Communique'

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**December 2018**

December brings to all our minds the Christmas season. Let us never forget that **“Jesus is the reason for the season!”** We celebrate at this time of year the birth of our Lord, who came to Earth with a promise of dying for our sins. He fulfilled that promise on the cross and we celebrate the fulfillment of His promise to us at Easter.

Last month we finished a two-part series on DNA as possibly our best evidence for the Creator. This month, we have two articles which will inform you of the cutting-edge research of DNA manipulation of human embryos. This is a controversial field of study in our society, in our churches and in the scientific community. We will show you that there is an evolutionary worldview perspective to all this which is clouding the whole issue.

Our program at SABBSA this month is an examination of the **light travel time problem**. We have a Quasar Red-shift article summary and link which impinge upon this topic in this newsletter. Our SABBSA monthly program features **Spike Psarris**, who was a leader at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the Cassini probe which we featured in last month’s **Communique**’. We invite you to be a part of this video presentation as Spike tackles one of the most perplexing questions in creation astronomy at this month’s SABBSA meeting on December 11.

As always, we have a full rundown of all the creation science educational opportunities in the greater San Antonio area and Texas. This includes information on the **2019** **Biblical Worldview Conference** annually held by Faith Lutheran Church. Also, we have a reminder of our exciting **“Taking Us to the Stars!”** programs we are hosting for FEAST this coming year. We would like to thank the Reverend Thompson and Faith Lutheran Church for hosting this event as well.

**Ethicist: Gene-editing human embryos ‘a train wreck of a thing to do’** [Mark Pattison - Catholic News Service](https://www.americamagazine.org/voices/mark-pattison-catholic-news-service) December 03, 2018

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The revelation in late November that a Chinese researcher had edited genes in human embryos and then implanted them in a woman was "a train wreck of a thing to do," said an ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

"Normally clinical research proceeds in phases. First, you verify it works in animals, etc. Second, you verify that it's safe. In small things you verify it's effective," said John Brehany, the center's director of institutional relations. "He skipped all that stuff."

"He says, 'I practiced in animals and human embryos.' Even the Chinese officials are saying he violated their standards," Brehany told Catholic News Service in a Nov. 30 telephone interview from Philadelphia. "He said he didn't want to be first, he wanted to set an example, but he's toying with human health. He said he practiced on human embryos, so that means he probably destroyed them. He practiced in the context of experimentation."

Brehany was referring to He Jiankui, who first revealed his efforts Nov. 26 during an international gene-editing conference in Hong Kong. He learned the gene-editing technique known as CRISPR while doing advanced research at Rice University in Texas. His partner from Rice may face sanctions from the U.S.-based National Institutes of Health depending on the depth of his involvement in the scheme.

"CRISPR" stands for "clusters of regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats." This is a specialized region of DNA having two distinct characteristics: the presence of nucleotide repeats and spacers. Newsweek reported Dec. 3 that He has not been seen since participating at the International Summit on Human Genome Editing and may be under house arrest by Chinese authorities.

"The couples were offered free fertility treatment if they participated in this, and that's an unethical inducement," Brehany told CNS. "They might have been told it was a vaccine for AIDS," as the babies' father was HIV-positive, he added; He had said he sought to remove the gene that triggers HIV infection. "In other words, there are multiple, multiple ways this was a hash. It really was a hash."

**Tomatoes and animals are one thing. Humans, though, are another.**

Gene editing is nothing new, Brehany said. "There's a lot of gene editing that goes on in agriculture and in animals and there have been some experiments and attempts that have gone on in humans, very carefully done, that have gone on since the 1990s," he added. "A lot of this has not been successful, in part because the human immune system tends to think that new genes that are introduced are foreign bodies."

"There have been a number of attempts at gene editing for things like cystic fibrosis, sickle-cell anemia, a number of conditions that shorten people's life," Brehany said. "When you are introducing changes into somebody's body, they don't go any further. Either they don't go any further, or they die.

