

Think & Believe

A Publication of *Alpha Omega Institute* • Winter 2004; Vol. 21 No.1



The Search for Extraterrestrial Life

by Michael Schaver

The late Carl Sagan identified several criteria by which signals from outer space might be evaluated, in hopes of finding evidence of intelligent life. He saw elegance, complexity, internal consistency, and utterly alien aspects as signs that a message from space was meaningful.

To Sagan and other evolutionists, finding a meaningful message from outer space would support the idea that we aren't anything special in the cosmic scheme of things. After all, to find nothing special about the earth in general, or people in particular, minimizes or removes God's place in His creation. Is it any wonder why the results of these efforts cause people to be depressed or hopeless and feel that there is nothing special about themselves, their struggles, or their destiny?

Creationists however, know that meaningful messages have been communicated. Notice for example, that DNA satisfies all of Sagan's criteria. Its double-stranded helical structure and its ability to synthesize proteins are truly elegant and complex.

In addition, the information it contains must remain internally consistent to pass information from one generation to the next. These "alien aspects" of DNA can be seen by observing unique animals that instinctively behave as their parents did but without ever seeing or learning from them.¹ [See "The Migration of the Golden Plover" by Dan Korow, on p.2.]

Sagan believed that this DNA "signal" (which clearly isn't of human origin) was the product of random, natural processes. Yet, the DNA satisfies his criteria so brilliantly that one wonders if he ever noticed the irony.

Another message system that also meets Carl Sagan's criteria is the Bible. Its message is that the Creator was willing to dwell among us and die for us to redeem us, and thereby demonstrating both His righteousness (that the wages of sin is death) and His love (that He loves us so much that He is willing to die in our place, as a substitute). Now that is elegant!

When it comes to complexity, commentaries on the Bible show the depth. Henry Morris, in *The Genesis Record*, writes 716 pages on Genesis alone.

The Bible is also internally consistent. It relates a single message and, despite the length of time from the first writing to the last, or the diverse circumstances

of the writers, there is internal harmony. What appear superficially to be contradictions turn out to be the source of spiritual insights.

One of the most utterly alien aspects of the Bible is its predictive prophecies. These could only be possible if their source was outside of time and knew the beginning from the end.

Its themes are utterly alien also. To value humility over pride, service over being served, faith over reason, and salvation as a gift and not by human effort puts it at odds with human cultures.

So, maybe Carl had a point after all. An Extra Terrestrial Intelligence sought to communicate with him but he spent his life looking in the wrong places for that message. It was in the genetics in his fingers as he adjusted his telescope, and it was in the Bible available for him to read. Only God knows whether Carl answered the call when he got it. 105

¹Sivertsen, Walter I. *SETI and DNA*. Creation Research Society Quarterly, 12/2002, page 190-193.



The Migration of the Golden Plover

by Dr. Dan Korow

The golden plover is no “bird brain.” His summer home is in Alaska, and his winter retreat in Hawaii! How would you like those living arrangements? However, Alaska and Hawaii are separated by the Pacific Ocean. How does this little bird get from one home to the other? Does it book a flight on United Airlines, sitting in the first class section, munching on a bowl of seeds? No. In reality, it flies the entire 2,500 mile trip in one fell swoop. This is no easy task.

Researchers have estimated that golden plovers flap their wings approximately 250,000 times in succession. Since there are no rest stops along the way to relax their weary wings, they either reach their destination or they drown. It's all or nothing — they do not know how to swim!

Golden Plovers must also have enough stored energy. Since their only fuel source is their fat cells, they must have the foresight to “bulk up” to nearly twice their body mass prior to the trip. Who ever heard of a marathon runner intentionally putting on weight before a long distance race? Yet, studies show that they increase their size to 200 grams, allowing a maximum of 70 grams as energy for fuel.

Now here's the amazing aspect of their migration. Even with their bulkier bodies, they still do not have enough fat fuel to make the trip. At weights below 130 grams, these

birds would be too weak to fly. They should run out of steam 72 hours into their 88 hour flight!

So how do they successfully accomplish this astonishing marathon? The key is that they must fly in a “V” formation like Canadian geese. The leader of the pack flaps his wings creating a turbulent airflow behind him. This swirling air creates an updraft that

the followers take advantage of.

