arthropods and molluscs to echinoderms and chordates (us)."

Wow. How did unguided processes do that? A two-foot-long swimming head out of nothing. We are going to veer aside from all of those new body plans, encompassing all current body plans and more, and where all that information came from for the moment. The sheer size of this thing should suggest many fossil precursors. Yet, no such complete tree has been found. Add another chapter to the failure of unguided blind mutation as the process that drives speciation. Once more evolution is revealed as an information tweak, usually at a cost, and not the driver of new forms. Notice how entropy is slowly but surely creeping into the modern ecosystem's diversity? Slowly we are creeping not to increased speciation, but through extinction, survival of the fittest, to fewer species, and equilibrium.

Once again we have been sold a model of reality that does not fit, and on which we have built our current materialist culture to the threat of the world. Now that scientific materialism has produced this culture, it sees the dead end and wants to go find another planet, but like multi-universes push out the problems of fine-tuning and information, the problem with humanity will follow humanity into every corner.

09.09.2021

- [Surprise: The Composition of Gases and Metals in the Milky Way Are Not As Expected](#)

"Today, a team of astronomers from the University of Geneva (UNIGE) demonstrates that these gases are not mixed as much as previously thought, which has a strong impact on the current understanding of the evolution of galaxies. As a result, simulations of the Milky

Way's evolution will have to be modified."*

I think that tuning our models as observed or observable reality comes into greater focus is admirable and scientific. What, to me, is less so is when we promote and project our simulations as the reality that then guides and undergirds public opinion, policy, and funding. Our models and our math are only approximations not only of things distant but also how to draw a circle. The ratio PI is, no matter the decimal places, really, a rounded estimate of a simple, natural, analog form. PI is a model of reality on which we never seem to find the truth, how many other surprises await us when and if we finally get beyond our own solar system.

09.09.2021

- [We treat COVID patients. Here's why the 'pandemic of the unvaccinated' narrative is wrong.](#)
"We're all in this together, and if there are actions we all – regardless of vaccination status – can be taking to stop the delta variant from surging in our hospitals and our communities, we must do them. The public health messaging about “pandemic of the unvaccinated” plays to the worst aspects of human nature and does not encourage all people to practice the behaviors needed to curb this virus."*

It is too seldom that we hear a voice of reason in the cacophony of political posturing. The media, political pundits, and escapists seem too eager to focus on a common enemy and claim that we can unite and solve the problem if we just eliminate the enemy. When you look at the sad progression of many of the atrocities that we now call war crimes, that is really what was at the root, a common enemy who we normal, intelligent, rational humans could dehumanize. What history teaches us is that not only does such dehumanization seem to excuse treating others with cruelty, but it never solves the core problems that plague us. I can't help but feel that all of these COVID-19 mandates should have, could have rolled out differently. First, the thing I would have liked to see is a change from "trust us, we're scientists who know what's best", to an explanation of how it all works. Science has been horribly wrong many times before, and the world has shifted to a place where we don't even trust our doctors without going to the web to research our own conditions.

09.07.2021

- [How narcissists climb the career ladder quickly](#)
"Rovelli and Curnis believe that their results have serious implications for the workplace, since they show that narcissistic people are still favoured despite the well-known problems they present to their companies. “Our results are somewhat worrying,” say Rovelli and Curnis. They point out that the narcissists’ rapid promotion could mean they lack the necessary experience to carry out their responsibilities – which could exacerbate the effects of their rash and dishonest decision making."*

Thankfully I've only had one true narcissist for a boss. It was horrible. He was a pretty boy who was full of his own looks and achievements, but little else. One of my parishioners was the parent of one of his former parishioners. She claimed that her daughter left his church because he was rude and uncaring. Once he made it to the cabinet, he tried his hardest to get to be a bishop, heaven helped us by not allowing that move. His only credit is that he had been given the highest steeples in the conference more based on his looks and connections, well, there is more to this that cannot be said in writing. Most folks we glad to see him leave the cabinet and now that his time is done, off onto obscurity. No bright and shining star here, nothing to see, move along, like most self-promoters.

I think that this is why Jesus and the early pre-Constantine church sought to elevate the most humble who really didn't want to move up. They, and God, knew that such folks would not rely on personal charm or promotion of self, but focus on the call and the work to be done. Well, how often we are fooled by a pretty face, a snazzy suit, and dyed hair!

09.07.2021

- [“Do You Believe in Evolution?” A Short Answer](#)

"Yes, I believe in the evolution of life, and I believe in the evolution of automobiles, but I don't believe either could have happened without intelligent design.

...

I don't believe that the four fundamental, unintelligent forces of physics alone could have rearranged the fundamental particles of physics on Earth into computers, science libraries, and cell phones, for the same reasons I don't believe tornadoes will ever run backward and turn rubble into houses and cars."*

09.06.2021

- [How Complex Is a Single Neuron in Your Brain?](#)

No quote from the article. This is just one long quote from a closed access paper. But the takeaway is that modern artificial neural networks are based on a 70-year-old outdated concept of how a neuron works and that modeling our current understanding, well, we don't have computers powerful enough.

09.05.2021

- [‘Return Of The God Hypothesis’ Explains Why Science Can No Longer Ignore Intelligent Design](#)

"Charles Darwin's extremely implausible explanation for the origin of species, which becomes more implausible with every new biological and biochemical discovery, remains popular in the scientific world today only because — no matter how implausible and how inconsistent with the evidence — it must be true because it is the only alternative anyone can imagine to the “unscientific” theory of intelligent design."*

When a mainline media outlet like the Federalist begins to allow what remains a toxic subject on most college campuses, well, you know that the ideas and ideals expressed are gaining traction. Actually, the origin of species by random mutation and chance combination is leading to a lot of dead ends. The only fuel that keeps it around is that there is no better materialist theory and there are too many careers with too much money in the pipeline to give it up. So, let's add on a few universes, push the problem out and hope for the best.

09.04.2021

- [Your Next Car May Be Built With Ocean Rocks. Scientists Can't Agree If That's Good](#)

"Industry proponents say deep sea mining is more environmentally friendly than land-based mining, making it the best option in the face of looming mineral shortages for electric vehicles and a tight timeline to decarbonize transit. Marine and climate scientists counter that there's scant data on the deep sea to gauge potential consequences for oceanic biodiversity and carbon sequestration, and that it would take decades of study to get a holistic assessment."*

Silly humans. We always want our cake and eat it too. When will we learn? We lean toward

the beatific "Star Trek" vision of a costless future socialist world where everything is both plentiful and free. The only true future for humanity, at least in the short run, is one of sacrifice and self-imposed deprivation. Energy, minerals, whatever do not spontaneously emerge out of nothing, well, unless you are the big bang. The seafloor is not just material haphazardly strewn, but an organism that lives and breathes as a colony of interdependent life and processes. We disturb such a beast to our peril. I do not want the second coming to happen on my watch. I believe in it. I can't wait for the fulfillment of time, but to aid it is to work with Satan and the forces of evil in this world. No, I would love for this world to exist in perfect balance until our sun burns out and fries us. Yet, it looks like humanity, well, I use that term too loosely, it looks like *homo sapiens*, creatures capable of humanity, are hell-bent on a materialist neo-Darwinian apocalypse that will make the judgment day of God look serene in comparison. Too bad. So much potential wasted on bitcoin, air conditioning, individual freedom, and IP addressable dishwashers that can let me know the dishes are done while I am on vacation. This is not humanity, this is pure stupidity.

09.03.2021

- [Bitcoin Uses More Electricity Than Many Countries. How Is That Possible?](#)

"The process of creating Bitcoin to spend or trade consumes around 91 terawatt-hours of electricity annually, more than is used by Finland, a nation of about 5.5 million. Alex de Vries, a Paris-based economist, estimates that every year and a half or so, the computational power of mining hardware doubles, making older machines obsolete. According to his calculations, at the start of 2021, Bitcoin alone was generating more e-waste than many midsize countries."*

So much for the green revolution. The brave new world we are headed toward seems plagued by energy problems, environmental catastrophes, and massive e-waste issues. Why aren't the "new green" folks up in arms and outlawing bitcoin in the US economy?

09.03.2021

- [Evolutionary Imagination and Belief Drive False Claims of a "Four-Legged Whale"](#)

"The problem with these claims? That's right folks — they didn't find any of the fossil's legs. Everything you just read about this fossil is the product of imagination. In fact, if you check the technical paper you'll learn that they found very little of the fossil at all."*

It used to be that such deception and tricks were only the tools of tabloid papers and not the perceived plain objective reporting of the established news media. Well, the fantasy is broken. I saw the picture of the pieces on which the interpretation was based. I thought at the time, "Wow, how did you come up with that from this?" Even given the suggestion of body form, there just was not enough of whatever this was left to figure out anything. A lot of the skull and a few intermediary vertebrae are all they have to go on. None of the critical parts that might suggest legs versus fins versus nothing remains. Total hack job and sensationalism. An active imagination and the lust to get in the press, making headlines, I think played more into this than real abstract thought. AI could have done better.

09.02.2021

August 2021:

- [This Physicist Discovered an Escape From Hawking's Black Hole Paradox](#)

"Page's discovery was that if you assume that the evolution of the universe doesn't lose

information, then, if you start out with..."*

If we assume that math is a human construct, which it is, and then make the proposition that we can add in variables or constants that fill in missing information, like "dark matter" or "dark energy", then we can do all kinds of things to make the equation work. Kind of like assuming that biogenesis had to take place, so let's add chemicals and environmental attributes in concentrations that could not have existed in prebiotic earth, but can produce at least something that suggests what we observe, and, voila, success. Ultimately none of this solves the questions that are so dear to human existence, like where we are going to get food? How and why should we be kind to each other? Where are we headed as the penultimate species on this planet if not the universe, and how and why are we going there? Our tech has brought much into existence, but the cost to the environment, life, and quality has been high. We now live on scorching earth that has a dubious future that might just make the application of all this tech irrelevant. The questions will remain, are our pursuits worth it? Has the post-industrial world focused its resources on the right trajectory?

Far from the idyllic society of "Star Trek", any generation, we see our assumptions failing dramatically. AI has done little more than help China oppress its population, helped Tesla ram the rear end of police cars, and provide us with killing machines that ruthlessly apply algorithms. All because we bought into an initial assumption, made it fit, and reimagined the universe. We need to be careful about what we assume and how from the start it constrains or determines the reality we perceive.

08.26.2021

- ["The Humanics Philosophy of Springfield College" of Springfield College](#) [pdf]
"To build men, one must know man. Out of this conviction there developed the concept of Humanics - a set of ideas, values, and goals which through several metamorphoses became the accepted philosophy of education at Springfield College. It is because of this philosophy that the College believes itself to be distinct and different from other colleges. It is around this philosophy that the college administration, faculty, students, and alumni join in a cooperative effort to move toward commonly sought goals. It is by focusing on this philosophy that there develops on its campus a college community which, in open communication, makes communion and commitment possible."*

Body, mind, brain, and soul is what is the difference between mere education, passing along and contributing to the dataome, and realizing the higher ideals of a fully engaged superperson who strains toward the perfection of the future. Today we too readily accept information as education.

08.26.2021

- [Mind-Blowing Benefits of Exercise](#)
"...stressed-out women who exercised vigorously for an average of 45 minutes over a three-day period had cells that showed fewer signs of aging compared with women who were stressed and inactive. Working out may also help us reduce ruminating -- reliving stressful thoughts again and again -- by altering blood flow to the brain, according to study authors."*

Just sayin'...

