

GCN

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Science and the Bible

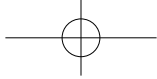
Chi-Yu King

As mentioned in a previous article,¹ both science and the Bible emphasize facts and truths, and condemn falsehood and superstition. But they are different in pre-supposition, realm of concern, the way information is acquired, and the participating researchers/authors.

On presupposition, science has been historically based on atheism and materialism (including energy), while the Bible, on Christian theism that there is an omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, everlasting God who is the creator of all things, both spiritual and physical, and who ordained and is maintaining the order and laws in the universe. Since whether God exists or not is beyond scientific proof, either presupposition needs to be accepted by faith.

On realm of concern, science studies the

physical universe in hope of discovering natural laws that govern its normal operation. On the other hand, the all-inclusive Bible touches all aspects of life and all disciplines, physical as well as spiritual, and even God himself, while its main purpose is to convey God's message of saving mankind and the whole creation from the fallen condition back to what God intended at the beginning. It deals not only with ordinary things that obey the natural laws, but also occasionally extraordinary things, or so-called miracles, that transcend such laws. These extraordinary things are inconceivable under the presupposition of atheism, but are entirely reasonable under the presupposition of Biblical theism: God being the one who originally made the rules can of course occasionally break the rules by doing certain



transcendental “new” things as a sign of His intervening (John 20:30-31).

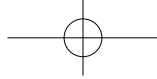
On source of information and participants, scientific knowledge has been acquired solely by human efforts in a never-ending process of observation and rational thinking. Since human abilities are limited, the scientific conclusions (theories and laws) are approximate, tentative, and limited in the realm of applicability, always subject to change when demanded by new discoveries. The Scriptures, on the other hand, were not only written by human authors but also claimed to be inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21), thus have both human and divine nature. Since God the creator is omniscient, it is reasonable to believe that the inspired Biblical truths, unlike scientific conclusions, are inerrant, absolute, and everlasting (John 17:17; Psalm 119:89; 1 Peter 1:25; Mark 13:31). Thus, when certain scientific conclusions appear to have contradicted some Biblical truths, one should not automatically jump to the conclusion that the Biblical statements are unscientific and thus wrong, but should examine whether these statements

have been incorrectly interpreted or whether the scientific conclusions are valid. In two previous articles, I discussed about “earthquakes” and “the origin of mankind” to illustrate the fact that some Biblical statements not only preceded scientific discoveries and conclusions, but also gave better explanations.^{2, 3}

Since science and the Bible are not completely separable in content, both emphasize facts and truths, and both have un-provable presuppositions accepted by faith, any contradicting statements between them should both be considered when seeking truths. Thus science-related statements in the Bible should not be excluded from the curriculum of schools in the name of “separation of science and religion.” When inquiring the origin of mankind, for example, the schools should not be required to allow the teaching of the theory of evolution but at the same time forbid even merely mentioning the possibility of creation, as insisted by many who are atheistically-minded.

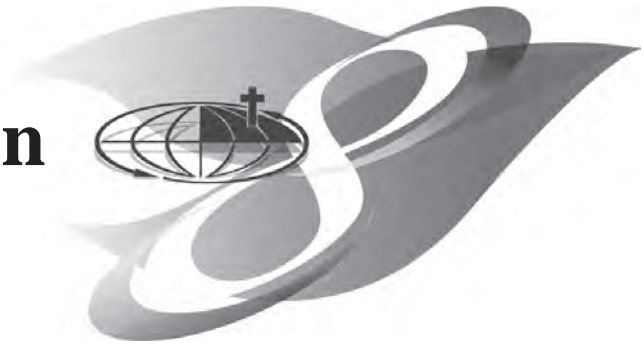
If Biblical statements may occasionally transcend scientific laws, such as those in phys- ► To p.6





A Reflection on the 8th Chinese Congress on World Evangelization

Nehemiah

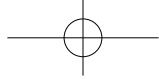


The 8th Chinese Congress on World Evangelization (CCOWE) took place in Bali, Indonesia on September 12-16, 2011. Sponsored by the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE), the congress this year had this theme: The Holistic Gospel of Christ to All Peoples. The Congress had a total attendance of 2,132 delegates from 37 countries. In addition to the Chinese track, a separate and parallel English track also took place with its own programming. This reflection will focus on the Chinese track.

Each day had a sub-theme and started at 8:30 am with worship and singing. Then it was Bible exposition followed by a break. Panel discus-

sions then took place with a moderator and three panelists presenting the sub-theme of the day (such as Church in one accord commissioned by Christ, Social/Cultural transformation through Christ) ending with question and answer time with the audience. After lunch, workshops were offered on Tuesday and Thursday. Free time of two hours for those two days was allotted before dinner which was served at 6 pm (a wonderful time to make new acquaintances and renew old ones). The day ended with a Revival meeting each night.