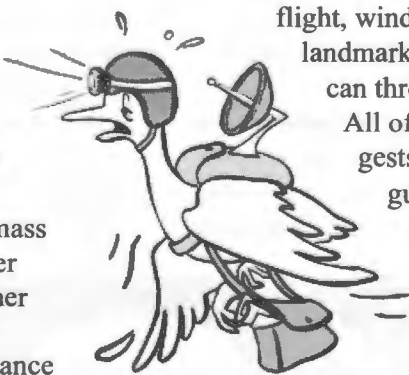
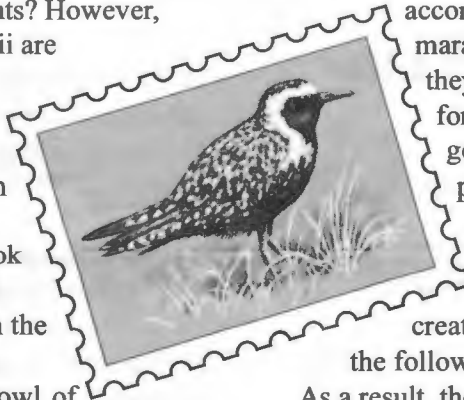
As a result, the golden plovers arrive at their destination having used 23% less energy in flight and with approximately 10 grams of fat in reserve!

Even more astonishing is their ability to navigate the long distance. If they were only 5% off their target, they would miss the Hawaiian Islands completely. Yet, even though they lack a compass, maps, or even a GPS, they remain oriented in the precise direction. Neither cloud cover, adverse weather conditions, night flight, winds, nor a lack of landmarks over a vast ocean can throw them off course.

All of this strongly suggests God's hand of guidance over these amazing birds.

Unfortunately, our textbooks attribute all this to “instinct,” and not

to God. Instead, let's give the credit to the source of true intelligent design: our all-wise, all-knowing, all-caring, and loving Creator. He alone is worthy. If God can lead and direct the golden plover, how much more can He lead and guide you in life through His divine Word and Holy Spirit! We're in good hands. **T&B**



Please Pray for:

- Health & safety for speakers
- Good attendance, open hearts, and fruit for eternity.
- Production of youth/adult curriculum
- Wisdom and energy for staff
- Broader financial support

You can help:

- Host a seminar in your area.
- Commit to regular support or onetime gift (Year-end donations were lower than normal which leaves us in a tight spot for the new year.)
- Volunteer for newsletter stuffing or office help

Coming Events

L&MJ = Johnsons, D&AK = Korows,
D&MJN = Nuttings, RS = Rich Stepanek

- 1/30/2004, Brownsville, TX, Brownsville Comm. Fell., Mike Jones, 956-544-4248, RS, L&MJ
2/2 & 2/9/2004, Delta, CO, VISIONS Group, AOI, 970-523-9943, D&AK
2/13/2004, Houston, TX, Good News Club, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, L&MJ
2/13/2004, Houston, TX, Chinese Bible Church, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, RS
2/17/2004, Houston, TX, YMCA, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, L&MJ
2/18/2004, Houston, TX, Taylor High School, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, RS
2/18/2004, Houston, TX, YMCA, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, L&MJ
2/19/2004, Houston, TX, Good News Club, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, L&MJ
2/22/2004, Houston, TX, Chinese Bible Church, Darlene Shirlen, 281-530-7282, L&MJ
2/28/2004, Galveston, TX, Galveston Chinese Church, Ron Shen, 409-744-9357, RS, L&MJ
3/1/2004, Delta, CO, VISIONS Group, AOI, 970-523-9943, D&AK
3/7/2004, SLC, UT, Intermountain Baptist, Tom & Cynthia Edwards, 801-969-1593, RS, L&MJ
3/8/2004, Delta, CO, VISIONS Group, AOI, 970-523-9943, D&AK
3/13/2004-3/325 2004, Jackson Hole Bible College Spring Creation Field Trip and Ministry Outreach, AOI office 970-523-9943 D&MJN (Check web for latest additions)

• Mark Your Calendars •

Sep 23-25, 2004, Creation Celebration, Grand Junction, CO, Creation teaching, children's ministry, and field trips plus concert by Michael Card. Plan now to join us for this special event. Watch for more details!

The Nature of Instinct

by Mark Sonmor with Justin Glick



Suppose a group of scientists were walking along the beach, and they ran across a message written in the sand. Suppose, in addition, these same scientists praised the grains of sand for their ability to organize themselves in this way. Obviously, we would say they were crazy.

Yet, the same scientists can say that the unique design of animals, including their instinctive behavior, somehow came about by random processes and, ironically, most of society accepts it.

In reality, both the writing in the sand and the instinct of animals require a prior input of information. It is the origin of this type of built-in preprogramming that has scientists scratching their heads.