Had a conversation with someone who had gastric bypass surgery and lost 250 lbs., meaning this person was at one point over 400 lbs.! But while this is a celebration, activity is key to keeping healthy or even reversing the damage of a gluttonous and greedy culture, two deadly sins folks. Also, I suggest that it is environmentally sound. Would that my activity could be

put to good work as intended by God. If God had wanted brains in a bottle, God would have created such.

Again, just sayin'.

08.26.2021

- [Quantum Physicist Shows How Consciousness Can Create Reality](#)

"While reflections on a universal Will or universal Mind (Bernardo Kastrup's view) will seem far out to many, it's helpful to realize that quantum mechanics, among other things, has made simple materialism, including physicalism, increasingly untenable. So curious minds look at alternatives."*

Indeed! I wondered when we begin to see some literature reflecting the mind/consciousness debate and quantum mechanics, especially around "spooky" or quantum entanglement. Remember, we only perceive about 5% of this "garden universe", to use a phrase from the Moody Blues, the rest is curiously referred to as dark matter and energy. The term "dark" is a scientific materialist way of describing something we cumulatively cannot explain or know. I guess mysterious or unknown would provoke too much truth about how perfect science has answered the questions of existence. The universe is greater than our observations of everything because we cannot observe everything/universe. Jesus is right, humility is a better way to the truth than hubris will ever be, for humility realizes that there is always more.

08.23.2021

- [The Vaccinated Are Worried and Scientists Don't Have Answers](#)

"For the time being, there are simply more questions than answers. Are breakthrough infections ticking up because of the delta variant, waning immunity or a return to normal life? Are vaccinated people more vulnerable to severe illness than previously thought? Just how common are breakthrough infections? It's anyone's guess."*

In my book, Bloomberg is a reliable and respected source for news and vetting information. For the above paragraph to be in one of their pieces is remarkable. Remarkable because it is counter to everything that we have been hearing from the popular press and through official sources. There is a huge risk in using guesswork to guide policy.

08.22.2021

- [Defending the Mind's Reality at a Materialist Cocktail Party](#)

"Most of the university cocktail set is quite sure that the mind is simply what the brain does. To doubt that, in their view, is to part company with science. And yet the evidence points in the opposite direction. If you are stuck with them, here are some snatches of their usual brilliance, along with suggested replies and their sources."*

While I don't travel in the "university cocktail set", I do meet a lot of folks who have questions or innocent presumptions about mind, brain, and consciousness that betray academic or popular programming. This is a nice summation of the field. I just wish that I had a better brain for my mind to use!

08.21.2021

- [Swiss researchers calculate pi to new record of 62.8tn figures](#)

"Researchers nevertheless continue to push calculations for the constant – whose first 10 figures are 3.141592653 – ever further using powerful computers."*

I heard it said that Buckminster Fuller was troubled by PI. Fuller felt that the universe did not round, nor does push calculations out 62.8 trillion decimal places before it creates a bubble.

Math and numbers are artificial and incomplete, yet we, arguably without choice, use them to model and fill in for reality, often supplanting that reality: we do great harm when we mistake the model for reality. How humbling is it to consider that it has taken our modern tech "108 days and nine hours" to draw a circle.

08.18.2021

- [New "Long Story Short" Video Delivers a Dose of Reality for Origin-of-Life Researchers](#)

"Experiments to produce the building blocks of life always begin with unnaturally pure, concentrated reagents. These are purchased from laboratory supply shops and produced through sophisticated, intelligently designed processes."*

Science is best consumed critically. Look for the conditionals, push for where shortcuts to processes have been made. It is hard not to get a cake when you design to bake one with the selected ingredients, leaving only to chance if the conditions are right for rising or falling. But in a combination of cake ingredients, one cannot get lasagna.

08.18.2021

- [The developer of the AstraZeneca shot says the Delta variant has made herd immunity impossible](#)

"Israel is a good example of this: COVID-19 cases dropped in the country after it vaccinated about 80% of adults — prompting some to hope that it had reached herd immunity — but the Delta variant has since brought another surge of cases."*

I suspect that the CDC and other government bodies/officials that disperse the information and data are a bit concerned that news like this will be too damaging for the majority of folks to be able to handle. Most of us have become too psychologically fragile to consider going back to wearing masks and shutting down larger gatherings, but this is the only way that we will limit COVID-19. The current vaccines have given us a reprieve but they are not a solution. The more the vaccines are exposed to the virus, the better it will become at working around our attempts. I would think that this is the most critical time for us in our war against COVID-19, and it looks likely that we will need more relief money before this is over, so, we should be careful about what we spend in other places.

08.12.2021

- [Randomness is Not a Scientific Explanation](#)

"Here's the irony of the view that whatever is unique in our universe is random: We can never know if anything is truly random. This is because randomness is unprovable, which was proven by three different computer scientists: Ray Solomonoff, Andrey Kolmogorov, and Gregory Chaitin. The only thing we can know is that something is not random. Hence, we can never know that something originated from randomness."*

So much for random mutations. The article goes on to assert that when scientific materialists assert randomness as a cause, well, that is just shorthand for they don't really know what the cause is. Wow, makes sense, and it makes them sound like they know what they are talking about.

08.10.2021

- [The vaccinated are angry. That's understandable but unproductive, health experts say](#)

"Public health experts told USA TODAY that anger is understandable, widespread and

unproductive. They worry that shaming and blaming the unvaccinated could backfire – entrenching their decision rather than persuading them to get the shots."*

I have a love/hate relationship with my calling. For us to be the body of Christ as God intended it in the midst of a world that is very far from God's will for the fullness of life God intended for humans, I am required by faith to work with all kinds of folks: being as much as possible, all things to all people. The biggest journey has been the diminution of ego, pride, selfishness. It is hard because I am human and I get hurt, feel attacks, and also feel the inward pain of being right in my pursuits to which others disregard with reckless abandon. Doggone it, I want to get mad, throw a hissy fit, and either bang heads or walk away. Then Jesus steps into the room saying "Kregg, do you love me? Well, feed my sheep!"

Anger is as unproductive as intractability. Anger and prejudice do nothing to advance an argument except cement polarization. I suspect that most of what separates us in the current socio-political context has logic and data as a secondary cause. The primary source, in my humble opinion, is the loss of trust and discourse that has produced the current toxic milieu. Instead of "all ways are the queen's ways", we should rather pursue all ways are valid for consideration until we fully explore, hear, and strive to empathetically understand one another. Granted that this takes a heck of a long time, and maybe one lifetime will not avail to produce the society for which we yearn, but I would suggest that we as humans would produce something more stable with fewer swings of the pendulum than we are now experiencing.

Remember the old adage of "what goes around, comes around", everything that is gained by the pen can be taken by the pen, everything that the gun, bomb, or newest weapon can produce is just as volatile as the next weapon, and all are dependant on the scarcity or surplus of competition for resources. "Revolution never won, it's just another form of gun, to again what they have done...", thank you to the Moody Blues who remind us that extremism of any color is not an avenue for peace nor justice.

08.10.2021

- [One of the Ocean's Biggest Threats Is Still Mostly a Mystery](#)

"The first signs of trouble came in the mid-2000s. A strikingly beautiful, highly venomous animal called the lionfish—first spotted outside its native range in the Indo-Pacific in the 1980s—seemed to be in every reef, mangrove forest, and seagrass meadow in the Caribbean. The fish quickly became the face of what the International Union for Conservation of Nature has called “arguably the most insidious threat” to marine biodiversity: invasive species."*

So, this is not some enthusiast releasing a pet into a self-contained ecosystem, like a pond or a lake, but the distribution of a highly successful species wandering from its habitat of origin. Along the way it is "taking down", outcompeting native species. Is this not what it means that the fittest compete to survive? Do terms like "invasive species" say more about our prejudice and assumptions than they do about the processes at work? After all, the tinker that is evolution is ever blindly trying to refine a better predator: der Übermensch.

It takes intelligence to know when a predator becomes so efficient that it will deplete all but itself, and then only be able to feed on itself. We see this as "intelligent" humans try to combat invaders like the Zebra Mussel or Silver Carp. It is interesting that both of these are species that we cannot monetize easily, threaten food sources, and inconvenience recreation. I wonder if this is not why we see them not in the light of evolutionary processes, but as invasive? They are impressive predators who will conquer the world, reduce its complexity and diversity despite our intervention.

In the study of biology, there seems to be a bias toward the presumption of both diversity and complexity. But what if, without intervention from intelligence, all systems move more towards stasis and simplicity? To my untrained eye, this is what the fossil record at least implies.

08.09.2021

- [The Surprising Benefits of Talking to Strangers](#)

"The results of that research have been striking. Again and again, studies have shown that talking with strangers can make us happier, more connected to our communities, mentally sharper, healthier, less lonely, and more trustful and optimistic. Yet, like Nic, many of us are wary of those interactions, especially after the coronavirus pandemic limited our social lives so severely."*

A little harder to do in this era of COVID-19, but nice encouragement. We really do need to be a bit less intimidating and fearful of each other.

08.05.2021

- [The really worrisome thing about the Delta variant](#)

"Here's the real news: there is growing evidence that -- for whatever reason (higher viral loads, something different about how the virus is handled by less mature immune systems, or something else), children infected by the Delta variant may develop a more severe form of the disease compared to illness caused by other forms of the virus."*

With all the long-term side effects, including an up to 7% drop in intelligence in severe cases, that have been attributed to COVID-19, why would a parent or expecting parent be willing to gamble with the future of their children? The moment my daughter was eligible for vaccination, I encouraged her to get it. Crazy. We get the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) as a matter of course, yet we balk at SARS-CoV-2 immunization. Granted it does not have the history of the MMR, but it probably has more data from around the world than the MMR. Curious that there have been no further side effects from the vaccine reported since the early with heart inflammation in some recipients.

Too bad we don't believe the rest of the world: "[Fully Vaccinated Still at Considerable Risk of Getting COVID, Giant UK Study Shows](#)". So, fully vaccinated parents and would-be parents are bringing this home to their vulnerable children. Just because I don't want something to be, does not make it true. See the post of 08.02.2021, "The Infantilization of Western Culture".