In addition to the main speaker, several missionaries shared about their lives in missions. Also reports on the state of Christianity or



Chinese church were given from various parts of the world. It was a very jam packed congress that lasted well into 10 pm each night. Available each morning of the congress was also the “Daily News,” a four- page color newspaper giving delegates more information regarding the congress and the people of the congress.

A book fair and exhibition by various mis-



Display of the Chinese Christian Mission History in Indonesia

sion agencies were available as well as display of the Chinese Church History in Indonesia.

There were many notable speakers during the congress. One in particular left a deep impression upon this author. It was Dr. Christopher Wright, the Bible Expositor each morning. Dr. Wright is the International Director of Langham Partnership International, a group of ministries, founded by Rev. John Stott, providing literature, scholarships and preaching training for pastors, churches and seminaries in the Majority World. In four sessions (interpreted by Rev. Jonathan Chiu into Chinese superbly), he helped the delegates to explore the biblical understanding of the breadth of God’s mission, from both the Old and New Testaments, and the scope of how we are called to engage in it. He provided a biblical understanding of God’s heart for people through the Abra-

hamic covenant in Gen 12 and what it means for us today – as heirs of the covenant.

Going beyond the Great Commission in Matthew 28 (and the parallel passages in the other Gospels), Dr. Wright used Gen 18:18-21 to bind together the themes of election, ethics and mission. Specifically, he used three questions to help the delegates think through what it means to have the foundation of all biblical missions on God’s promise to Abraham that all the nations of the world would be blessed through him and his descendants.

1. What kind of world do we live in?

2. What had God promised to do about it?

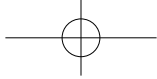
3. What does it mean to us?

In day two, Dr. Wright extolled the delegates to be the living proof of the living God in the midst of the nations, using Ex 19:1-6 and 1 Pet 2:9-12. Day



One of the many display booths at the congress

three, through Deut 4:32-40 and Acts 4, Dr. Wright explained that God’s people are called to bear witness to the historical facts of God’s salvation and revelation, and to make known the only name through which people may be saved: Jesus of Nazareth. Lastly, on day four, Dr. Wright encouraged the delegates to live out God’s mandate, to “seek the welfare of the city where you



we have to understand our motivation first and foremost. Are we serving God because we can then get our self worth through it? At times, serving God seems so noble, but with the wrong motivation, it can become an idol and wreck all relationships just like any other idols in our lives. He shared what it was like to have this idol and how it caused much trouble in his relationship with his wife. More importantly, he shared what God has revealed to him and helped him to work through the issue. What words of wisdom through the personal experience of a field worker.

live” through Jer 29:1-14. Even when all seems hopeless, even when it seems that evil powers have prevailed, when it seems that God cannot be found – He is there. This is the sovereignty of God in the midst of history, suffering and evil. This is part of God’s mission, original promise found in Gen 12:1-3. We are then to live out this mission. Are we committed to live out this mission?

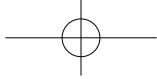
The Biblical exposition of Dr. Wright, set the congress on the right foundation; it shaped the call of Rev. Stephen Tong for workers on Thursday night, and it gave the reason for the 8th congress and for world mission: because it is first God’s mission – we are just taking part in what God’s doing since the beginning.

Another speaker that shook this author was Mike, a cross-cultural worker in a Creative Access Nation. Mike is an ARC – American Raised Chinese born in Taiwan. Mike shared deeply about the danger of having idols in one’s heart, even when it is the noble sentiment to go overseas and serve God. One has to be careful as we seek to serve God and follow in His mission;

The Communion during the last night together, with Rev. Joshua Ting, the incoming General Secretary of CCCOWE, giving a message between the taking of the bread and the wine, was unusual. Delegates were reminded of what the wine represented (the blood of Christ), as we consider taking the holistic gospel of Christ to all peoples. It is through the blood of Christ, by the blood of Christ that the work in accomplished. As one brother exclaimed: “I never knew taking Communion could be so powerful, to be able to experience God so thoroughly



The incoming General Secretary, Rev. Joshua Ting and out-going General Secretary, Rev. Morley Lee, with the interpreter Mrs. Lam.



through such a simple act”.

