

The Source

EZEKIEL 47:1-12

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH



"In the Master's Hands"

JUNE 2015

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

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PLEASE JOIN US:

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In the Master's Hands

Marilyn Cook

Whenever I sit down or lie down, my loving dog, Duke, is next to me to be petted or just touched and now the stray kitten has overcome her fear of me and walks between my legs just to have that touch. How are we with our Lord and Master? Do we long for just the touch of His hand upon us – His loving arms around us?

In this issue of *The Source*, Dr Phil takes us on a journey, first of all to the things we are made of, then to some of the far reaches of space, all the work of our Lord and Creator. Our minds are stretched that the Creator of it all still cares about us. Next he brings us to see the Lord and Master of everything before a puny crowd of men – on trial for nothing He has done on earth. But He loved us so much that He stood the trial and the cruel beatings and then the gruesome crucifixion in order that we may be saved. Do we long for Him – just the touch of His hand?


Shane shares with us the pilgrimage he took to a church named, Bethel, where worship of the Lord is first and foremost of all that they do.

We have significant articles by scientist Earnest Lucas, and reports of the coming together of men who are scientists and love the Lord. They have written a document worthy to go down in posterity. Craig reports on the Men's Retreat held recently – also some very significant things.

Please read and as you do, draw near to the Master of us all.

"Before a word is on my tongue You, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and You lay Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain."

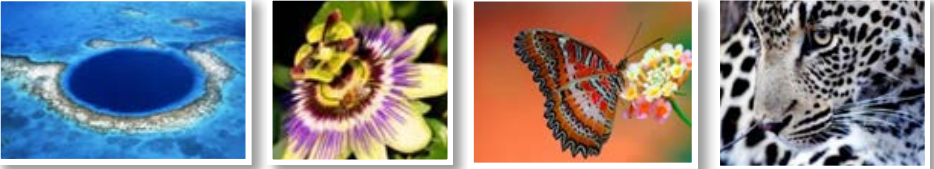
Psalms 139:4-6



Andromeda is just one of 100 billion galaxies we can detect (but we do know there are at least a billion times as many as that).

And these are both one very small part of the All Things that were made by Jesus and are sustained at every point in time by Him.

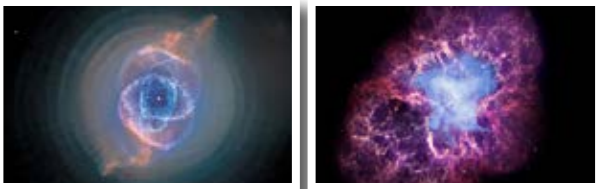
Maybe you're not a galaxy or elementary particle sort of person. Well how about these?



Birds or Butterflies, tropical Isles of dense rain forest - All Things were made by Jesus and All Things are sustained by His mighty word.

So, how did the creation welcome its creating, sustaining God when He took human flesh and lived amongst us?

Luke 23:33-34: *"When they had come to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals – one on His right, the other on His left. Jesus said, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*



Surely never truer words said: "They do not know what they are doing". Surely they had no idea the person they were crucifying was the one who made these?

But why did this have to happen? Fortunately God tells us very clearly in Col 1:19-20:

"For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in him, and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."

So it was God's plan that His fullness dwelt in a man – Jesus – so that His blood shed on a cross could pay for our sins and hence reconcile us to God. Suddenly it makes a sort of shudderingly awesome sense.



Science and Christianity

Earnest Lucas

It was a warm summer evening. Two people were walking along the beach listening to the gentle lapping of the waves and looking at the star-studded sky. They both spotted a light flashing out at sea. One of them was a professor of physics, the kind of scientist who thought of nothing but his work. Science was his life. He rushed to his car where, being the sort of person he was, he kept all kinds of scientific equipment. He got out a stopwatch and timed the flashes. He got out a photometer and measured the brightness of the flashes. He set up a spectrometer and recorded their spectrum. He noted the position of the light against the background stars. As he drove home along the coast road he stopped a couple of times and noted its position again as it appeared to move against the background stars, and did some triangulation calculations. When he got home his wife said, "You look excited dear, did you see something interesting tonight?" "Oh Yes" he said. "I saw what I deduced was a heated tungsten filament, enclosed in a silica envelope, in an atmosphere of argon emitting a regular pattern of flashes of visible radiation at an intensity of 2,500 lumens from a distance of about 950 metres offshore"

The other person on the beach that night was a teenager going home from Sea Scouts. When he got home his mother said, "You look excited dear, did you see something interesting tonight?"