08.04.2021

- [The infantilization of Western culture](#)

"While scholars such as James Côté and Gary Cross remind us that infantilizing trends began well before our current moment, I believe our daily interactions with smartphones and social media are so pleasurable precisely because they normalize and gratify infantile dispositions. They endorse self-centeredness and inflated exhibitionism. They promote an orientation towards the present, rewarding impulsivity and celebrating constant and instant gratification."*

Wow, cool beans. I think this op-ed makes a whole lot of sense of the world I see around us. Most folks just need to grow up and get out of their Disneyland-shaped realities and expectations, especially of their own egos and deceptive importance. We have a rare privilege to impact the world in the seventy-odd years most of us are given. God gives them not to create memories that death or illness take away, but to form relationships, do good work, and

get messy with humanity in producing a better world.
08.02.2021

July 2021:

- [How the coronavirus infects cells — and why Delta is so dangerous](#)

No quote from the article just a great read. Very accessible and easy to follow. The pictures move! The illustrations add a huge amount to understanding what is going on. This is probably the most thorough and up-to-date article I have seen. Well worth the read.
07.30.2021

- [Students Sue School District for \\$12 Million Over “Monkey See” Photos](#)

"They are suing their school district for \$12 million after the teacher of their advanced zoology class showed slides of them juxtaposed with a gorilla with the caption “Monkey see, monkey do.” The photo of the four was taken on a field trip with their class to the Bronx Zoo, a place with a dismal history. There, in 1906, the African pygmy Ota Benga was displayed in a cage in the zoo’s Monkey House to educate the public about the insights of Darwinian theory.”*

Beware Social Darwinism is not dead nor doth it sleep! Not only is it alive in New York, but, as I referred to below, Richard Dawkins takes neo-Darwinism to the same chilling ends that Hitler and many late 19th and early 20th century scientists did, until they woke to the unpalatability of their position to the general public, see [Dawkins is wrong – grossly wrong – about Down’s syndrome](#) for example. By their fruits, ye shall know them. The fruit of the last 100 plus years of scientific materialism is less than encouraging and has brought us to a world that is in deep distress in almost every way.
07.30.2021

- [Why Did So Many Doctors Become Nazis?](#)

"It is worthy of emphasis that although many professions (including law) were “taken in” by Nazi philosophy, doctors and nurses had a peculiarly strong attraction to it. Robert N. Proctor (1988) notes that physicians joined the Nazi party in droves (nearly 50% by 1945), much higher than any other profession. Physicians were seven times more likely to join the SS than other employed German males. Nurses were also major collaborators. The Holocaust should be studied by every health care professional as a reminder of how sacred the substance of our craft is, and what the consequences may be if we forget the dignity of persons again.”*

I remember a conversation with a laser friend in Connecticut who asserted that Hitler was a Christian. I had to remind him that like many leaders, Hitler tried to co-opt religion in his attempt to gain power. As Hitler moved toward total control, he moved away from an established religion and toward an establishment religion: Hitler's true god was the logical end of Darwinian evolution in the science of the times and in the philosophy of Nietzsche. Hitler wanted to be not the father of many nations, but the creator, or facilitator, of a one great nation of genetically superior superhumans people by the Arian race. What stopped him was the combined effort of the wilting Christian morality of Europe infused by the power and conviction of America who fanned the flames of moral outrage and the purely Christian understanding that life is a sacred trust that requires even the protection of those society sees as less productive or capable. In Darwin, the genetically inferior get left behind in a cruel battle for fitness. In Jesus Christ, no one gets left behind for everyone is of sacred value and

worth. Them's words worth living and dying for!

07.30.2021

- [Eating foods high in flavonoids could slow down cognitive decline, a study says](#)
"Additionally, eating flavonoids only plays a small role in potentially slowing down cognitive decline, he said. People should live a healthy lifestyle as well, he noted, which includes regular physically activity and not smoking.
The Mediterranean diet has been shown to be effective in the preservation of cognitive function, Potts said, and many of the foods featured in the diet are high in flavonoids."*

God did not build us for the easy life of pre-masticated and partially digested, commonly known as processed, foods. Like a muscle, proper nutrition works our digestive tracks out in order to make them stronger. Like any workout, this means discomfort at first. The problem is when to know if this is transitory or chronic. I now am up to eating truly remarkable amounts of fiber without any discomfort in any way not by eliminating any WHOLE food that mildly bothered me, but by waiting for my system to catch up to what I was eating. Again, this is not a solution for chronic digestive issues. I am curious if anyone is working the kind of stuff that some are doing on building up peanut toleration in those who have allergies: small dose introduction. I also think that some of the new therapies around gut organisms are intriguing. We are not only what we eat, but the bacteria we encourage and the viruses we fight all produce a garden universe that vibrates completely. It is remarkable what the Lord has made.

07.30.2021

- [Research looks for possible COVID tie to later Alzheimer's](#)
"One study of older adults in Argentina found a surprising amount of dementia-like changes in memory and thinking for at least six months after a bout with the coronavirus -- regardless of the severity of their infection. Other researchers found Alzheimer's-related proteins in the blood of New Yorkers whose COVID-19 triggered brain symptoms early on."*

So, we need to not only worry about today but how this can impact long term on our populations. It seems to me that the ounce of prevention today, though inconvenient, is worth a pound of cure tomorrow. This is especially worrisome with pregnant women, babies, and youth. We have no clue the seeds we are sowing biologically through our ignorance.

07.30.2021

- [CDC mask decision followed stunning findings from Cape Cod beach outbreak](#)
"As of Thursday, 882 people were tied to the Provincetown outbreak. Among those living in Massachusetts, 74% of them were fully immunized, yet officials said the vast majority were also reporting symptoms. Seven people were reported hospitalized."*

Oh my, I am utterly surprised... NOT. Really, this is a "head in the sand" moment. What, about a month ago Israel put its masks back on because the data showed that the vaccines were only 30% to 40% effective at stopping transmission. But our pride and lack of survival instinct have led us over the cliff. "Unless I see the data, or have direct experience..." well, here it comes. This is truly bad news for it will not just lead to a fourth wave, but a petri dish for an even worse variant. COVID-19 is not done with us yet.

07.30.2021

- [Our Scientific Salvation Will Be The Death Of Us](#)
"Rationality does not deal with the unknown unknowns. The perfectly rational man is a closed book, one who has perfectly circumscribed reality within his mind. This has a double

effect, which are mutually reinforcing. First, the perfect rationality closes him off to the unknown unknowns. Second, since the rational man knows all physical means, he focuses with a laser like precision on the path of the ultimate human end: physical immortality.... Yet if we take a step back and look at the past couple centuries, the era of progress has been anything but progressive. Instead we have hundreds of millions murdered, many more lives ruined, and humanity held in thrall to a vision that denies the reality of its rotten fruit."*

All "closed books" are not only known quantities, they are not only closed to consideration of anything outside of their cognitive framework, not only closed to wonder and mystery, they are in a sense dead. There is nothing new to explore, only further information on well-known pathways. No new application that the side streets of open-mindedness can lead us down. As E. F. Schumacher observed: "After all, matters that are beyond doubt are, in a sense, dead; they do not constitute a challenge to the living.

To accept anything as true means to incur the risk of error. If I limit myself to knowledge that I consider true beyond doubt, I minimize the risk of error but I maximize, at the same time, the risk of missing out on what may be the subtlest, most important and most rewarding things in life." (Schumacher, E. F.. *A Guide for the Perplexed* (p. 3). Unknown. Kindle Edition.)

07.28.2021

- [Too much coffee linked with raising dementia risk, shrinking brain](#)

Ouch, that hurt. Well, the good with the bad. Thankfully I have limited my intake to about four cups of half-calf a day for the last ten years. I know that my mom would exceed six cups, maybe a subconscious attempt at self-medication to stimulate faltering neurons or increasing plaque. I am the odd duck who does not mind decaffeinated because I like the taste of coffee, black, hot, and like a big hug on winter's night.

07.28.2021

- [Higher COVID Rate Found In Some Counties With Higher Vaccination Rate – Why, And What It Says About The Delta Variant](#)

This is exactly what I would expect from the scenario I discussed below: a vaccine that while aimed at reducing or eliminating symptoms, is less than effective at killing off the virus. Right now we are all potential incubators of the next mutation of SARS-CoV-2, and one potential step closer to a variant that defeats the vaccines and true immunity. When we entered this, we had said that masks indoors were not going away anytime soon, yet here we are...

07.28.2021

- [One Last Goodbye: The Strange Case of Terminal Lucidity](#)

"They divide the phenomenon into two general classes, however. In the first subtype, 'the severity of mental derangement improve[s] slowly in conjunction with the decline of bodily vitality.'...

In the second subtype of terminal lucidity, the authors tell us, 'full mental clarity can appear quite abruptly and unexpectedly just hours or days before death.' In one study, 70 percent of caretakers in a British nursing home said they'd personally observed people with dementia becoming lucid shortly before their deaths."*

Had not heard the term "Terminal Lucidity" prior to listening to Michael Egnor's discussion of near-death phenomena on a YouTube interview: <https://youtu.be/qVeKN5r-mT8>. I think

that my dad went through something like this in his final days. Emergency room doctors had placed him in an induced coma after he had been bleeding into his brain for some 7 hours and undergoing surgery to drain off the blood. The nurse warned us not to stimulate him too much because he would try to break out of the coma. We spent about an hour with him talking and reassuring him. All through this time, there was no sign that he knew we were there. His vital signs remained flat. We began to say our goodbyes, that we loved him, and assured him that we would see him tomorrow. His vital signs spiked. It was as if he were trying as hard as he could to say one last thing before we went. I often feel that I should have stayed a bit longer, hindsight is perfect. When we visited the next day, his vital signs were normal and constant. It was like a machine had been left on with no work to do. He would not wake up again, as the machines kept him humming along. We would stop their work only a few days later and his story would end.

We would never hear those last words, but I can't help but feel that he tried to rally in order to bestow them before his spirit left. The machines could pump and fuel the biology, but he had left that first day when he really should have died.

07.27.2021

- [How the Delta variant upends assumptions about the coronavirus](#)

"But evidence is mounting that the Delta variant, first identified in India, is capable of infecting fully vaccinated people at a greater rate than previous versions, and concerns have been raised that they may even spread the virus, these experts said....

The **Pfizer** Inc (PFE.N)/BioNTech vaccine, one of the most effective against COVID-19 so far, appeared **only 41% effective at halting symptomatic infections** in Israel over the past month as the Delta variant spread, according to Israeli government data....

'It's a double whammy,' Topol said. "The last thing you want is to loosen restrictions when you're confronting the most formidable version of the virus yet.'" (Emphasis Added)*

This is not over. For years we have been told to pull back on antibiotics and even sanitizing everything because they are producing superbugs. Is it the same with COVID? If the virus is able to live and infect, even asymptomatically or mildly, and vaccinated individuals are able, with Delta's higher viral load, to then pass this along and infect others, have we not now set up the perfect environment for COVID-19 Delta to evolve around our vaccines?

Notice the article, by Reuters, reflects that data coming out of Israel is only 41% effective (some put it at 31%) at halting symptomatic infections, what about asymptomatic infections? How low does the effectiveness go? Can asymptomatic infections spread the virus? Is this efficacy down to 20%? Does an asymptomatic or mild infection still cause damage to the brain or heart?

Oh well, I have my plastic Jesus on the dashboard of my car, all is well. Put the peddle to the metal, and damn the curves, full speed ahead.

07.27.2021

- [Large study finds COVID-19 is linked to a substantial drop in intelligence](#)

"The main caveat is that we do not know what the mechanistic basis of the observed COVID-cognition association is. Nor do we know how long any impact on cognition might last. I am providing the assessment technology for use in a raft of studies that are now trying to answer these questions,' Hampshire said."*

Why would you even play with getting this? What they are not saying is what the effects of even a mild or breakthrough case would be. In the reading that I am doing it seems that asymptomatic and mild cases among vaccinated individuals are not rare. Hospitalization and

death are, but not an infection. The news out of Israel suggests that the vaccines are about 30% to 40% effective against infection. If I had a child under 12 or a pregnant wife, I would very concerned about them. Who wants to reduce their child's intelligence or risk other long-term effects of an infection?

This just underscores that there is so much we do not know about this virus. It is too early to call this over.