An event like this takes a lot of planning and man power. Many thanks goes to the planning committees and the 200+ volunteers (who paid their own way to go and serve the congress) from the Chinese churches in Indonesia for their warm welcome and help during the congress. Of course, if one wants to find fault, there are probably ample examples. The biggest objection this author has must be the cost of the congress. It cost over USD \$2600 for this author to attend

the conference, not a small sum by any means. Perhaps CCCOWE could consider having it in places that are more affordable so more delegates can come and be encouraged as we consider together what it means to be on God’s mission.

(The author is a Doctor of Missiology student in the U.S. A.)

From p.2 ► ics and chemistry, one may wonder whether they can occasionally transcend mathematical laws also. Yes, from the Biblical doctrines of “trinity” and “dual nature of Jesus Christ” we know that indeed they can. Mathematically, trinity may be expressed as “1+1+1=1” and Christ’s dual nature as “1+1=1”. These equations are impossible in the realm of created physical universe, but not impossible for God, who transcends this realm. With such realization, when illustrating the Biblical truth of trinity, we do not need to resort to such analogy as “water, steam, and ice” anymore. Regarding “dual nature,” if even light in the physical universe can be both particle and wave, why cannot Jesus, “the true light” (John 1:9; 9:5), be both God and man?

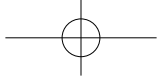
Another fundamental principle that God transcends is Causality, which was revealed by His declaration: “I AM” (Exodus:3:14a), meaning He exists by Himself from everlasting to everlasting! He is not only the first cause of all things, but also the final end of all things (Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 22:13).

References:

1. “Science and Christian faith: Are they mutually exclusive or contradictory?” *Great Commission News*, Summer 2006.
2. “Earthquakes witness to the Bible,” *Great Commission News*, Winter 2011.
3. “God created, made, formed, and established the worlds.” *Great Commission Bimonthly*, No. 65, p. 36-37, 23, December 2006; No. 66, p. 34-36, January 2007.

Quoted Scriptures (in New King James version):

- *John 20:30-31*: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”
- *2 Timothy 3:16*: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”
- *2 Peter 1:21*: “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
- *John 14:6*: “Jesus said to him: ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”
- *John 17:17*: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”
- *Psalms 119:89*: “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.”
- *1 Peter 1:25*: “but the word of the Lord endures forever.”
- *Mark 13:31*: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.”
- *John 1:9*: “That was the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.”
- *John 9:5*: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
- *Exodus 3:14a*: “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’”
- *Ephesians 1:10*: “that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him.”
- *Revelation 22:13*: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and Last.”



Mergent Church: For 20 years, church merging has grown in US and Canada. A year ago, 2 thriving churches merged in order to better reach the Phoenix area and, with a third church joining last January, they have grown to 4,800 members, 14% more than their combined total before. Traditional survival-based mergers by dwindling churches often shrink again. But mission-driven model spurs additional growth. 2% of churches have merged in the past 2 years, and 5% are likely to by 2013.

<Christianity Today, christianitytoday.com, September 2011>

Bhutan: The constitution states that Buddhism is the “spiritual heritage” of the nation, and it is one of the few nations where there are no open mosques, Hindu temples, Christian churches or Jewish synagogues. Yet, with 1st election held in 2008 it is now a parliamentary democracy. Though evangelism is still illegal, the number of believers is clearly growing, gathering in house fellowships secretly. What is hopeful is that people widely believe that the government is well aware of the house fellowships and has chosen not to interfere.

<Words of Hope, www.woh.org, 8/22/11>

India: The economic growth and technology advances have reshaped people’s mind regarding support of certain Christian ministries. For 30 years, an agency distributing audio scripture tapes and tape players in the nation received 2-3% from local giving for their budget. This year, they already see it jump to 20% and hope to see it rise to 25% next year. Especially with the younger generation more affluent and technologically minded, they know what technology can do and will have a sense of ownership in supporting these ministries just as supporting mission personnel.

<Audio Scripture Ministries of Holland, www.asmtoday, 8/24/11>

Philippines: In 2008 an agency started a children’s outreach ministry in a slum area. Soon after the program ended, the transformed parents were eager to begin a church. Under the leadership of missionaries, the church has grown to a congregation of over 100 today, despite the devastating effect of a typhoon in 2009 that wiped out many lives and homes across the island nation. A group of gamblers and alcoholics has turned into a troop of Christ-centered citizens, built a three-story structure, and added a daycare with professional teachers.

<Operation Mobilization, www.omusa.org, 7/28/11>

Burundi: 500 churches from different segments came together for an outreach program in early August. The event began with a week of community outreach and service: eyeglass clinic, women gatherings, school for deaf children, youth sports clinics, etc. An American evangelist and his team assisted the

program with some 60,000 crowding a fairground during the weekend. Early counting of decision cards indicated that 8,000 have accepted Christ. It was an historic show of Christian unity.

