

For certain, Graham has not pleased everyone. His critics have included separatists like Carl McIntire, Bob Jones, Sr., and Ian Paisley. Liberals, Unitarians, and the *Christian Century* have also found fault. Graham has not responded to his critics, but he has not been oblivious of them. He said, "I don't want to get to heaven without any scars." Slight chance of that, with so many conservatives and liberals putting Graham's words and deeds under a theological microscope.

Perhaps the most unfair criticism ever made of Graham resulted from an interview he gave to some *Charlotte Observer* reporters in the 1980s. Based on their research, this headline appeared: "Billy Graham's Secret \$23 Million Fund." An Orlando, FL newspaper printed a picture of a dollar bill with Washington's face replaced by Graham's. This aroused questions in readers' minds about Graham's financial integrity. It shouldn't have. There was nothing secret about the fund which was established for a building at Wheaton College and a conference center in Montreat, NC. The foundation which held the money was approved by the IRS, had been audited every year, had been announced in many press releases, and was not for Graham's personal use. Nothing illegal or unethical had been involved. Eventually criticism faded, and sufficient funds were collected to complete the projects.

Billy Graham's life and ministry have been presented via many books, articles, documentaries, and television interviews. This book takes a unique approach in demonstrating that Graham's beliefs, actions, and personal qualities are firmly based on the Bible. The book is a very good source for a primer on basic Christian doctrine. Five appendices provide some helpful documentation about Graham's ministry. For instance, one gives a list of Graham's writings; another the 13-page Corporate Statements of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

*Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.*

**ODD GODS: New Religions and the Cult Controversy** by James R. Lewis, ed. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001. 435 pages. Hardcover; \$33.00. ISBN: 1573928429.

Lewis, associate professor of religious studies at the University of Wisconsin, is the author of *Doomsday Prophecies: A Complete Guide to the End of the World* and *The Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects, and New Religions*. In *Odd Gods*, Lewis and three dozen experts deal with religious expression in the USA which is described as a "crazy-quilt landscape." Most of the book describes the history and beliefs of unusual religious groups including sects derived from Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh persuasions. Also dealt with are the "Moonies," Wiccans, Satanists, Spiritualists, Channelers, Scientologists, The Heaven's Gate Cult, New Age and UFO devotees, and many others.

Lewis accurately points out that the public often has false perceptions of cults which lead to public fear with subsequent scapegoating. Some cult groups are socially pathological, but there are also many unorthodox sects which pose no threat. Lewis analyzes the differences between dangerous groups and the merely innocuous, and discusses the appeal of minority religion affiliation.

This substantial book contains an expansive index, lengthy bibliography, and black and white photos of many cult founders. With accounts of cults from A (Anthroposophical Society in America) to Z (Zoroastrianism), this is the book to buy if you are curious about America's so-called cult phenomena.

*Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.*

## Letters

### Inversion and Resolution

I wish to make further comments on Jerry Bergman's article "Is the Inverted Eye a Poor Design?" (*PSCF* 52, no. 1 [March 2000]: 18-30). I challenge the specific assumption of Edinger (pp. 19-20, note 7) that the retina is sub-optimal because its photoreceptors are on the back so that light has to get through the nerves and blood capillaries first.

It may surprise some readers to learn that "inverted" photographic paper has been proven to give quite satisfactory performance. For some years, the major German manufacturer Agfa produced "Agfachrome Speed," a color printing paper, which was much appreciated by users because of its matchless simplicity in use. A color slide was mounted in the negative-carrier of the enlarger and the image projected onto the baseboard; Agfachrome Speed was then placed on the baseboard, with the

light-sensitive emulsion DOWNWARDS—i.e., away from the light source—and after appropriate exposure was developed (in a single bath).

Its relevance to the controversy about the architecture of the retina is that it refutes the assumption of inferior resolution in photoreceptor surfaces mounted on the back. Many of us were astonished when Speed came out with its "back-to-front" arrangement; but its resolution was not inferior to that of papers with the usual arrangement of emulsion on the front. This much-appreciated printing paper was withdrawn after some years because of inadequate sales, not because of any difficulties with resolution.

Admittedly, the structures through which the light has to pass before reaching the photoreceptors are different in the retina from the fibers of polycarbonate of which this printing "paper" was made. However, the same type of reasoning applies—wrongly in the case of the paper, and therefore I suggest it is wrong for the retina. Those who claim our retinas are of inferior design are probably not aware of the facts, which, of course, supersede any vague

theoretical reasoning. Their assumption is refuted by the proven good resolution of Agfachrome Speed.