"Oh Yes," he said, "I saw a boat signaling SOS. I phoned the Coastguard, and they sent out the lifeboat."

This 'parable' illustrates the fact that the same event may have more than one explanation. Science, by the very methods which it uses, is restricted to the study of material things - matter and energy - and so its explanations are always expressed in materialistic terms. As a result it explains how things happen - in the parable, how the flashing light was produced. - the mechanisms of nature. It cannot answer questions about meaning and purpose - in the parable, why someone was shining the light and the message it carried. So, science does not provide all the explanations! Many scientists recognise this. Professor Martin Rees, who is the current Astronomer Royal and Professor of Astrophysics and Cosmology at Cambridge University, who is not a Christian believer, has written:

"The pre-eminent mystery is why anything exists at all. What breathes life into the equations of physics, and actualized them in a real cosmos? Such questions lie beyond science, however; they are the province of philosophers and theologians." (Our Cosmic Habitat, Princeton U.P., 2003, p. xi.)

But we have to recognise that, because its concern is the 'why'

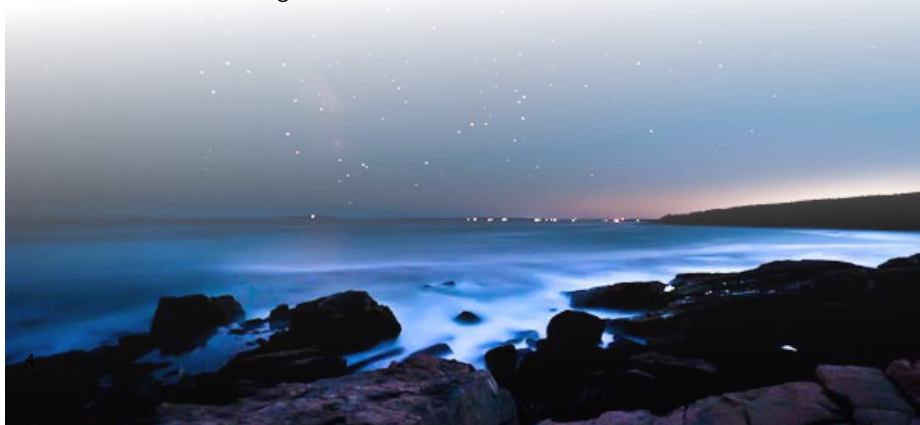
questions, the Bible doesn't give us all the answers we might like either. John Calvin, the great Protestant Reformer who was also a great Bible scholar, wrote a commentary on Genesis in AD 1554, before modern science had come into being. He made two important points about how we should understand Genesis 1. First, he pointed out that the Bible is written in what he called 'the language of appearance', dealing with the world as it appears to ordinary people. So, Psalm 19 speaks of the Sun moving around the earth. As a result, the Bible doesn't provide answers to what we would regard as scientific questions, the 'how' questions. As Calvin put it:

"To my mind this is a certain principle that nothing is here treated of but the visible form of the world. He who would learn astronomy and other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere." Commentary on Genesis 1:8

Many of the occasions when science and Christianity seem to be opposed are the result of people - sometimes scientists, sometimes Christians - not recognising the difference between explanations given in terms of mechanisms and those given in terms

of meanings. For example the question, "Why does the universe exist?" can be answered by the scientist in terms of how it came into being through what scientists call 'the Big Bang' and the Theory of Evolution. But that is to give an answer in terms of a mechanism. It does not rule out or contradict the answer that a Christian would give, that it exists because God created it. The Big Bang and a process of evolution may have been the mechanism God used. The mechanistic answer alone does not give the existence of the universe any meaning. In fact, if it is the only answer it suggests that the universe is simply the result of a meaningless cosmic accident. It is only if the universe is the creation of a personal God that it has any meaning, the meaning that flows from the Creator's purpose in bringing it into being. However, there are things in science which suggest that the universe may have a meaning. I want to share one or two with you.