"If you introduce changes into a woman's eggs, or a man's sperm, or a human embryo within a very short period after conception, then those genes not only introduce genes into cells but into future generations, and that is both an opportunity in some respects, but it's also controversial for a couple of reasons. He set out to do just that. And again ... in a couple of countries they've approved this for a few things," Brehany said.

One country where some human gene editing is legal is the United Kingdom. It is illegal in the United States, and after the furor erupted at the Hong Kong conference, China said what He had done was illegal in China.

The Catholic Church's position is spelled out in the 2008 Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith document "Instruction 'Dignitas Personae' ('The Dignity of a Person'): On Certain Bioethical Questions." The dignity of a person, the document says, "must be recognized in every human being from conception to natural death. This fundamental principle expresses a great 'yes' to human life and must be at the center of ethical reflection on biomedical research."

Other faults Brehany found with He's work included: practicing gene editing on other human embryos first; implanting twin embryos even though one of the twins did not carry the new trait, and may be "a patchwork of cells with various changes"; giving notice of his research only after he started; and having no experience running human research trials.

"On a normal day, in vitro fertilization already separates procreation from conjugal love," Brehany said. "It also introduces the option, and the temptation, of eugenics -- checking out embryos by sight or sophisticated analysis to learn which exhibit optimal health or traits. Those that don't measure up are routinely discarded."

# Gene editing: Gateway to Promised Land or key to Pandora’s box? [Yonat Shimron - Religion News Service](https://www.americamagazine.org/voices/yonat-shimron-religion-news-service) August 04, 2017

(RNS)—*News that scientists for the first time successfully edited genes in human embryos created a stir this week.*

*In the experiment, outlined in a paper in the journal*Nature *published Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2017 scientists essentially snipped a mutant gene known to cause a heart condition that can lead to sudden death.*

*The work is controversial because it showed that scientists could manipulate life in its earliest stages and that those changes would then be inherited by future generations, if the embryo were allowed to grow into a baby****. The embryo in question was destroyed.***

*It also raised the tantalizing promise that the baby would be disease-free and would not transmit the disease to his or her descendants.*

*The work, a collaboration by the Salk Institute, Oregon Health and Science University and Korea’s Institute for Basic Science, was performed using private money since the United States forbids the use of federal funds for embryo research.*

*But it raises a host of ethical questions with religious ramifications. Should these edited embryos be allowed to develop into babies? Could scientists edit out undesirable traits to create customizable “****designer babies****”? Could it increase inequality in society between those with access to such technology and those without?*

*Arthur Caplan, the founding head of the Division of Bioethics at New York University, answered some of those questions. The interview was edited for length and clarity.*

**The gene editing findings are a breakthrough, do you agree?**

It’s a breakthrough, but a baby step. It’s a demonstration of proof of principle, meaning you made a correction and didn’t kill the embryo, and as far as you know, it developed normally for a little bit. It still didn’t demonstrate that there weren’t some errors made in other parts of the embryo. That might appear later in development...

**People are now worried about the possibility of creating designer babies. Should they be?**

I’m filled with amusement about that worry. The paper that was published was kind of like a demonstration that it’s possible to put a satellite in orbit. The designer baby question is sort of, ‘Can we travel to other galaxies?’ We aren’t very close. It’s not something anybody has to worry about right now. It’s certainly a consideration for our grandchildren, but not for us.

The questions today are: Who’d be watching this technique enough to decide how much safety and evidence there needs to be to try to make a baby using this technique? Who owns the technology and what will they charge people for it? Since most of the prior work on gene editing was funded by taxpayer money, it might be interesting to know if there’s going to be any effort to guarantee access at reasonable prices. The mapping of the human genome and everything that led up to this was publicly funded.

**But this study was done with private money and that raises the possibility that further research can be done privately and maybe even abroad, right?**

I will guarantee this technique will move forward. There are other governments in other countries that want to do it: China, Britain, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea. There are plenty of places around the world that would not see much to object to in continuing this work. What the United States does will not be the last word.