07.26.2021

- [The Day Philosophers Started To Take Consciousness Seriously](#)

"We can't really understand our own consciousness for the same reasons as we can't really see ourselves the way others see us. And the others can't see themselves the way we see them. That's all part of the remarkable fact of human consciousness. In one sense, we are each our own little interior world. In another sense, we are part of something much larger. The science that can help us understand this better will not be committed to materialism."*

I guess that I had not really considered consciousness to be that cutting edge. Like so much in who we are, consciousness is just a state. But my dog does not have it. She operates at a different level of simple self-preservation and cultivation of that preservation.

- [Schizophrenia linked to marijuana use disorder is on the rise, study finds](#)

One of the greatest assets of being Methodist is our stand against the exploitation of human weaknesses which are proven to not only degrade the lives of individuals, not only drag down society but also have an impact upon dependants whose resources are squandered through unrestrained personal behavior. So, we as Methodists do not hold with either alcohol or gambling in any form as a personal preference in society. And now there's marijuana. Study after study is showing that it has long-term effects on the minds of those who regularly use it for recreational purposes. Because it is latent with a high return in taxes for legalization, we now find our leaders, who by the way grew up in the sixties and seventies under its influence, pushing to cash in on the crop. This is not simply reckless, it borders on evil.

07.22.2021

- [Dubai creates fake rain to battle scorching 50C heat](#)

"In recent videos that are circulating online, Dubai is an unexpected sight. The city is being battered with torrential rain through cloud seeding efforts – so much so – it's creating hazardous driving conditions."*

Once again humans are using their tech to disturb the balance of nature. Could this be why other areas of the planet are suffering such a drought? It would seem to me that if you pull water out of the atmosphere in one place it will not be there to fall out in another. This is kind of a butterfly effect. I hope that we are working on this tech for the midwest!

07.22.2021

- [DNA pulled from thin air identifies nearby animals](#)

"The team identified 17 species kept at the zoo and others living near and around it, such as hedgehogs and deer. Some zoo animal DNA was found nearly 300 meters from the animals' enclosures. She also detected airborne DNA likely from the meat of chicken, pig, cow, and horse fed to captive predators indoors. All told, the team detected 25 species of mammals and birds."*

Time is coming when we will forget about cameras as law enforcement and governments like China will use DNA sniffers to prove beyond doubt where someone is and how to gather all

kinds of information about them. China has the largest DNA database. It is continuing to catalog and track more and more of the world's population. One wonders if they are not working on some kind of enhanced virus that will attack along racial or ethnic lines? If that is possible, I am sure they are investigating it.

07.22.2021

- [Meet the New New Atheists, Not Like the Old New Atheists](#)

"These atheists are only recognizing something that no small number of Jews also see — Ben Shapiro, Dennis Prager, and Michael Medved, for example. They (and I) would agree with Fergusson that, “when the constraints of civilization fall away” — and in the West, that means Christian civilization — “we behave in the most savage way to one another.” Christianity is suited to the role of a religion for billions of people.”*

The following is from one of the above article's cited works:

"For one of the most prominent historians in the world—himself an agnostic—to say that we should go to church is rather startling, but Ferguson’s sentiments also appear to be part of a growing trend. The late philosopher Sir Roger Scruton began attending church himself despite struggling with belief, regularly playing the organ at All Saints’ in Garsdon. His secular friends say his faith remained cultural; other friends were not so sure. What we do know is that he thought Christianity was in many ways the soul of Western civilization, and that the uniquely Christian concept of forgiveness was utterly indispensable to its survival."

Van Maren, J. (2021, May 25). *Grave Men Facing A Grave Faith*. Convivium Magazine.

<https://www.convivium.ca/articles/grave-men-facing-a-grave-faith/>.

Just having this conversation yesterday about the continuing degradation of society even as it shakes off the shackles of higher authority accountability with a lab tech holding a degree in environmental science and biology, working in a variety of labs over the course of her career. Pulling away from Christianity has eroded society's ability to be more ethical and far, plunging it into the mere creaturely world of tribalism masquerading as political affiliation, race, nationalism, or culture, with its ensuant attributes of prejudice, injustice, and hate.

07.22.2021

- [New 3D images of shark intestines show they function like Nikola Tesla's valve](#)

"It appears these spiral-shaped organs slow the movement of food and direct it downward through the gut, relying on gravity in addition to peristalsis, the rhythmic contraction of the gut's smooth muscle. Its function resembles the one-way valve designed by Nikola Tesla more than a century ago that allows fluid to flow in one direction, without backflow or assistance from any moving parts.”*

I think that perhaps maybe the article should be changed to read that "Nikola Tesla more than a century ago designed a one-way valve that resembles these natural occurring spiral-shaped organs...." After all, give credit where it is due, the Original Designer was not Tesla. That Tesla saw in such design both logic and advantage is a testament to the achievement of creation and not its mimicry.

Here's a neat explanation of Tesla's valve:

[Century-old water valve invented by Nikola Tesla could have modern use](#)

07.21.2021

- [Biology Journal: Evolutionary Psychology Is “Impossible”](#)

"Even evolutionary biologist P. Z. Myers jumped on this bandwagon, writing about the field

of evo psych, "None of their prior claims are valid, and they don't fit with what we do know about evolution and the brain!" But will these criticisms have any effect on the field itself? Myers concludes that evo psych is too insular for that..."*

Just so we can clearly know the issue: evolutionary psychology is a new field that seeks to make assertions concerning the evolutionary forces and pressures that have combined that give us the mind and priorities we have today. Feelings like love or beauty as well as base needs like hunger and reproduction are all the process of evolutionary pressures from humanity's past. Why waste ink or bits and bytes on such a pursuit? A scientific materialistic worldview would be incomplete without it.

The problem should be obvious, there is no existent data in the prehistoric record upon which to form any proof of a hypothesis. Evo psych is a supposedly psychological field that lacks any scientific rigor other than that of its own logic. Because we do not have a historic record, data, of any prehistoric mind and the evolutionary pressures such a mind might have been subject to produce certain traits evo psych is reduced to pure speculation. What a wonderful field to be in, getting paid to speculate without any oversight or higher authority while producing no meaningful content for the advancement of society or culture, probably all on the public dime.

I cannot help but think of the excess of past cultures whose fading years were plagued by useless and frivolous pursuits and bureaucratic excesses. Too many resources leads to stagnation, not invention. The tinker called evolution works through stressors that drive selection, not ease that at best stalls selection, and at worst degrades functionality.

07.20.2021

- [The Reality of the Mind: The Argument From Epilepsy](#)

"There are no forms of epilepsy where people have calculus seizures, or have logic seizures, or philosophy seizures. Seizures always evoke [00:51:00] either perceptions, movements, emotions, or memories. And Penfield asked, why is there an entire class of mental content that is never evoked by seizures, and can never be evoked by direct stimulation, and that is abstract thought? ...

What Penfield said, and what I'm saying, is that there's an entire class of mental states that cannot be evoked physically. That stands as an argument against materialism. Penfield started out as a materialist. He ended his career as a passionate dualist, as I have also, because I've seen the same evidence..."*

Egnor goes on to explain that there is literally no evidence of a seizure involving abstract thought. It is as if abstract thought is not resident in any particular part of the brain, nor is it distributed throughout the brain because seizures are distributed throughout the brain. Until the evidence points someplace else, Egnor suggests, this would seem to indicate that there is a nonmaterial aspect to the brain. Why does this matter? Well, there are some materialists who claim that consciousness is an illusion and that the concept of "soul" is a delusion. Egnor's work suggests that the universe is more complicated than our materialistic understanding. As you can tell by the date, I am stalling on completing the sermon for today!

07.18.2021

- [Boredom's link to mental illnesses, brain injuries and dysfunctional behaviors](#)

"Early research often dismissed boredom as temporary and inconsequential, but recent work has established its links to mental illness, traumatic brain injury and dysfunctional behaviors such as reckless driving and substance abuse..."*

I have seen this play out in so many folks in a variety of ways. I have known some who are disabled and think that sitting home is the best thing in life, until boredom sets in. Once they have had enough of TV and web surfing, they start to wish to do something with a real physical presence, but they also want to get paid to do it, which jeopardizes their disability. When I broach the idea of volunteering, well, that's met with silence. The best thing for anyone is to be gainfully employed. We should not go down the road of a guaranteed minimum income without the expectation that folks put foot to pavement and do something for or with someone for what they receive, even if it is volunteering.

7.18.2021

- [Can Silicon Valley Find God?](#)

" Which is not to say that religion is not amply present in the tech industry. Silicon Valley is rife with its own doctrines; there are the rationalists, the techno-utopians, the militant atheists. Many technologists seem to prefer to consecrate their own religions rather than ascribe to the old ones, discarding thousands of years of humanistic reasoning and debate along the way. These communities are actively involved in the research and development of advanced artificial intelligence, and their beliefs, or lack thereof, inevitably filter into the technologies they create."*

Anyone who does any coding at all realizes that artificial intelligence (AI) is really just an algorithm with millions of lines of code, doing what many computer viruses do to evade detection by modifying its code algorithmically. Where does the data for the algorithm come from? A programmer who builds in his or her own belief system along with all of those nice conditional statements. It is no wonder why early AI was hopelessly prejudiced until a real "intelligent" programmer inserted code not to be. AI is really smoke and mirrors that can do some things very quickly, but even the most primitive true intelligent machine remains the stuff of science fiction. Sorry Alexa you are not human intelligence 2.0!

I sometimes wonder if silicon valley did come up with an algorithm that followed the data where it led, what it would say about the probability for all of the right principles, interactions, and combinations necessary for what we see in the world today. Would such AI think that this is all possible from random chance? What would it say about the Big Bang? Remember that like AI, a scientific computer simulation is a designed tool to produce the results of an outcome-based experiment. Take it all tongue in cheek.

07.17.2021

- [Is the Universe Causally Closed?](#)

"Materialists generally argue that dualism of mind and brain is not possible because of causal closure — by which they mean that all physical effects have physical causes. ... There are undoubtedly more examples of violations of causal closure in modern physics, but the Big Bang, black holes, the field equations of general relativity, and quantum entanglement are sufficient examples of the lack of causal closure in nature to render the causal closure argument against dualism in the mind-brain problem ineffectual."*

Well now, I had not really noticed the term "causal closure" before this piece, and while Dr. Egnor lists multiple examples where modern physics has violated this position, only one is necessary to violate causal closure as a principle.

7.16.2021

- [AI vs. the Pandemic: A Hopeful View of the Future of Work](#)

"Because if you can develop virtue that means, first of all, you have first person subjective experience. You have agency. You have the capacity to choose between alternatives for a

purpose. ... And the chief virtue that I argue is the one that sets us apart is one that I call creative freedom. And creative freedom is not just the ability to act freely – I can choose if I want vanilla or chocolate ice cream – it's the ability to train and constrain ourselves so that we can do something meaningfully that we could not have otherwise done."*

- [Mint condition Super Mario 64 game sells for record \\$1.5m](#)

All I can say is, really? Who cares about a game cartridge that can no longer even be played? One can't even use the excuse that it was necessary to recover some long-lost piece of data because the program is no longer available. I mean really, in a world where most folks can't even afford the basics we have others who are flying to the edge of space, spending spare millions on larger homes, and buying collectible video games. Forget the question about other intelligent life in the universe, I sometimes wonder if there is ANY intelligent life in the universe.