<Luis Palau Association, www.palau.org, 8/15/11>

Uganda: Malaria is a easily preventable disease, but more children die of it than HIV, war, or any other threat here. The reasons are clinics and hospitals are few in many regions and some of them lack equipment to diagnose and treat it. In a northern region of 1 million people, there are less than 10 clinics, meaning about 1 doctor for 10,000 patients. In 2 months, 520 children in the region died of malaria. Through a church contact with an US agency, equipment and medicine were sent. In a year the problem was essentially solved. Only 2 or 3 children died of it this year.

<International Aid, www.internationalaid.org, 8/9/11>

Mexico: An agency set up a foster group home in Juarez, right in the midst of violence and turmoil. Some of the children are orphans due to the drug war. Last year, the group created their first self-led Vacation Bible School with 130 in attendance. This year over 150 came and 63 of them accepted Christ. Most of this year’s group were teenagers who did not attend last year feeling too old for the event. This gives hope that the next generation could be less violent and avoid being succumbed to the active recruiting of the drug cartels.

<Buckner International, www.buckner.org, 8/10/11>

Cameroon: A team of missionaries witnessed the attack suffered by a village from a neighboring village that resulted in 300 homes destroyed and 6 deaths. The motive for the attack was for land, food and water. The team repaired the homes and wells, and even arranged for 3 new wells to be constructed. Clean water is in critical need. Some 30% of the population does not have it. The team is putting Biosand filters in the new wells that can reduce diarrhea by 40%. This will not only save lives but provide unique opportunities for the gospel.

<Wycliffe Associates, www.wycliffe.org, 8/10/11>

Sudan: An agency conducted leadership training in the recently divided southern part of the nation for a group of Christian leaders with a passion for reaching the unreached. Over 30 of them committed to planting new churches in the most unreached tribes. 138 groups in both north and south, over half of all the groups combined, are unreached. Amazingly, these leaders coming from different tribes from the south, have the heart to reach the northern tribes too, despite the pains they have gone through in the last decade.

<Global Advance, www.globaladvance.org, 7/8/11>



National 9/11 Cry Out America Prayer Gatherings

On the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 event, Christians gathered in 1,450 counties out of a total of over 3,400 counties in the United States, for united and fervent prayer.

With believers congregated in over 2,500 churches and neighborhoods, it is conservatively estimated that a total of more than 2.5 million people nationwide were crying out for a new spiritual awakening for America in the 21st century.

This past 10 years has been a difficult time for the nation with natural disasters, financial downturn and war. The church also witnesses further spiritual decline in the nation and recognizes her own weaknesses and the need for a genuine repentance to God.

In New York City, the Rally began with prayer time at the Statue of Liberty on a cruise ship. They moved on to near Ground Zero at the harbor. The main speakers were Rev. Rick del Rio, one of the first clergy arriving ten minutes after the second tower collapsed, and Rev Mark Gonzales, founder of the United States Hispanic Prayer Network and United States Hispanic Action Network.

Rev. Thomas Wang, GCCI's President Emeritus, was the Coordinator for the Prayer Rally in Santa Clara County, California. The Rally was held at the Korean Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in San Jose, California. It began with welcoming words from the Senior Pastor Rev. Wonbae Son. An estimate of more than 800 people attended the two-hour Rally.

Six speakers with 5 minutes each to speak on a specific area of concern and two minutes to lead in prayer. This is followed by three minutes of congregational prayer either in small groups

or individually. The time regiment was strictly enforced, but the enthusiastic response to the messages and the fervency of the prayer generally prevailed over the time limits.

The speakers were Mr. Larry Pegram, Rev. Abel Rios, Rev. Tong Liu, Rev. David Yi, Rev. Kamil Navai and Rev. Oscar Dace. Mr. Pegram led off with stating the devastating effect of 9/11, but reaffirmed our hope in Christ and the need to proclaim that hope. A video clip in remembrance of victims and families of 9/11 was shown accompanied by group prayers. Other speakers in turn spoke on 'Government and leaders of America,' 'God's Forgiveness of sins of America,' 'The Revival of Churches of America,' 'The Family and Young People of America,' and 'The Military, First Responders, Those in Harm's Way & America Return to God.'

At the closing, the audience responded with exuberance to the remarks of Rev. Wang that this is only the beginning. We need to continue calling America to Repent and Return to God, and pray earnestly for a new spiritual awakening. May God enable the committee to work and to achieve that goal.

PS: A follow-up meeting of the Rally Committee has decided that the next Prayer Rally will be held in May, 2012. Your prayer is very much needed and appreciated.