The idea that humanity would knowingly move back from the opportunity to prevent diseases from being passed on to future generations is ludicrous. The arguments about perfect babies, mutant humans or eugenics are not going to stop attempts to prevent disease or repair disease.

**That’s worrying, isn’t it?**

I still think you can try to regulate the technology. It would be nice if we had an international group; set out some rules. It would be great if the scientific community—with religious and ethics and legal leaders—would set up some rules of how to operate. It would be nice if journal editors would say, ‘We’re not publishing anything unless these rules are followed.’ That is important to do.

**What are some of the concrete questions such an international group should address?**

Where you get your embryos and gametes from; what kind of informed consent would you use to do research? How long can you develop an embryo in a dish? How far can you take it? How much animal work should be done before we attempt to make a baby? What diseases ought to be the top priority to study and work on and why? What are the competencies a team should have to do this? Should we create a registry, so that every experiment with embryos is filed and registered and we know all the outcomes, good and bad? Who pays if a child is born with grave disabilities? Those are the issues. Superbabies? That fear can wait awhile.

**What practical steps can religious groups take?**

First, get a scientist in to talk to you—someone who understands this and can tell you where we’re at in engineering embryos in humans and animals.

Second, what is the obligation to pay for this on the part of the government if it’s really oriented toward diseases and their prevention and treatment? Speak up for fair access.

Lastly, religious groups can demand that the scientific community form the kind of oversight body and rules I’m talking about.

It wouldn’t hurt to do one other thing: Try to understand historically—what was Nazi eugenics, what made it so evil? How did it come to pass? It wasn’t because of new technology; it was because of racism and bigotry. If you want to worry about abuse of today’s technology, it’s just as important to be careful about anti-disability views, racism, prejudice. That’s what leads people to misuse technology, not the technology itself.

**Editor’s Note**: **These two articles, printed a year apart in a Catholic ethical forum informs us of where we are in this frontier field of human embryo genetic manipulation. The Chinese researcher who caused the latest furor admittedly skipped all logical step by step research protocols and violated his own nations laws in what he did.**

**The ethical questions are outlined in these two articles. Question 1 is - Do we want this type of research to go forward since it could lead to the elimination of genetic diseases and congenital mutations and disabling conditions? The unclear answer from society is maybe and probably.**

**Question 2 is – Do we want the ability to play God and design our own fetuses as “super babies” with their sex, appearance, IQ and physical attributes predetermined by us? The answer to this eugenics question by society is again an unclear maybe. While we would like to eliminate birth defects and congenital diseases, it is clear many would use this technology to change a baby’s sex or other features. We are and should be uncomfortable usurping God’s prerogatives in this way and touching on the eugenics mistakes previously attempted. The good news on that front is we are a long way away from that type of manipulative ability.**

**Question 3 however is the one not being talked about because it is not in the geneticist worldview of genetics today. Do we understand enough about genetics to even begin toying with such genetic manipulations? Geneticists’ clear answer is that they think they do, but current research would beg to differ.**

**In spite of the results of the ENCODE project making it very clear that the 1.5% of our genomes known as genes are not the only things which determine cell and organism functions, but that the other 98.5% has even more say in these functions, it is still the worldview of geneticists that they can manipulate only these 1.5% our DNA gene regions and hope to effect the genetic changes they want without adverse side effects or unforeseen consequences. Such a view is not only ignorant, it is irresponsible. Other considerations aside, we do not yet know enough about the human genome to attempt such research with any real expectation of good results, but the result of harming human embryos in this process is guaranteed.**

**What they are tinkering with are human embryos and human fetuses which are human beings! God breathed the nephesh (soul) into us and knows us from conception. The idea that it is alright to blindly experiment with such human life and throw it away when it does not turn out right, or worse yet, bring to term an experimentally defective baby is morally corrupt.**

**High-redshift quasars produce more big bang surprises**

***by*** [***Bill Worraker***](https://creation.com/article/5216)

The big bang paradigm assumes that extragalactic redshifts are mainly cosmological in origin. Thus, high redshift quasars (quasi-stellar objects) are thought to provide a glimpse of the very early universe. However, recent X-ray and radio studies present major problems for this interpretation because such quasars apparently possess large central masses (probably supermassive black holes) and are very similar in elemental composition to much lower redshift quasars. Thus, they appear mature, despite the ‘young’ ages ascribed to them (1 billion years).