7.13.2021

- [Unlocking the 'gut microbiome' – and its massive significance to our health](#)

"Studies suggest having a diverse population of gut microbes is associated with better health. But when human populations urbanise, microbial diversity declines. Professor Jack Gilbert is an award-winning microbiome scientist at the University of California San Diego and author of *Dirt Is Good*. 'Over the past 80 years and since the dawn of antibiotics, there has been multi-generational loss of microbes that appear to be important for human health,' he says. 'They're passed from mother to child [during birth, via breastmilk and skin contact] throughout the generations, but at some point in the last three or four generations, we lost some. We're not entirely sure if the cause was our lifestyle, our diet, cleanliness in our homes or the use of antibiotics. We're also missing certain immune stimulants that people in the developing world have plenty of.'"

When life gets tough, most humans' first response is to look for a place in the sun where life is easier. We've done this with food, especially as our population densities and focus on free time have increased. We look for quick food when possible, while our society demands stable shelf lives with ever-increasing distribution chains. Seldom has humanity been satisfied with the answers that life is not easy, nor is it always fair, we want both and more. Unfortunately what we want is not always good for us. The modern lifestyle, especially surrounding food and nutrition is increasingly harmful to our bodies, our sexuality, and degrading our souls.

7.13.2021

- [Cells undergoing cell death protect their neighbors to maintain tissue integrity](#)

7.12.2021

- [An Engineering Perspective on the Bacterial Flagellum: Part 1 - Constructive View](#)

"The following applies a similar engineering approach to a motility system for bacteria. In doing this, the constructive approach becomes—in effect—the engineering documentation that must be written as if a clever bioengineer were tasked to devise a motility system for a bacterium lacking a motive organelle. This is done to follow a typical systems engineering approach, which produces a detailed design from functional requirements, but it does not presuppose the existence of any such intelligent agent. However, this approach can be an instructive exercise in determining how many logical requirements are actually dictated by the need for a motility organelle for a bacterium. In effect, this top-down specification is

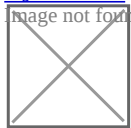
intended to be an independent, detailed “prediction” of a motility system for bacteria, albeit a prediction after the fact. ...

Yet to date, no scenario in substantive detail exists for how such an intricate propulsion system could have evolved naturalistically piece by piece.”*

It is fun to now see a multidisciplinary discussion of the complexity of biological systems and what they would entail if we were to design them. The amount of complexity, the efficiency achieved, and the staggering odds against pure chance combination are instructive. But what is most interesting is that the debate has moved from the oversight of biologists to include chemists, engineers, and many other branches of the science tree. What an exciting time to be following abiogenesis, biogenesis, evolution, and design.

- [What is Mind? What is Consciousness? How Can We Build and Understand Intelligent Systems?](#)

Image not found or type unknown



The picture above is from, Werbos, P. (n.d.). *The Big Picture*. . . [Graphic].

<http://www.werbos.com/Mind.htm>

- [Why Are Gamers So Much Better Than Scientists at Catching Fraud?](#)

"For many games, you need to show not just a recording of your screen, but also a video of your hands on the controller or keyboard, so moderators can ensure that it really was a human—and not a script or a bot—that clinched the all-important record. ... Science has been much slower to adapt, even after countless scandals. Researchers provide images for their papers entirely at their own discretion, and with no official oversight; when they aren't faked, they might still contain cherry-picked snapshots of experiments that don't represent the full range of their results. The same applies to numerical data, which are often—consciously or unconsciously—chosen or reported to make the best case for a scientist's hypothesis, rather than to show the full and messy details. Only a few journals require scientists to do the equivalent of posting the screen-and-hands recording: sharing all their data, and the code they used to analyze it, online for anyone to access.”*

While a critique found in many other works, Stephen Meyers in his latest book *Return of the God Hypothesis*, points to this kind of intellectual sleight of hand at work in almost all of the work being done in both neo-evolutionary and abiogenetic reporting. Reading critically and going back to source material are skills increasingly absent in the modern academic and recreational reading consumer. The devil is in the details, and we are all tempted to use smoke and mirrors when putting food on the table or legacy is at stake. But truth and the future of understanding suffer when one fails to own up prejudice or manipulation. This is also the outcome of our publish or perish academic food chain in which the government rewards reams of paper of any quality, especially when the message is on target with the latest fad.

07.07.2021

- [White Gen X and millennial evangelicals are losing faith in the conservative culture wars](#)

"Furthermore, many of the people that I spoke with cited a culture war fatigue. Some believe that evangelicalism's multi-decade investment in campaigning for these conservative stances and alliance with the Republican Party actually harmed the evangelical tradition instead of

empowering it, while others are simply trying to opt out of the culture war and focus on their faith instead."*

Never been a fan of mixing politics with religion. God did not like the power of kings for a reason. I think that being the figurehead king, president, congress, or any other body politic the focus shifts toward the locus of authority away from God's leadership through written, revealed, and communal discerned truth and wisdom to human effort and will through law or legislation. Political means are quick ways to impose prejudice from the top down but do not work at heart transformation. This goes for absolutely every issue that is tearing us apart. The thirteenth amendment to the constitution could legally abolish slavery, but could not end discrimination and prejudice that live with us to the current day. Legal means regulate systemic symptoms of dysfunction but cannot do the heavy lifting of personal transformation. The only way that hearts get transformed is through relationships.

I wonder what this would look like if, as was the goal of the "Hyde Park Thanksgiving" project, we all sat down together and developed a relationship with somebody we don't like? Having run the HP Thanksgiving for some 4 or 5 years, I could see the patterns emerging: groups would buy up blocks of tickets to occupy full tables so that they could sit with their friends, while the poor and dispossessed would then largely be left to eat with others of their own state. But those with fewer resources were not guiltless in the effort. I fielded complaints that those who received subsidized tickets all wanted to be seated at the same table as their friends, so, the next year, one would ask for more tickets and pass them out to folks they wanted to eat with. Why do we ghetto ourselves like this? The same thing happens with the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. We gather every year and speak about inclusion, but when it comes time to eat or socialize, well, we end up with friends who tend toward the same ethnic, social, and cultural background as ourselves. Church is not only the most segregated hour, but I have found it to be the most segregated four days out of the year. Is it so amazing that our congregations reflect this? I don't think that we will never, never emerge beyond our current impasse unless everyone both makes room and is willing to sit down at the table with others they don't know and run the risk of transformation.

Maybe it is similar to the rationale of Olympic Gold winner DeAnna Price observed over the conflict of a fellow medalist disrespecting the national anthem and the flag on the podium, ""When I stand for the flag, I stand for the people, and so to me ... we're good, I'm fine. She's gonna do her, I'm gonna do me, and we both talk about it, and we've had our conversation," Price said." (Brest, M. (2021, July 6). *'She's gonna do her, I'm gonna do me': Gold medal hammer thrower who honored anthem reacts to peer's protest*. Yahoo! News. <https://news.yahoo.com/shes-gonna-her-im-gonna-132000341.html>.) Or as the Bible puts it: "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)

Do Gen X and millennial neo-evangelicals have it right? I really don't think so. After all, most babies are not as disposable as bath water. Until we find a way of balancing competing particularities, we will never fully realize God's plan for the church or humanity. We have tried acceptance, toleration, and concession, as well as rejection, political action, and

exclusion, neither have produced a world that I feel pleases God.

07.07.2021

- [American Men Suffer a Friendship Recession](#)

"The percentage of men with at least six close friends fell by half since 1990, from 55 percent to 27 percent. The study also found the percentage of men without any close friends jumped from 3 percent to 15 percent, a fivefold increase.

Single men fare the worst. One in five American men who are unmarried and not in a romantic relationship report not having any close friends."*

07.07.2021

- [Out-group animosity drives engagement on social media](#)

"Significance

Almost four billion people around the world now use social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and social media is one of the primary ways people access news or receive communications from politicians. However, social media may be creating perverse incentives for divisive content because this content is particularly likely to go "viral." We report evidence that posts about political opponents are substantially more likely to be shared on social media and that this out-group effect is much stronger than other established predictors of social media sharing, such as emotional language."*

At one point in the life of the Methodist Church we used to take stands on the exploitation of culturally accepted behaviors that exploited or negatively impacted the lives of those in our world. With social media, it is almost as if we are using the very tools of the enemy with the excuse, good or bad, that the benefits outweigh the negatives for church growth, family connections, and instant gratification. Methodists refused to use alcohol because of the excess of addiction for some and how such a temptation eroded family life and deprived innocent women and children of resources. The same is true of gambling. Negativity is abusive behavior that we as a society, or even a world, have come to not just tolerate, not simply endure, but promote for the enrichment of one or two at the expense of the greater community, if not the world. C.K. Chesterton observed that it is easy to be base, mean, serious. In his work *Orthodoxy*, he says something like "Satan fell because of his gravity.... Angels fly because they take themselves lightly." I know I have the exact quote wrong, but you get the point. It is base, instinctual, lower humanity to be sarcastic, angry, attacking, polarizing, we go to such things naturally, as Gretchen in Goethe's *Faust* observed:

"Gretchen [going home].

How could once so stoutly flay

When some poor maiden went astray!

How I could find no words enough

At others' sins to rail and scoff!

Black as it seemed, I made it blacker still,

But never black enough to suit my will;

I blessed myself! So proud I've been!

Now I'm myself laid bare to sin!

Yet - all that drove me, all I would,

God! was so dear! ah, was so good!"

Priest, G. M. (Trans.). (n.d.). "Faust - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe".

<https://www.alchemywebsite.com/faust16.html>.

The upward call of Christ is to change the channel when the tone gets too emotive, good or bad, to make a wise and informed decision, and if the fruit of a discussion produces polarity, then it really is not of God.

07.06.2021

- [HEAVENLY FIRE](#)

"The Auroras (or Northern and Southern Lights) rank among the seven greatest natural wonders in the world. For millennia, they have captured the imaginations of anyone who has witnessed their ethereal beauty in the polar skies. HEAVENLY FIRE: The Mystery of the Auroras is an unforgettable exploration of why these incredible light shows occur, and what they reveal about God."*

Fireworks. When we long to really celebrate we gravitate toward bright lights and big noises! As I watched this video from the John 10:10 Project, I could not help but feel gratitude for the ideals of our country that we are celebrating today. While nothing humans do is perfect, there is no other place on earth that mimics what I think are God's priorities better than here in America. We have the freedom to be mostly self-determining. We can even call into question the very existence of the state if we want and not fear being thrown into jail or hell. It is this very freedom that God has built into, if not, in my opinion, founded the whole of creation on the freedom to know good and evil, to question even God. God wants a freely chosen love, uncoerced and unconnected to the personhood of God. As I consider our humble attempts in the microcosm of our fireworks to celebrate our freedoms, fragile and challenged, I will be considering God's Auroras as a perpetual heavenly rejoicing of God's self-emptying love of humanity and the freedom that a God has blessed us with in Jesus Christ, who seeks to give us an everlasting country in God's Kingdom victorious. Happy 4th of July!

07.04.2021

- [Aliens Who Landed Here Would Just Starve, Science Writer Predicts](#)

"NASA has — quite recently — stopped being snarky about aliens. That does not make them true. It just means we don't have to live with the snark now. Which makes it easier to think."*

Love these lines about "snark". Having a relative whose "go-to" is snark and sarcasm, tools too often used by those who have poor self-images, the only thing that I would add would be that the loss of snark and sarcasm allows for vulnerability and, thus, real conversation and relationships. It is a trend today to weaponize everything, losing the ability to simply enjoy and relate, even in our differences.