The Radcliffe Science Library in Oxford is not a place where one might expect to have a religious experience, but that is what happened to me. I was an undergraduate at Oxford University studying chemistry. My tutor had set



me the task of finding out all that I could about the vitamins and then writing an essay on 'The Chemistry of the Vitamins'. I spent a morning in the library reading all I could find out about what was then usually called Vitamin H. It is now usually called 'biotin' or Vitamin B7. At the end of the morning, when I put the books and journals down and started to organise my thoughts about what I had read before going to lunch, a sense of wonder came over me. This happened as I realised how all the functional atoms in that molecule interact with one another, modifying each other's properties so that biotin is exquisitely fitted to do the job it does in our bodies. I found myself rephrasing the words of the psalmist in Psalm 19:1, *"The vitamins declare the glory of God and the living cell proclaims His handiwork"*.

The issue of design arises in various areas of science. In the 1930's astronomers realised that all the galaxies, the great star systems, are rushing away from one another in a way which indicates that the universe had a beginning in some single event which happened about 14 billion years ago. The 'big bang theory' of the origin of the universe resulted from this. Since then a lot of evidence has accumulated to support it.

As the theory has been developed astronomers have realised that it points to something which they had not expected. This is the fact that we live in a universe which, as they put it, is 'fine tuned for carbon-based life'. The chemical element carbon is the essential basis of life as we know it.

It is produced in the nuclear reactions that go on in the heart of stars. At the end of their life some stars explode, spreading the carbon throughout the universe, so that it gets incorporated into planets, such as the Earth, as they form from the gas clouds around other stars. We are all made of star-dust. However, for stars to be able to form at all the rate at which the universe expanded immediately after the 'big bang' had to be just right. If it was too fast all the matter in the universe would have been dispersed as a very thin gas cloud before the force of gravity could have caused pockets of the gas to clump together to form denser clouds that would eventually contract and become stars. If, however, the very early universe expanded too slowly, gravity would have caused it to collapse in on itself and it would have ended quite quickly in a 'big crunch'. The probability of the rate of expansion being just right has been calculated as 1 in 10⁵⁰ (which is 10 followed by 50 noughts). Fine tuning indeed! Also, stars can only exist because a balance between two of the fundamental forces of nature, gravity (which pulls the gas in stars together) and electromagnetism (which stops the star collapsing in on itself because the charged particles in the gas repel each other). The probability of the balance of these two forces being just right is 1 in 10⁴⁰ (which is 10 followed by 40 noughts). Another example of amazing fine tuning!

These are not the only examples of just how 'fine-tuned' the universe is for life as we know it. All this led the

astronomer and philosopher of science Paul Davies, who is not a Christian believer, to write, *“Though science may explain the world, we still have to explain science. The laws which enable the universe to come into being spontaneously seem themselves to be the product of exceedingly ingenious design.”* (Superforce, Unwin, 1985, p. 243).

Now, this isn't proof the universe has been created by a God who designed it to support human life. You can insist that all the apparent evidence of design is the result of blind chance processes at work. Alternatively, you can suggest that in fact there are billions of universes, each produced by different 'big bangs', all with different sets of laws, and that is why there is one that is fine tuned for carbon-based life. However, it seems just as reasonable, if not more so, to conclude that our universe is not the product of some random process but rather the creation of a mind which planned that this universe should have the laws of nature and properties of matter which would produce conscious, rational living beings. So, as it uncovers the mechanisms of the universe, and shows how intricate they are, science at least raises the possibility that there is a Creator whose design is to be seen in the nature of the universe in which we live.

But how can we know whether there is such a Creator? Listen to these words from the Bible, from the beginning of John's Gospel: John 1:1-5, 14, 16-18.

- We have had a word, a message, from the Creator in human form – Jesus. What is it?
- John 1:17 refers to the Law of Moses. The Creator who gave the universe its physical laws has given us moral laws, Psalm 19: 7ff.
- However, we have broken those laws with the result that we and the world are in a mess.
- Jesus came to make a way out of that mess for us. What is it?
- Forgiveness from God for breaking His laws through the death of Jesus who took the consequences of our disobedience on Himself at the cross.
- New life through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
- A new power to live the way God wants us to live through the Holy Spirit.
- The message from Jesus is that all this is available to us through 'grace', John 1:17. *'Grace' means being given what you don't deserve as a free gift.*
- But a gift has to be accepted. This gift has to be accepted by faith, by trusting God and believing the message He has sent us through Jesus.
- Have you accepted HIM?

