

See? WOW!

News and Encouragement for CID Circuit **W**itness & **O**utreach **W**orkers

Nbr. 15 – February, 2020

Not that He had to . . . but He had to!

When I was in seminary, a couple of days in class set students' heads to spinning. One professor told us that in a way God could not just stand by, as it were, while all of fallen humanity went down the eternal drain. The next day, in a different course another professor noted, just as strongly, that God is God and He is under no compulsion to save.

Some students thought this a contradiction. One professor or the other had to be wrong.

Not so fast, though! Yes, God saves out of love that He freely gives, for no external reason. "By grace you have been saved . . ." (Eph. 2:8). What the second professor said was quite right, thank God.

And the first had spoken truly as well. He was not talking about any compulsion brought to bear upon God, but rather His own deep love that moved Him to send the Messiah. "For God so loved the world . . ." (Jn. 3:16). Thank God for that, too!

Jesus kept saying "it is necessary" for Him to do this or that as our Savior. No one was forcing Him to go to the cross and suffer the wrath of God for us. He didn't have to. And yet He had to – because He wouldn't have had it any other way.

See? WOW! What grace God has given poor undeserving sinners in Christ!

Page two article

This newsletter is currently running a series of page 2 articles on various apologetics topics. This issue and the next one carry summaries of some

contents from a book by a famous former atheist philosopher, Antony Flew. Before he died a few years ago, Flew acknowledged belief in God – albeit, alas, not in Christ as Savior.

Could a church in your Circuit use some help?

St. John, East Moline desires to provide aid to CID churches. It will help fund short trips by its members (a week or less) to assist with things like:

- VBS, perhaps a 2nd VBS in a new location
- Evangelism canvassing
- Special events to help a congregation's visibility, e.g., block party, ice cream social in the park
- Physical labor, making building improvements

This is an intriguing and generous prospect. Please publicize this opportunity in your Circuits ASAP, and refer any questions or interest to me. I would guess summer would be prime time for St. John members to render these kinds of service, and summer will be here before you know it!

Spiritual Conversations Workshops

The Lutheran Laymen's League is offering a couple of "Spiritual Conversations Workshops" in the St. Louis area in February. Each of these runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.: on Feb. 8, at Lutheran High School North, St. Louis, and on Feb. 15 at Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Church, St. Peters.

In addition to training and food, attendees at these workshops get a Spiritual Conversations starter kit for free. To look into this opportunity further, go to <https://www.lhm.org/workshops/>

Springfield Circuits Convocation



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I will present on *Meeting 21st Century Religious Challenges* (Atheism and the New Atheism, Islam, and Postmodernism) at the Springfield East and West Circuits Convocation at Immanuel, Springfield on April 4. Registration is at 8:30; presentation starts at 9:00 and ends at noon. Please help us promote this event, especially in Circuits relatively close to Springfield.

Worth considering:

Summary of some contents of There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed his Mind *by Antony Flew (HarperOne, 2007).*

Chapter 4 begins the book's second, most interesting, part: "My Discovery of the Divine." Flew emphasizes that his trek toward theism has been a journey of reason instead of faith, an inquiry after the "Aristotelian God" (92-93) not unlike one sketched by Mortimer Adler. In the name of reasonable thought, Flew asks his "former fellow-atheists": "What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute for you a reason to at least consider the existence of a superior Mind?" (88).

Next Flew begins a point-by-point discussion of the reasons why he changed his mind about God. In chapter 5 he starts with the laws of nature, which he characterizes as "a voice of rationality heard through the mechanisms of matter" (111). He provides a quote from scientist Paul Davies that summarizes the entire chapter: "Science is based on the assumption that the universe is thoroughly rational and logical at all levels. . . . Atheists claim that the laws [of nature] exist reasonlessly and that the universe is ultimately

absurd. As a scientist, I find this hard to accept. There must be an unchanging rational ground in which the logical, orderly nature of the universe is rooted" (quoted on p. 111). Earlier in the chapter, Flew had also quoted Davies, who wrote that "even the most atheistic scientist accepts as an act of faith the existence of a lawlike order in nature that is at least in part comprehensible to us" and further that no physicist believes, for example, that Newton's inverse law of gravitation amounts to a cultural creation (107).

Much of chapter 5 consists of quotations from Albert Einstein. Earlier in Flew's career he had mischaracterized Einstein, calling the great physicist an atheist. In the present book Flew sets the record straight. He quotes Einstein's explicit denial of being an atheist, in a statement where Einstein went on to paint a lovely verbal picture of a child looking about a library filled with books in many languages (99). Someone must have written and arranged all these books! Together, Flew's several Einstein quotations amply show the famous scientist's humility in the face of a much superior Mind. They also point to his recognition that science is possible only upon recognition of the rationality shown in existence (101-103). Not stopping with Einstein, though, Flew adds quotes from Heisenberg, Schroedinger, Planck, and Dirac. The latter said, "God is a mathematician of a very high order" (105).

Chapter 6 forms in effect an extended note to chapter 5. For not only are there laws of nature; moreover, these laws make the universe hospitable to life, "fine-tuned" for it. Flew reports that "Virtually no major scientist today claims that the



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fine tuning was purely a result of chance factors at work in a single universe” (115)! Explanations for the fine tuning either point to design, or else they claim that there is a “multiverse” consisting of various universes, among which ours happens to be the one that supports life. This shows the speculative lengths to which people will go, in the total absence of evidence, as they attempt to evade God. Flew quotes Richard Swinburne: “It is crazy to postulate a trillion (causally unconnected) universes to explain the features of one universe, when postulating one entity (God) will do the job” (quoted on 119). And even if there were a multiverse with its own “deeper” laws, this fact would not account for where those laws came from.

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