07.04.2021

- [Recasting Darwin Stories into Engineering Models](#)

"But what if organisms were engineered to survive in changing environments? What if a designer had the foresight to install mechanisms in the genetic code that would switch on under stressful circumstances? Stickleback fish offer an opportunity to test those alternatives."*

As hinted at in the article below, "Viral Video Overstates the Evidence About Bacterial Evolution", it looks like DNA and the machinery of the cell have multiple switch combinations that are "on" or "off" depending on the most efficient means of survival. Every "on" comes at a cost to the organism. In the case below it is *E. coli* switching food sources from glucose to Citrate, but with the change in food source comes a cost to the health and ability to compete with other organisms as Citrate is not as efficiently or effectively nourishing for *E. coli* as glucose that *E. coli* prefers. When you delve into the issue deeper, *E.*

coli returns to glucose the first opportunity it gets, switching off the Citrate metabolic switch. It turns out that the information in the DNA was already there waiting to be turned on if *E. coli* were unable to find glucose. This is different from the ability to change to a completely unknown food source. For us to change from needing complete protein in our diets to being able to digest and be healthy on simply wood pulp, like termites, would require a totally new restructuring of all of our systems, new information, and hardware to be able to utilize new functionality.

07.03.2021

- [The perfect number of hours to work every day? Five](#)

"Research indicates that five hours is about the maximum that most of us can concentrate hard on something,' says Alex Pang, founder of Silicon Valley consultancy Strategy and Rest and author of several books examining the links between shorter working hours and productivity. 'There are periods when you can push past that, but the reality is that most of us have about that good work time in us every day.'"

Do you remember those long nights of study before an exam? I can recall reading and wanting to retain information so desperately that I would try all kinds of tricks to just cram information in. Most of the time such things were futile. It was like the words would numbly bounce off my brain after a while. It has taken me the better part of my 59 years to figure out how to read, study, and process information that is in harmony with my rhythms. That is why 5:00 AM works for me to begin my daily choir of reading, thinking, and incorporating information.

Do you realize that your brain is the most power consumptive organ in your body? Were we able to come close to replicating it artificially in some vast computer, we not have enough electricity to run such simulations for more than a few individuals. But the incredible nature and force of our created biology is so highly energy efficient that we walk about in the company of many super computers next to us. Thinking, concentrating, and task completion are highly energy consumptive. Knowing when our "good work" times are and respecting our biological limits are critical for the quality and creativity of the work we do.

07.01.2021

- [Concrete: The material that's 'too vast to imagine'](#)

"However, Emily Elhacham of the Weizmann Institute of Science and colleagues recently attempted to give it a shot. Their goal was to better understand humanity's impact during the Anthropocene by totting up the weight of all inanimate human-made objects on Earth. As part of their calculations, they found that concrete accounts for around half of all human-made things – the single biggest category of anthropogenic material. And if its rate of growth continues, it will overtake the total weight of Earth's biomass sometime around 2040."

And the proponents of scientific materialism tout that humans are not exceptional when compared to a crow using a stick to get treat. Ignorance of human exceptionalism will lead us down the road to a roasted planet capable of unintelligent, unexceptional life forms. We need to recognize, embrace, and hedge the distinctive human nature, in both its positive and negative potential if we are to buy back the world for good purposes.

07.01.2021

June 2021:

- [SCIENCE JOURNALIST: NO HYPE. CONSCIOUSNESS IS A HARD PROBLEM!](#)

"Almost certainly, the human mind is not a material entity but an immaterial one, like information. If we accept that, we can perhaps convert it from an opaque mystery that can never yield any results because we are on the wrong track to a mystery that is difficult but solvable in principle because we are now looking in the right places."*

Chicken or egg, which came first, the reality of our world or our ability to perceive it objectively? Is "knowledge" or "scientific materialism" the real and ultimate illusion?

- [A Sad Truth: Social Media Rewards Us for Acting Badly](#)

As critical as I am about Social Media, I must say that I did not expect the negative impacts that it is having on our entire society and culture. This article not only cites two reputable reports that link social media with both polarization and negativism, but it goes on to suggest ways to not be a part of those destructive behaviors. Well worth a read.

- [Former Cubs star Ben Zobrist accuses pastor of affair with his wife](#)

"Now at age 40 and out of baseball for nearly two seasons, Zobrist spends most of his time working with his charity and offering spiritual and financial support to MLB prospects, according to his lawyer."*

I may not be a sports person, but so many of these athletes are so faithful. To be able to see a rotten egg in the pulpit and not "throw the baby out with the bathwater" is an admirable trait. These celebrity pastors need to all be brought back to their calling. E.F. Schumacher in *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* made the assertion that no business should expand beyond 300 workers, for at that number one can still have familiarity with everyone at work. I think I remember Schumacher going so far as to say that larger companies are destructive of the human soul. Just think about this in a religious context. We have supersized everything as a means of satisfying individualism and preference for cutting-edge entertainment. What have we lost? A witness platform in the downtown of every rural, suburban, and urban landscape. The voice, witness, and love of Christ is increasingly the purview of large non-denominational churches because of the "feeling". Well, well, how foreign the concept would be to saints who ended their lives through torture and hardship so that the Way of Christ might flourish for us to carpet, air-condition, and make comfortable for pastors to have affairs.

- [Freebits: An Interesting Argument From the Big Bang for Free Will](#)

"It's an imaginative idea but Scharf ends with a practical conclusion: "The essential point to all of this is that information shows itself to be more than one might expect. It isn't just a way to probe the fundamentals of nature; it may be part of the fundamentals."

Indeed. But generally speaking, information is created and recognized by minds. Or perhaps, in the case of the universe, a Mind. Scharf doesn't sound as if he intends to go that far. But if a Mind created the universe and wanted free will to be possible, perhaps Aaronson's freebits would be a way to do it."*

Where did all that data come from? DNA, cosmic constants, the vast 90 some odd percent of the rest of the universe we can't see and thus, understand. What if it is all about the data the Mind that in the beginning spoke with creative intelligence and set all things going. The Mind continues to interact, build, and guide the universe as the human experiment progresses and matures to being that eternal dwelling mate for the One who thought, spoke, and created.

- [New study links intrinsic religious motivation to higher-level patterns of thought](#)

"In other words, participants who agreed with statements such as 'I have often had a strong sense of God's presence' (intrinsic religiosity) and 'Prayer is for peace and happiness' (extrinsic-personal religiosity) were more likely to describe reading as 'Gaining knowledge,' and this relationship was mediated by the strength of spiritual beliefs, such as the belief that God is an all-pervading presence.

'The main takeaway from this study is that people who are motivated to pursue religion or spirituality **and integrate it fully into their life** while finding it contributing to what they experience tend to think in more meaningful ways,' Michaels told PsyPost. 'That is, religious as well as spiritual people tend to experience thought patterns that are more organized and provide a deeper sense of meaning. This meaning can help be a sort of mental anchor during times of distress.'" [emphasis added]

Dolan, E. W. (2021, May 22). *New study links intrinsic religious motivation to higher-level patterns of thought*. PsyPost. <https://www.psypost.org/2021/05/new-study-links-intrinsic-religious-motivation-to-higher-level-patterns-of-thought-60857>.

This really echoes my experience. Faith, yes, is something that one can, as Bruce Metzger puts it, "splash around on the shallow end of the pond", but it becomes most rewarding and sustaining when one plunges into the depths that could drown an elephant. When I look back over my journey of faith, now some 50 odd years of wrestling with God and God's will in my life, I can see the profound ways that God has matured me through the battles I have fought, the struggle to read and comprehend beyond my ability, and by applying the God-given courage to plow into places that angels fear to tread. This has led me into areas of biology and cosmology, physics and statistics, skills that I don't have, understand, or even at the time wanted. But persistent slogging along has its rewards, and keeping an eager, open mind far outweighs "[adaequatio](#)": read it until you understand some of it, and then read it until you understand more!

All in all, in every church I have served, I have pushed to try my best to bring everyone patiently along. This has meant relationally wrestling with ideas, obsessions, and traits that far too many of us just give up on, or see as fringe and not worth either redemption or our time. All life is sacred. All life is broken. No one deserves to be left behind until they choose to do so.

- [Viral Video Overstates the Evidence About Bacterial Evolution](#)

"They found that the trait is not very genetically complicated — again, akin to flipping a switch — and that there is more to the story than is being been told. Indeed, their paper shows that no new genetic information arose during the evolution of this trait."*

I recently made mention that I have decided to begin using my dominant hand less frequently and strengthen the skills of my submissive hand. Why am I doing this? Because I noticed that my right hand will do tasks that my left hand is perfectly capable of doing, it just doesn't want to. Now, at points, I forget which hand I am supposed to do things with, like throwing a ball for my dog. It is neat to express a new skill for which I did not know I was capable. This is no new function, but the growth of what is dormant yet there in my life.

Science is as susceptible to food chain issues as any other field, including religion and the media. This is why one must read both sides to find the truth. After 40 years of an experiment that you had hoped would produce proof of your views, what would you be inclined to see? Maybe the creation of a whole new hand to throw the ball rather than the same old hand learning a new dormant trick.

- [Magic Tricks May Fool You, but These Birds Can See Through Them](#)

"Eurasian jays are not newcomers to subterfuge: To thwart thieves while they're storing food, jays will perform something very like sleight of hand — sleight of beak, if you will — if another jay is watching. They'll pretend to drop the food in a number of places, so its real location is concealed."

"Looking ahead, what kind of a magic trick would play on jays' expectations of the world? Ideally, the experimenter would be a bird and not a person, capable of the same motions and gestures as the jays."*

Kind of neat. We deceive one another because we exploit our own weaknesses in perception. The other interesting point is that we do this because it is part of nature, our creatureliness, lower being. My dog, smarter than any crow, exhibits the same behavior. If I see her burying something, she quickly grabs it and moves it to another spot. While she is not using slight of paw, she is perceiving who is present and how to protect her trophy.

- [New Paper Provides Further Evidence for Free Will](#)

"Can physics prove there is no free will? No, but it can make physicists incoherent when they write about free will. It's hilarious. Sabine Hossenfelder misses the irony that she insists that people "change their minds" by accepting her assertion that they... can't change their minds."

"But is determinism true? Does science show that we fated to want whatever we want?

Modern science—both theoretical and experimental—strongly supports the reality of free will."*

- [The Health Benefits of Coffee](#)

"In a study of more than 200,000 participants followed for up to 30 years, those who drank three to five cups of coffee a day, with or without caffeine, were 15 percent less likely to die early from all causes than were people who shunned coffee. Perhaps most dramatic was a 50 percent reduction in the risk of suicide among both men and women who were moderate coffee drinkers, perhaps by boosting production of brain chemicals that have antidepressant effects."*

What possible theological content could this offer? Well, coffee needs no explanation. It is simply one of God's miracles.

- [Do Any Dogs Go To Heaven? If So, Why?](#)

"In any event, on the view suggested by Lewis — call it a thought experiment, if you like — what might make a dog immortal is his identification with humans, who are immortal."

Who knew that being a pet owner could be so eternally important!