Furthermore, the length and timing of reionization within the big bang paradigm as deduced from the spectra of the high redshift quasars conflict with figures based on recent Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe data. These results add to mounting evidence of surprisingly mature high-redshift objects, which is difficult to explain within the big bang paradigm. However, the evidence appears to fit within a creationist cosmological framework. Further investigation of these phenomena may help to develop a model in line with a biblical explanation.

**Editor’s Note: This new data is right in line with what our own Dr. Daniel Harris and astronomer Halton Arp have been saying of years. It is also related to the discussion we will have December 11 at our monthly meeting as Spike Psarris discusses the “light travel time” probelm. If you would like to read more on this subject, the rest of this article comes from Creation Ministries International and you can click on the link below to read the rest of this article.** [**https://creation.com/high-redshift-quasars-produce-more-big-bang-surprises**](https://creation.com/high-redshift-quasars-produce-more-big-bang-surprises)

**Christmas Gift Ideas**

Would you like your Christmas gifts this year to enjoyable while at the same time evangelical, educational and uplifting? If so, we have some gift ideas that will fit that bill available at our December meeting or by calling us.

We have available three different versions of Bruce Malone’s brilliant **creation devotional series**, giving your loved ones an insightful one-page devotion for each day of the year revealing the miracles of God’s creation and tied to scripture. These very special devotionals are available to you at less than half the retail price.

As a stocking stuffer, we have Lee Strobel’s booklet entitled **“The Case for Christmas**”, also at a ridiculously low price. In fact, at our December meeting we will have available all manner of biblical apologetics and creation science materials, such as John McArthur’s exceptional new book **“Battle for the Beginning”** and a host of top-quality videos, kid’s materials and even Spanish language materials.

Pray about some of these materials being your Christmas gifts to loved ones this year. You can inspect or buy any of these materials at our December meeting, or call Scott Lane at 210-861-0454.

**2019 San Antonio** **Biblical Worldview Conference**

Saturday, January 26, 2019

***Today’s Educational World:***

***Is It Safe for the Christian Student?***

Sometimes yes. But increasingly no.  There are few “safe spaces” for biblically-minded Christians at most colleges and K-12 schools. Instead, the opposite is often found: subtle and not-so-subtle belittling and undermining of the Christian worldview. Today’s educational world can often be a very dangerous place for Christians and their faith.

This conference will explain what is dangerous in the educational world, offer God-pleasing support, alternatives to a postmodern/postfactual/progressive education, and prepare students to defend and share the hope they have in Christ.

**Presentations:**

* **“Postmodernism: Embedded in Education and There’s (Almost) Nothing to Do about It”** (Pastor David Thompson, Faith Lutheran Church, San Antonio)
* **“Getting the Facts Straight: How Grammar, History, and Logic Can Rescue Education from Postfactualism”** (Dr. Ryan MacPherson, Bethany Lutheran College, Minnesota)
* **“Science – Distinguishing a Classical & Biblical Education from an Evolutionary Education”** (Dr. Gary Locklair, Concordia University Wisconsin)
* **“For Students on the Front Lines of Higher Education”** (Dr. Andrew Das, Elmhurst College, Illinois)



* 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
* $25 per person (includes a catered lunch)
* Live streaming available
* Worship and social hour 7:00 Friday evening

**Faith Lutheran Church**

**14819 Jones Maltsberger, San Antonio, TX**

[**www.worldviewsa.org**](http://www.worldviewsa.org) **210-494-7800** **pastor@flc-sa.org**

We highly recommend this annual faith-based worldview conference which is hosted by our partners in Christ at **Faith Lutheran Church**! This conference includes presentations both for the creationist, as well as great talks for home school parents.