Principles of Reconciliation between Science and Faith

As a group of theologians, scientists, clergy, chaplains and other members of the Christian community, having met as part of the 'Science and Faith Dialogues' held under the auspices of African Enterprise in the Waterberg District in April-May 2015, and being concerned that erroneous contradiction of science risks antagonism and rejection of faith:

- 1 • We declare our faith in God almighty, the creator and sustainer of all things, including this universe, our world and all life.
- 2 • We acknowledge that biblical truth is received by revelation from God and provides meaning and purpose, and that pursuit of biblical truth is of eternal value.
- 3 • We recognise that science derives knowledge by observation and experiments on the material world and explains mechanisms of how the world works, which has important earthly value.
- 4 • We affirm that God has spoken to us most clearly and completely through Christ and especially Him crucified. The cross reveals the complementary relationship between the act of crucifixion brought about by human agency and God's redemptive purposes.
- 5 • We believe that biblical and scientific truths can be complementary, and that there are theologically acceptable interpretations of the Bible that are not in conflict with science.
- 6 • Our pursuit of truth should be characterised by the following: In essentials, we strive for unity; in non-essentials we respect diversity of views; in all things we practice charity and love.



The Fold

We have had a full schedule since our last update. We are currently still waiting on the social workers and what our official status will be. We had a large group of people from Texas come and spend a week with us. They accomplished a lot of work, especially some awesome artwork, and fun times with the children.

Our new shipping containers were quickly filled by a company whose tender expired in Thabazimbi, and they donated everything in their offices.

We have been having monthly visits from a great group of people from the UK, who are here for a six months missions course. The children and our house mothers have great fun with them. Lots of games for the kids and some pampering for the house mom's.

The Easter holidays were fun. The kids did crafts and had a Easter egg hunt. Thanks to Adam getting all the computers up and running, the kids all had computer time most days of the break. We also packed up the bus and had a great day at Eventieria. We spent hours looking at all the animals and spent the rest of the day with a picnic and using their swimming pool. The last day of the school break, the Eskom sponsored mobile clinic came and gave complete check ups to all the kids. What a blessing.

On a sad note, our co-workers the Hayes have returned to the US. They will be missed.

We thank you for your support and prayers.



If you would like to help in any way, here are our details:

Nedbank Lephallale
Current account # 1445126591
Branch # 144547

The Bethel Pilgrimage

Shane Dowinton

Several weeks ago I was considering the idea of going to Bethel church in Redding, California for a church conference being held there on Christian healing. I have followed Bethel church for many years now through their music as they have been great worshippers and many of the songs that we have loved as a congregation of St John's have come from there. It seemed like a long way to go for a conference and life always seems to be so busy so I committed it to the lord in prayer.

I sensed the Lord's leading to the effect that I should understand that in every generation there are centres where God's presence is being felt and seen with great intensity, we call it revival. I felt the Lord saying, this is my lifetime, my generation, my opportunity. If Bethel is one of those centres where the fire of revival is burning brightly then should I not make that pilgrimage to see and experience it first-hand. Further, I felt Him nudging me that if these are truly fires of revival burning then surely those with a heart for the Lord must take their torches and light them from those fires and return to ignite others.

I was not disappointed. The culture of Bethel is steeped in worship, everything that they do is from a heart that rejoices in His presence. There are many things that Bethel "does"; teaching, outreach,

mission, community and personal welfare but all of it arises out of a joy and delight in coming near to a loving Father who is good all of the time.

Bethel has four core values that sit in their collective and personal hearts. They believe that God is a good, good Father all of the time; they believe that Christ paid for everything at the cross so that we might live in the blessing and favour of His resurrected life; they believe that God loves everyone and considers every life unique and important to Him and they believe that He is the God of the impossible, a Father desperate to break in to a damaged world with His glory and infect it with heaven.

These core values are nurtured from the earliest age through wonderfully creative environments full of joy and rooted in worshipping the Saviour, Jesus. The children are a delight, full of confidence in their identity in Him and quick to share the blessing of the Father with others in prayer and demonstration of His presence through healing and prophecy.

And, of course, this culture spills over, it is too much of a blessing to contain, it is the good news of God's kingdom come near. Redding is a town not dissimilar to Vaalwater, albeit somewhat larger. It is a

service town for the mountains, it provides for the rancher, the hunter or the visitor to the beauty of the Rockies. Wherever I went in Redding I experienced the influence of Bethel, waitresses were used to international visitors, they were used to odd people praying for them and blessing them with oversized tips! The taxi man, not a church goer, was blown away by testimonies to what God was doing in their midst and taking to the nations! The pizza delivery guy turned out to be at one of Bethel's schools and arrived not just with our pizza but with a word of knowledge for one of the pizza eaters and promptly prayed for the damaged ankle that the Lord had pre advised Him on! Not everyone in Redding is a believer but everyone in Redding is aware that Christ is being worshipped at Bethel, what an amazing testimony to a church.