- [Harvard-bound grad asks high school to give her \\$40,000 award to a community college student](#)

This story was sent to me by someone in the congregation. The following is my reply: Really nice story. Faith does not mean that one expects to have everything handed to one, but shores up the firm commitment that there is enough, and that is as good as a feast to be able to share with others. I also like the message that hard work, commitment, and perseverance still have value. We are given blessings to be blessings, not to remain dependent.

- [The Coolest Tech on the Planet \(Hint: It's Inside You!\)](#)

"And as Dawkins himself has acknowledged, even today "no one knows" how the first life —

with its complex information storage, transmission and processing system — might have arisen from non-living chemicals in “a pre-biotic soup.”

Not surprisingly then, some scientists and philosophers now doubt Dawkins’s confident assurance that evolutionary biology has shown that all appearances of design in life are an illusion.”*

There is a new weapon in the arsenal of the modern scientific materialist. They still use the old standby of vague conditional language and colloquialism, similar to the statement "this SUGGESTS that x caused y", or, in one article I just read that talks about hot smokers producing life, "the environment in the chimney produced the first cells, that then exited into the sea to produce the first life". Oh, that's nice, but where are the peer-reviewed articles that spell out HOW this happened. I forgot we don't ask that because there are none because biogenesis remains a mystery, or should we call it an illusion because that is the new weapon.

Human consciousness, freedom of will (and therefore accountability in behavior), and now design in life have all become illusions that don't exist. The new fad, if you don't understand it but want others to think that you do, dismiss it as an illusion and move on with your agenda. Wow, when Oscar Wilde wrote that “life imitates art far more than art imitates life”, in *The Decay of Lying* (1891), he did not know that the same could be said of the science in his day. Truly interpreting the world about one is an act of divorcing oneself from prejudice and preconception, both of which can be affected by partial information, usually only based upon the 4% of the physical universe we can see. A real open mind questions even its own perceptions for, as Scrooge so eloquently put it, they can be influenced by an act of indigestion, or plaques building up in one's brain. But they are not illusions.

Cool YouTube video referenced in the article:

- [Do You Know Your Predestination? Understanding Romans 8:28-30](#)

"Notice that this verse does not say everything that happens is good, or even everything that happens is God’s will. To the contrary, it says God is like a weaver, weaving together all sorts of things to a good end. God can even use suffering and sin and even evil for the good of those who love him. Second, we have here the rare phrase “those who love [God],” which in context clearly means Christians—those who have the Spirit of God in their lives and confess Christ. It is then not just anyone who has all things worked together for them. This is a promise for believers.”*

Nice article not only about how Arminian's interpret Romans 8:28-30, but also inspiring us to remember that life is the macro view and not microscopic perspective of a season. We run through our spells of challenges, depressions, frustrations, and griefs, yet through these, the richness of faith, for the long-suffering, emerges again to bring not only life but life abundant.

- [Life Fights Entropy with Intelligent Design](#)

"Consider: the best minds in science and engineering are trying to approach the capabilities of bacteria. That might suggest some thoughts about the origin of the target they are trying to reach.”*

Great article on the second law of thermodynamics. There are three things to underscore in the article:

1. Again we see that information is a driver in the basics of creation.
2. Entropy, disorganization, is always at work to create stasis. It is only the input of energy

that order can continue.

3. It has only taken us 150 years from concept, through research, design, and finally application to mimic the efficiency found in creation for millions of years.

- [The Scandal Rocking the Evangelical World](#)

"The chasm that currently exists between how Christians like to think of themselves and how they are actually seen—between the invocations of grace and the acts of ungrace, between condemning impurity in others while engaging in it themselves—has to be fully acknowledged and dramatically narrowed. Christians would do themselves a favor if they spent a little less time obsessing over the secular left, a little less time feeling that they are victims and a persecuted minority, and a little more time in honest self-examination. As a well-known preacher from many years ago asked, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" He asked the question because he recognized the tendencies against which we all have to fight."*

I can hardly say that I am surprised. "Neo-Evangelicalism", to distinguish it from classical efforts to share the Good News of the Way, in all of its manifestations, is way too centered on the easy root, the Constantinian answer to Christian social orthodoxy, that would be via political power. God still wants no earthly king, and heaven already has one, but we really don't learn, do we?

All I can say is kudos to Russell Moore. The mainline needs to go. Let us not mourn its passing. Too much do as I say and not as I do. Too much power politics. Too high of a cost, in so many ways. These megastructures have become a liability.

- [We Are Now Informed: Consciousness Does Not Really Exist](#)

"The non-conscious brain is, of course, the seat of much valuable information. But the conscious brain is what discovers that. Consciousness is the main thing that distinguishes human beings from sponges or sand. The mystery is not eliminated by calling it an illusion.

Deciding to give it up sounds clever at *The Conversation* but — in the end — it is just nonsense. And not even wrong."*

I don't know if it is part of the cancel culture or not, but scientific materialism is going to increasing lengths to try to break apart the human faculties of understanding. I don't know if the Egnor or one of the writes at Mind Matters, but what the article is saying is that in an effort to try to get "behind the curtain" of human understanding, scientific materialism is eliminating the very faculty by which we apprehend and understand the human mind, which is our consciousness. My dog, who is non-conscious understands her life through simple impulses, like her favorite food. She never wonders why she thinks what she thinks, or reflects on the meaning of life. In that sense, she does not know what she is missing. "Turn off the light switch", as the author puts it, and the very pursuit becomes irrelevant and meaningless. Oh to be back in that garden of blissful instinct! But we have questioned and become awake to life's greatest question of meaning and thus place in the universe. The switch is on, whether we like it or not.

- [Justin Bieber Shares His Opinions—And a Warning—About Celebrity Pastors](#)

"While discussing the trappings of fame and celebrity culture, Bieber says, "I think so many pastors put themselves on this pedestal, and...church can be surrounded around the man, the pastor, the guy, and it's like, 'This guy has this ultimate relationship with God that we all want but we can't get because we're not this guy.'" He adds, "That's not the reality, though. The reality is, every human being has the same access to God."**

I have to admit to a growing appreciation for Bieber as a Christian. Just before the whole Hillsong/Lentz debacle, Bieber left a church with which he had become disillusioned, not the Church. Immediately after Lentz was fired, Bieber gave him refuge and space to work things out, even though, from what the articles claimed, Bieber had become less than supportive of the Hillsong model of evangelism under Lentz's leadership. I thank God that I am too old, too unsophisticated, and too poor of an orator to be tempted by bright lights and the flash of "Christian popularism".

*"Yes, to this thought I hold with firm persistence;
The last result of wisdom stamps it true;
He only earns his freedom and existence
Who daily conquers them anew.
And such a throng I fain would see—
Would stand on a free soil, with people free."*

(Cotterill, H. B. (Henry Bernard). *The Faust-Legend and Goethe's 'Faust'* (Kindle Locations 1194-1195). Public Domain Books. Kindle Edition.

And:

"'I pass the test,' she said. 'I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel.'"

(Tolkien, J.R.R.. *The Lord of the Rings: One Volume* (p. 366). HMH Books. Kindle Edition.)

- [The Way Forward for the Southern Baptist Convention: A Very Personal Word from Albert Mohler](#)

I am pessimistic and believe that a purge and new structures to maintain orthodoxy are what is needed. Too much of what Mohler seems to be advocating is aimed at preserving, or shoring up existing structures and understandings. I am a former Baptist who actually had studied Baptist polity and history, not Methodist, coming out of seminary in pursuit of ordination in the American Baptist Church. The problem with the SBC is that they are an extremely diverse group. Getting them all in the same room let alone at the same table will be nigh impossible, but it sounds good.

Like so many campaign platforms, Mohler is speaking to excite our hopes and dreams, but the reality in the trenches is very different. The social and societal issues that challenge the Christian church do not have any precedent in the past. There is a need for a remodeling of engagement with the culture that is about us because we are stuck in patterns of social engagement with contemporary issues using strategies that are 60 to 100 years old. There is a whole lot of water under that bridge, and when you look at the numbers across ALL mainline churches there is one and only one commonality, that of steep and prolonged decline.

We need new tools for evangelism and conversation with the world around us. Most clergy don't push themselves to understand the most basic of information that surrounds the greatest challenge for our youth, institutional scientific materialism that is "preached" with evangelical fervor in every primary and secondary school in our country. Why don't we have youth? We fill them full of Biblical stories in Sunday School. Appeal to their entertainment side as youth, and try to keep them suitably engaged with cookies, brownies, and games as

young adults. All along they are learning from every other sector of society and culture that materialism has found the answer to what it means to be human and it is overt atheism. No wonder those who don't kill themselves leave the church by saying that it has nothing of any substance to give them.

Seeing those now going into ministry, Christianity for the most part is not attracting the best and the brightest. We are attracting the most emotive and artistic who are also the least persuasive. Again, I am pessimistic about the mainline, and the SBC is really not mainline in the normal sense because it is a loose confederation of vaguely like-minded churches who tend to adhere to a broad platform and not really a centrally organized denomination that holds strict accountability. Unfortunately, I suspect that they will slowly spin apart by their own inertia.

- [What Drives Conspiracism](#)

"What is behind the growth of conspiracism? Many things."

"It is pleasurable to know and hold a higher knowledge..."

"...people always have a spiritual hole inside,

and if God can't fill it, Q will do. The unrealized and unhappy are always in search of a cause to distract themselves from the problems of their lives."

"Newsrooms are undergoing their own revolution, with woke progressives vs. journalistic traditionalists, advocacy versus oldschool news values. It is ideological."*

And the list goes on. For me I think it is Noonan's first observation that is most poignant as a pastor: God has left the building and now anything goes because everything is subjective, hopeless, and self-serving. Bye, bye higher ideals of the upward call to perfect humanity, hello that which promotes my objective and elevates my status in the food chain of life as an alpha person.

- [Street Tactics – Part 5](#)

Found a new orthodox website. This article is in defense of the Trinity. The videos and podcasts are very cutting edge and contemporary. I would suspect that they would go over well with a younger crowd, but I am not of that population, so how would I know?

- [Resurrection Genomics: Millennia-Old Palm Trees Live Again](#)

"Most interesting is the second explanation: active genomic maintenance. For days, weeks, years, centuries, and millennia, things were happening inside those seeds! In each cell, at the molecular level, machines were scrutinizing the DNA, identifying mutations and repairing them. For details on what a plant must do to ensure seed viability, see our article, "How a Dry Seed Can Live a Thousand Years." For a list of six DNA repair mechanisms that operate inside our cells and in all organisms, see our article, "Contingency Planning in the Cell" under "DNA's Repair Toolkit." These repair mechanisms involve numerous enzymes working together to locate damage and repair it. Undoubtedly some of the enzymes had to be replaced over time with the aid of other machines that transcribe and translate the DNA."*

Error correction, repairing, and inspection, for nearly 2000 years of being buried in the sand. This all sounds to me like the plot of a science fiction book suitable to Ray Bradbury, but this is God's handiwork and design, it is what sister nature does at God's orchestration.

- [Caught in a 'pickle,' millions of Americans might not have had an adequate response to the Covid-19 vaccine](#)

"Millions of other Americans are also taking immunosuppressive drugs that might weaken the effect of the Covid-19 vaccine, and they find themselves in uncharted territory, scared -- with good reason -- that their

vaccinations might not have worked.