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**Prayer Needs and Praises!**

**ICR and AOI** – ICR is in the final stages of building their **Creation Discovery Center.** Please pray for this huge endeavor and pray about contributing to the last $4 million needed to finish the project. Likewise, our friends at the Alpha Omega Institute have moved into their own facilities and are looking to pay off that facility. Please pray that this facility helps them reach the college students for which this facility was bought and pray about contributing to paying off this facility.

**SABBSA on KSLR**

Please join the **San Antonio Bible Based Science Association** “on the air” each Saturday afternoon with “**Believing the Bible!”** Join us **Saturday afternoons at 1:45 pm on radio station KSLR 630 AM in San Antonio and airing for 9-million people across the U.S. in 10 major markets.**

Here is our schedule of upcoming program topics: 

12/1 **Squid, Octopus, Alien DNA**

12/8 **Limited**
12/15 **Homologous Structures / Common Design**
12/22 **Winter Holiday**
12/29 **Caveman Language**
1/5 **You Think You Know?**
1/12 **Grand Canyon and Colorado River**
1/19 **Always Question?**
1/26 **Natural Selection**

These programs are available on **podcast**. If you cannot tune in on Saturday afternoons, or would like to sample our program or hear previous shows, they are available on podcast on the KSLR website. Click on the link below to go to the KSLR podcast page and scroll down till you find "**Believing the Bible**."

["Believing the Bible" - SABBSA on KSLR Radio](https://am630theword.com/radioshow/local)

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**Science Workshops for 2019 at FEAST. “Taking Us to the Stars!”**

We have a very special set of programs for the FEAST Science Workshops in 2019. We will take December off for the holidays in this series, but start up again on the fourth Monday in Janaury with the **“Heavens Declare”** series from Awesome Science Media.

Please remember there is also a young **children’s program** being provided by Dr. Carl and Mrs. Cindy Williams. Thanks to the Williams for this invaluable program!

Due to FEAST’s recent move from their Burwood location, these events this coming New Year will all occur at **Faith Lutheran Church, 14819 Jones Maltsberger, San Antonio, TX 78247**.

Many thanks to Pastor David Thompson and the membership at Faith Lutheran for hosting us!

**Cartoon Corner**

Thanks to **Answers in Genesis** who provides these cartoons each month for our newsletter and our presentations. Please think about donating to them in gratitude for this and all the ministries they give us.

**Around Texas**

**Houston:**
The **Greater Houston Creation Association** (**GHCA**) meets the first Thursday of each month. They meet at Houston's First Baptist Church at 7 pm, in Room 143. After the presentation, there will be refreshments, fellowship and creation science materials for all to enjoy. Their meetings can be streamed live! For more information, go to [www.ghcaonline.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=bztaencab&et=1103662222545&s=545&e=001xF-6WOYzM5Yyre44Ea_qUjH5EOT_fFIGjrfpfa5h-rD53IlUVbz3Vc0Dp47_VEwW3iQQ6F1b6K0EtKc_vUxYKpzN_8V2upXFbsOScvUeD92nJdUTjDIFeg==).