Moreover, our vision system includes not only the eye but also the brain, and is active as illustrated simply by the fact that the "blind spot" is not normally apparent to us. It is therefore reasonable to assume that any difficulty inherent in looking through the capillaries and nerves may be actively combated by neural corrective mechanisms that may not be yet well known.

Robert Mann  
Consultant Ecologist  
PO Box 28878  
Remuera, Auckland 1005, New Zealand  
robtm@maxnet.co.nz

## More Dialogue Desired on Origin Models

In response to the editorial "Beyond the Edge?" (*PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 1), I am writing to encourage *PSCF* to seek and include more articles that are more procreationist. As a "special creation-young universe-worldwide flood" origin belief/model proponent, I find so much "strong anticreation put-down" writing hard to read. The view, "Theistic Evolution: Enough Already," (*PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 5-6) and article, "A Time and a Place for Noah" (*PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 24-40) were a breath of fresh air.

There are only two origin beliefs/models with several sub-beliefs/models. I realize that creationist ASA was taken over, shortly after its founding, by theistic evolutionists/progressive creationists; however *PSCF* needs to balance the evolution origin bias with more creation origin bias. The scientific method does not and cannot offer a proof for either of the two primary origin beliefs/models. Our challenge is to objectively determine which origin belief/model offers the superior explanation/prediction power for origin observations research data and modeling outcomes.

Robert E. Landers  
ASA Member  
435 Edgar Road  
Westfield, NJ 07090

## Response to Allan Harvey, "On Natural Explanations"

It's better to be disagreed with than to be ignored, so I am grateful to Allan Harvey for his letter (*PSCF* 53 [June 2001]: 139) in response to my note (*PSCF* 53 [March 2001]: 5-6). Like many readers of this journal, I am a Christian academic who desires to appropriately and effectively present the claims of Jesus Christ to my students and colleagues. It is in that context that I raise questions about two issues: (1) the relevance of provincial discussions of theistic evolution to the secular academy; and (2) the importance of communicating clearly in the secular academy when the issue of origins is discussed. Harvey's letter is mainly concerned with the second point.

Harvey feels that my comments denounce theistic evolutionists and imply that they lack "Christian integrity."

He may feel that way (if the shoe fits as they say), but I was merely suggesting that if we want to follow the scriptural injunction to honor God as creator, we must say what we mean when we talk about origins. It is obvious to the readers of this journal that evolution implies much more than a scientific hypothesis. Whether Christians subscribe to special creation or some form of theistic evolution, the critical point is that God created. If we say evolution when we really mean creation, we imply support for the materialistic world view. When Carl Sagan refers to evolution, he does not mean any thing close to the idea that God created. If you mean that God created but use a term which implies random processes, then yes, that does demonstrate a lack of integrity. Why would you choose to mislead your audience, if not for the sake of "scientific appearances"? That is precisely the dilemma faced by my colleague in the situation described in my March 2001 article. If he refused to write within the context of evolution (random and purposeless processes), he risked losing the opportunity to write a book chapter, even though the topic had little to do with origins.

I am not suggesting that every reference to origins must be accompanied by a sermon on God's creative and providential acts, but an appropriate reference to the creator or God's design lets my students know about my world view. That encourages Christian students as well as students of other faiths, and creates opportunities to discuss my world view with non-Christian students. I see a profound irony in Christian scientists who, in their churches, actively debunk special creation in favor of theistic evolution, but casually refer to evolution in the classroom. Evolution is one of those wagon words which carries a metric tonne of philosophical assumptions, so it behooves us to put the term in context. The only and very simple point I am trying to make is that Christian academics ought to use terms which set them apart from secular humanism and scientific materialism. I personally know many Christian faculty on my campus, but last week when I asked a group of 120 Christian students if they had ever had a Christian professor, only six hands were raised. I take this to mean that there a lot of Christian faculty who are active in their churches but remain invisible on campus. With respect to the question of origins, let me describe how this works in my experience.

I am a food scientist with interests in dairy technology. I think one could derive something like the anthropic principal based only on the intricate physical, chemical, and biochemical interactions that determine the physical stability of milk. It would be completely inconsistent with my faith and dishonoring to the Scriptures for me to tell my students that this fantastic biological fluid came into existence by random processes. That is exactly what many of my students would assume if I referred to the evolution of milk composition and structure. My experience is that students appreciate my candor when I refer to creation or God's design rather than evolution. They appreciate my comfort with expressing my beliefs. Now, back to Harvey's letter.

Harvey considers the "absurdity that would result if this view is taken to its logical conclusion." He asks if atmospheric scientists are lacking Christian integrity when they discuss the weather in naturalistic terms. The rhetorical answer is "of course not," but Harvey is comparing