If their vaccinations did not work, they rely on the rest of the population to get vaccinated."*

For millions of Americans the isolation does not end. If you have been vaccinated and do not underlying issues that make you vulnerable to reduced effectiveness, walk around in humble thankfulness, and remember that not everyone who wears a mask and physically distances has a choice. Scripture makes a clear claim on the Christian, when one of the body suffers, we all suffer.

- [Pupil Size Is a Marker of Intelligence](#)

"We found that a larger baseline pupil size was correlated with greater fluid intelligence, attention control and, to a lesser degree, working memory capacity—indicating a fascinating relationship between the brain and eye. Interestingly, pupil size was negatively correlated with age: older participants tended to have smaller, more constricted, pupils. Once standardized for age, however, the relationship between pupil size and cognitive ability remained." *

Who knew that more than just beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I wonder if this correlates to the amount of time folks use their eyes in information gathering, like reading or just looking about the world verses a more sedentary focal length like view TV? But who is to say what "intelligence" really is? (See [Has humanity reached 'peak intelligence'?](#) for more details.)

- [Dawkins is wrong – grossly wrong – about Down's syndrome](#)

A good read but it misses the fact that Dawkins is not simply "...peddling his own brand of baseless religion", but, in fact, taking neo-Darwinism and thus scientific materialism to its logical conclusion. How did Dawkins get himself into trouble? Well, to quote from this article, 'Dawkins has a thing about Down's syndrome. A few years ago, he offered advice to any women pregnant with a child diagnosed with Down's. "Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have the choice.'" *

Yup, he said that. Anyone who has had a friend with Down's syndrome know how special they are, often reveal and provoking the best of us. They tend to be the perpetual "little children" that Jesus so loves. Dawkins reveals the weakness when we start to see people only as sacks of genes that either on the way up or down. Remember that it was not any classical religion that led Hitler to his extremes, but a belief that he was purifying the gene pool on the way to the superhuman. I don't know, but while not all, many of the Down's syndrome folks I know of exhibit characteristics that I think of as on the way to a higher humanity, not to mention that through knowing them, I am provoked with those same emotions of the true "Übermensch" that surpass the understanding of either Dawkins or Hitler, but God took to heart in the love of Christ.

- [Will Huawei's Android knockoff appease China's technology hawks?](#)

So, why is this on my list? Well, no offense intended, but I think of China not as leaders in tech, but more as hacks, and I think it has to do with their lack of imagination that is part of an overly materialistic and oppressive political model that sees humanity as a labor force and a power base for systemic replication. For me, this is at odds with the benevolence of a freely created humanity that can even question its penultimate ruler, God. It is in this freedom from control and coercion that we find the creative and imaginative power of modern humans to see new futures, artistically apply new technologies, and systemically incorporate the latest advancements in a way that encourages and enriches humanity. God knew that freedom and choice are the only way to win and guide the human heart. Any political system that chooses coercion, manipulation, and suppression, is doomed to failure. Religion needs to be mindful of this as well. Not all Christian expressions of faith encourage this radical freedom that Jesus died to encourage. The moment we lose the dialectic balance and waiver one way or the other, we sow the seed of political compulsion and create a king when God wills for judges in which creative discernment encourages human ingenuity.

- [Should you wear a mask indoors? 7 vaccinated epidemiologists share what they're doing](#)

As we begin to gather in larger groups and come back to in person worship, I find more folks asking about masking. I will probably continue to wear a mask in stores and out in public for the most part. I have no rational reason for such a position. I am fully vaccinated, as is my family, and will share my confirmation proudly with anyone who asks (it is on my smartphone, so I can involve tech in the task!). But my mask now feels part of my dress code, and will for a while. Just an underscore that not everyone who wears a mask and social distances has chosen not to be vaccinated.

- [The congressional UFO report is expected soon. Here's what we know about it and when you can expect it](#)

"Officials have cautioned that analysts did not immediately speculate that aliens were responsible for the phenomena. Instead, Pentagon and intelligence officials are most concerned that such objects are next-generation technology from American competitors such as China and consequently pose a national security concern."*

Why would this be of importance for me? Well, I was just asked by a member of the congregation what I thought. I am an agnostic when it comes to extraterrestrial intelligent life in the universe. I really don't have a horse in that race. However, I do think that the current increase in unidentified flying objects seems awfully coincidental with the rise of another technology: Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is really an augmented human resource tool that does not think or have a conscience of its own but can do a whole lot of human tasks extremely quickly. If you want to see a full discussion of the various understandings on the state of AI, I would suggest you spend a couple of days reading articles on the [Mind Matters](#) website. As for UFO's, I suspect that the Pentagon is correct, we are being dogged by foreign competitors who are anxious not only to spy on us, but to perfect their own AI algorithms in real-time, a prelude to offensive/defensive military AI, and the Pentagon should know because they probably have a similar program or let's hope they do. A really fast computer does not have to worry about g-force, oxygen, or any other biological. Massive amounts of data can be transmitted home to teams of human eyes to both interpret and resolve. Remember that AI really boils down to code and conditional statements that can only mimic human intelligence if it is not augmented by puppet masters behind the scenes.

- [Where Your Watermelon Came From](#)

I love coffee only second to watermelon. it is a consequence of childhood in Florida in a day when there were huge fields of large, seeded watermelons and warm days to eat them on. as kids, our family would go to the fields and get a couple of fresh watermelons that had ripened on the vines, spoiling us for a lifetime.

- [Sperm Count is Decreasing in Rich Nations—and No One Knows Why](#)

If this is your introduction to this issue then you wake up quickly. There has been a precipitous fall in human reproductive ability in post-industrialized nations for quite some time. I have been following this issue for at least 15 years, believe it or not. Up until just recently, this decline in fertility has been given a passing, back-page glance by news outlets. For me, reproductive health is a major factor in determining the health of a population. Humanity is in trouble. According to "Dr. Shanna Swan, an environmental and reproductive epidemiologist at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, found sperm counts have plummeted over the last four decades.... [B]ased on the current curve, sperm counts could be down to zero by 2045." (Crawford, A. L. (2021, May 18). *Brink of a fertility crisis: Scientist says plummeting sperm counts caused by everyday products*. wtsp.com. <https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/health/male-fertility-rate-sperm-count-falling/67-9f65ab4c-5e55-46d3-8aea-1843a227d848>.) We are sacrificing humanity's future on the altar of materialism, convenience, and just plain greed. But worst of all, we have neglected the signs because we just want to have fun, letting everyone do their own thing. Example: those nice shiny receipts you get at the store. Most commercial stores still use thermal printing to produce their receipts, not ink. Thermal printing is a chemical-dependent process that uses Bisphenol. (*BPA in thermal paper*. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. (2020, October 28). <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/green-chemistry/bpa-thermal-paper>.) Bisphenol is absorbed through the skin and mimics estrogen. (Fiore, K. (2009, February 5). *Bisphenol A Mimics Estrogen, Phthalates Target Testosterone*. Medical News. <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/publichealth/12767>.) This pseudo infusion of estrogen is problematic for both sexes, pregnant women, and male reproduction. This is only one way that we have created and normalized a toxic environment. Unfortunately, by the time a major news source like the Public Broadcasting Service gives something time, it may just be too late... God gives us warning signs and says "thou shalt not" not because we can't, but because certain things should raise red flags in our life together. I don't see any change

what we are doing that will head off 2045.

I am in the process of reading Dr. Shanna Swan's book, [Count Down: How Our Modern World Is Threatening Sperm Counts, Altering Male and Female Reproductive Development, and Imperiling the Future of the Human Race](#), and will try to post in my reading section. In the mean time, if given the choice, refuse the receipt! Doing so is good for you, for the future, and for the environment.

- [COVID-19 can infiltrate insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, study suggests](#)

I think that all of the research is showing that, well, no one really knows what amount of damage this little bugger does to one's system. For me, and my house, this underscores that in the lottery of life, I would rather hedge my bets with a vaccine rather than not. God created us with a miraculous mind capable of tremendous good in manipulating the stuff of the universe. (Okay, we can also do, and have done, horrific evil with that potential as well, but let's not go there today!) The tweaking of mRNA is at the height of humanity's technical prowess, what a pointer to a designed system that even as the machine is running one can discern and modify a bit of code so that the hardware just takes off and incorporates it. Our bodies are like perfected mini Amazon warehouses that are fully automated to supply a self-contained ecosystem with what it needs to continue on demand. Exquisite and far beyond any purely human system, even those automated robot hamburger chefs! As any good parent that seeks well-adjusted children to grow into responsible adults, God's hand becomes less as our competencies increase, taking on more the role of co-creation. I just wish we were doing a better job of growing appreciating our uniqueness and therefore guiding our world to becoming a less base place.

May 2021:

- [Why Don't Changes to Our Bodies Create a Different Consciousness?](#)

"From the [chart available at the site](#), we learn that central nervous system cells and ova last a lifetime but — for example — stomach cells last 2-9 days, taste buds 10 days, and skeleton cells are replaced at 10% per year. The information available to our consciousness from these sources is mediated by constantly changing "personnel" but we perceive ourselves as single persons."

Really, with the massive turn over of our cells in a lifetime, it is curious why our perceptions of self and world rarely if ever change. When I put a new print head in my printer, I have to align it because the replacement is not a 100% copy of the one replaced. When that happens in like taste buds, every 10 days, why doesn't food taste totally different all the time?

- [THE COHERENCE OF AN ENGINEERED WORLD](#)

Not only a great summation of a lot of design understanding in the cosmos but also great biological and chemical pointers that only engineers could fully appreciate as we less technically minded look on with wonder. Make sure you download and read the full PDF. It will take about 15 minutes to read, but well worth the investment.

"Could it be that the realm of nature and the human mind were, in some sense, made for each other, possibly engineered to facilitate the communication of important truths leading to the impartation of vital wisdom and the consummation of the ultimate love relationship [63–65]. This idea goes a long way toward explaining the fine-tuning of the universe for life and the grand success humans have had in reverse-engineering the cosmos."

- [Think Again: Why Religion is Good for Us](#)

"When it comes to our knowledge and opinions," Grant says, "we often favor feeling right over being right... we favor the comfort of conviction over the discomfort of doubt." I think

that faith asks us to question our motives, emerge from ego, and rather than self-promotion calls us to prioritize the greater and higher good for humanity and all of creation. Faith-filled Christianity use their doubt to come to greater spiritual insights as they pursue God down the road of creation. Thanks, Dave for passing this along.

- [Social Exclusion and the Evolution Debate](#)

"If I never talk with you, I don't have to think about the issues you raise. And if I don't have to think about those issues, they might as well not exist." This could be the mantra of our age.

- [The '3.5% rule': How a small minority can change the world](#)

This is something the early church knew well. The apples they suffered cruel punishment for, they offered not by throwing them at Roman soldiers or politicians, not as weaponized fruit, but through freely giving them as food to the poor, needy, and neglected. To their powerless sacrifice, we owe the rise of the Western world, its democracies, and the ideals that we see now eroding through power.

- [Why the Chinese Communist Party Feels It Must Destroy Religion](#) Again, unjust regimes have gone after the Church and sought to conquer religion, thus consolidating its power. Hitler was a master of this co-opting to move his implementation of a scientific materialist agenda of "*Das Übermensch*", the superhuman as the next leap in human evolution. For we Christians, the superhuman has already come to point us to peaceful co-existence through humble service and cooperation, not consolidation of power. Well, maybe that's why Xi and the whole of China tremble when they consider religion and the freedom it promotes.

-