My conference was brilliant and I have returned edified and encouraged, but more than that I feel excited that God delights in His children and loves to partner with them in the family business of transformation. From the joy of the throne room Christ is still about His business through believers who will take Him at His word; "Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:19, 20

LETHABO kid's club



Lethabo – a Happy Place!

We have a new bible study meeting each saturday who call themselves the ambassadors. They are led by godfrey lebes. We expect them to be a real power in the lord's work!

Lethabo Kid's Club children continue to come and enjoy their singing and dancing and storytime as well as their peanut butter and jam sandwiches. Several in the above photo grew up in Kid's Club and are now becoming leaders.

Report of Men's Bush Retreat

Craig Pidduck

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength. And you must commit yourself wholeheartedly to these commands which I have given you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home, and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your foreheads as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:4-9

About 23 men went on a retreat to the African Explorer which is about 12 km further up the road from our church. We went with an expectancy to meet the Lord, and I can report back that the Lord was faithful! It was a truly wonderful weekend of fellowship, praise and wholesome teachings led by Jono Pons.

Jono is a farmer and ophthalmologist in Swaziland. He is married to Helen who came down for the weekend with him. They have four kids, the oldest is in university.

Jono has a God given ability to teach the word in a simple, uncomplicated way, and it was just so refreshing to receive from him what the Lord

had planned for us to study. Our key verse from Deuteronomy begged the questions, "Are we listening to Him?" "Are we following the call of the Holy Spirit within?" "What is He saying to us?"

We covered a heap of stuff - issues we face with the inner turmoil within between the flesh, soul and spirit. This spilt into laws of life and death that we should either confront or adhere to.

Three very important subjects we went into were sexuality, relationships and finances. One of the most eye opening teachings was on the danger of pornography and what effects it has on us in our modern society. It is a subject that's uncomfortable to talk about, yet so urgently needs to be addressed. Recent studies have shown that 37percent of pastors struggle with an addiction to this evil. That's serious! If leaders of the global church are struggling with it, can you imagine the effect it has on the rest of us? Kids these days have access to it 24/7 on their cellphones in the form of video clips and pictures that get passed on. We as parents need to realise the dangers and teach our kids at a young age how to stay pure and resist what society puts forth as acceptable and exciting. It has been

scientifically proven that addiction to pornography can become worse than drug addiction. This is a pitfall of the enemy that needs to be overcome. But of course, we have a mighty Saviour who is able to bring us through and out of all evil. Much prayer over this dark avenue of society is required by all of us, and as a church it's important that we are aware!

Finances were also discussed, in particular how they should be managed. Next family relationships were discussed - there is a huge role to be played by the man of the household, most especially to his children. A man should set the example for his sons and daughters by the way he, himself conducts his life. Much discussion went into how one can achieve this as well as what God expects of each of us. I do hope the wives of the attendees noticed

a positive change in the man who returned home!

Jono ended the weekend with a wonderful message for our church as he led the Sunday sermon at 24 Rivers, saying that we need to be obedient and ready for Him, because the Lord has big plans for our humble little bushveld church.

All in all it was a truly blessed time together- the food was superb and a big thanks to all who put this together, most especially Wendy Godfrey.

See you again at the next one!

"But I trust in You, Lord, I say, 'You are my God.'"

My times are in your hands...."
Psalms 31:14, 15

INTRODUCING THE FARRANT TWINS ANGELA AND TIMOTHY

Congratulations, Nick and Candace!

We join you in Praise for His great gift to you!



**ST JOHNS CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE AT
9:15 for Praise and Worship, 9:30 Service Begins**

Take the Melkrivier Road to the Twenty-Four Rivers sign.
Turn right and travel 10 km. Turn left and left again into church property.

*For the Lord is the great God,
The great king above all gods. In His hands are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it,
and His hands formed the dry land."*

Psalm 95:3-5

Purpose Statement

To bring people to Jesus and membership in His family;
to develop them in Christlike maturity and equip them for their ministry
in the church and life mission in the world in order to glorify God.