Instinct, according to Robert A. Wallace in *Biology, the World of Life*, is: “any inherent, unlearned behavioral pattern, which is functional the first time it happens and can occur in animals reared in total isolation.” If instinct is unlearned, then is it possible that it is simply a natural

function of matter and energy? To find out, let’s go back to the beach.

When we get there, we find that a boy has built a sand castle where the message used to be. Even though the configuration of the sand has changed, every grain is still there. In essence, the sand was used to transmit information but the information was not a property of the sand.

In a similar sense, instinct is not a property of matter and it cannot come from material sources. For those committed to naturalism, this presents a big problem. For the creationist however, we see one more example of God’s providential care for his creatures. **T&B**

[For more information on instinct and information theory, see the enclosed book specials.]

Out of the Mouth of Babes...

by Pam Greene

Most linguists agree that children are born as universalists; meaning that they have the potential to speak any language. It is obvious that speech patterns become more ordered and sophisticated as a child grows. However, for spoken language to develop, the links between the phases of development must be exact and complete before the next phase can be achieved. For example, if a child is interrupted in one stage of development by trauma or lack of stimulation, it is likely he or she will not move beyond that point and will remain at that remedial level. In fact, children found in a few rare cases of isolation could not learn to speak at all.

Some might argue that children acquire language by simply imitating their parents. However, if this were

so, children would be slow to move beyond baby talk. Instead of simply “parroting” what they hear, children have the innate ability to apply abstract rules to formulate grammatical concepts. For example, a child might ask, “Mommy go?” when they see that their baby-sitter has arrived. This demonstrates that the child knows to place the subject first when speaking, followed by the verb. Who taught them to do this? No one. They just do it.

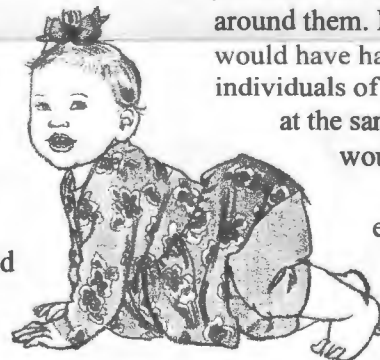
After children have begun to apply grammatical concepts in speech, they begin to apply words in new contexts. An example of this would be when a child says he is ready for his “big

sleep” when he is ready to go to bed. The word combination is his own creation, and not a form of mimicry.

If language came about by only natural means, someone somewhere, would have had to get the sequence just right with no one else talking around them. In reality, this process would have had to happen in all the individuals of a particular group, all at the same time. Otherwise, who would they talk to?

Even modern evolutionary linguists, such as Noam Chomsky state that the ability for language acquisition is

something that is built-in. God has designed us to communicate and to glorify Him even at a young age. The next time you hear a child’s amusing attempts at language acquisition,, remember the awesome design of our Creator! **T&B**





Director's Column

by Dave & Mary Jo Nutting

For 10 years, Lanny and Marilyn Johnson have taught

Creation vs Evolution to thousands of children. Many hundreds have come to the Lord through it. Now they, with the help of Mark Sonmor and other AOI staff, have put together their best into an easy to use teaching/learning tool. You can multiply the creation ministry with your own children or effectively teach children in Vacation Bible Schools, Backyard Clubs, Sunday School Classes, and Homeschool groups.

This curriculum is one of very few that teaches the truth of creation while addressing the problems of evolution. The teacher's manual contains

hundreds of pictures and gives extensive step-by-step instructions and materials for planning, teaching, and promoting a successful program. Professional videos/DVD's of Lanny Johnson's teaching sessions (included), now give teachers the option of teaching the lessons themselves or having Lanny do it. For those who want to teach the program, high quality CD images and powerpoint programs with text of each lesson are also included.

The theme of creation is constantly reinforced. For example, Marilyn's "How To" video will not only show you how to teach some excellent crafts, but also how to tie them into the lesson. Even the "Make a Fossil Activity" can be used for snacks (molds provided). Since kids are naturally active and

curious, we have included activities like measuring a life-sized Noah's Ark, digging for dinosaurs, and examining the design of live animals. An activity pack is also included for the children who finish early and need more learning activities to keep them busy. AOI has always been family oriented. Therefore, full color daily take home handouts with the main points of the lessons on the front and puzzles and games on the back will allow parents to learn with their children as they reinforce the lessons.

This expanded and complete, user-friendly version is what many of you have been anxiously awaiting. We are excited to see this valuable tool is now ready to multiply the Johnson's dynamic children's ministry. We pray you can reach many families for Christ with it! **T&B**

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Sunday School,
or Five-day
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