**Glen Rose:**
Dr. Carl Baugh gives a “***Director’s Lecture Series***” on the first Saturday of each month at the Creation Evidence Museum just outside Glen Rose, TX. This museum is also a great and beneficial way to spend any day. Presentations are at 11 am and 2 pm. For more information, go to [www.creationevidence.org](http://www.creationevidence.org)

**Dallas:**

The Museum of Earth History uses the highest quality research replicas of dinosaurs, mammals and authentic historical artifacts to not only lay out for the visitor a clear and easily understood connection between Genesis and Revelation, but will do so in an entertaining and intellectually challenging way. Open M-F 9 to 6. <http://visitcreation.org/item/museum-of-earth-history-dallas-tx/>

**Dallas-Ft Worth:**
The Metroplex Institute of Origin Science (MIOS) meets at the Dr. Pepper Starcenter, 12700 N. Stemmons Fwy, Farmers Branch, TX, usually at 7:30 pm on the first Tuesday of each month. <http://dfw-mios.com/>

**Abilene:**

The Discovery Center is a creation museum/emporium that exists primarily to provide scientific and historic evidence for the truthfulness of God’s word, especially as it relates to the creation/evolution issue. It also features some fascinating “Titanic Disaster” exhibits. <http://evidences.org/index.html>

**Lubbock Area (Crosbyton):**
All year: Consider a visit to the Mt. Blanco Fossil Museum, directed by Joe Taylor. The Museum is worth the visit if you live near or are traveling through the Panhandle near Lubbock. If you call ahead and time permitting, Joe has been known to give personal tours, especially to groups. For more information, visit [http://www.mtblanco.com/](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=bztaencab&et=1103662222545&s=545&e=001xF-6WOYzM5bqqt6T1G_CwJWJosrOSIhLAagtnP0Z504J-gEROEBe22S3gq720x6ofjFVqK-AfJcsjrsuQyRtoepYiAQVVUFC-cF56fLwwBJ0SQ-44KlLmw==).

**Greater San Antonio area:** Listen to **Answers with Ken Ham** online at the address below. (No nearby station for this broadcast). <http://www.answersingenesis.org/media/audio/answers-daily> To hear creation audio programs from the **Institute for Creation Research**, listen online at this address. <http://www.icr.org/radio/>Also, tune in KHCB FM 88.5 (San Marcos) or KKER FM 88.7 (Kerrville) for **Back to Genesis** at 8:57 AM Mon-Fri, then **Science, Scripture and Salvation** at 1:30 AM, 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM on Saturdays.

**Last Month at SABBSA**

**Is Genesis History? The Movie**

**“Is Genesis History?”**, a quality made and acclaimed theatrical documentary shown in theaters all over America came to **SABBSA** in November. This film featured over a dozen scientists and scholars explaining how the world intersects with the history recorded in Genesis. From rock layers to fossils, from lions to stars, from the Bible to artifacts, this fascinating film will change the way you see the world. This film was judged by us to be one of the better summaries of the evidences in the field of creation science.

**Next SABBSA Meeting:
Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 7 pm**

 Spike Psarris

**Coming to SABBSA in December**

**Distant Starlight: Does it Disprove Biblical Creation?**

We see stars and galaxies that are so far away, it seems that their light would need a long time to get here. In some cases, up to billions of years. Doesn't this disprove the book of Genesis, which says that the heavens and Earth were created merely thousands of years ago?

No, it doesn't. In this multimedia presentation, Spike Psarris will discuss the "LTT" (light travel time) issue, showing how this seemingly straightforward question relies on multiple assumptions being true, and at least some of them are false. Furthermore, it is not Biblical Creation which is disproved by distant starlight. It turns out that the Big Bang model has a fatal LTT problem of its own.

The vastness of the cosmos does not disprove the Bible. Instead, it supports the glory of our Creator.

This video presentation features Spike Psarris, former engineer in the U.S. military space program. He entered that program as an atheist and an evolutionist. He left it as a creationist and a Christian. Spike now writes and speaks on Biblical creation. He has published six articles in Creation magazine, one in CMI's Technical Journal, and is the author of the DVD series, "What you aren't being told about astronomy" (http://www.creationastronomy.com/)

Please join us in December for creation science and biblical apologetics teaching you will find nowhere else in Bexar County. We meet at Grady's Restaurant, at the corner of San Pedro and Jackson-Keller. The address is 6510 San Pedro Ave, San Antonio, TX 78216.