

VERITAS

Newsletter



The
New
England
School
of Theology
FAIRFIELD, CT

A Publication of *The New England School of Theology*

Summer 2010

Vol. 1 No. 2

From the President:

The New England School of Theology (NEST) is nearing launch of its first class: An Introduction in Christian Apologetics. The course will begin September 13th and meet for a total of 12 sessions on Monday nights 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Trinity Church. The address is 300 North Benson Road, in Fairfield Connecticut, which is conveniently located off Exit 22 of Interstate 95.

Registration is now open online for those interested in early enrollment. We are encouraging early enrollment to take advantage of a special offering including a tuition credit and free text book.

We plan to cover a number of relevant questions.

- *Does God exist?*
- *Are all religions the same?*
- *Where does life come from?*
- *Do science and the Bible conflict?*
- *How can a good God allow evil and human suffering?*
- *...and many others*

We hope that you will consider joining us this fall as we explore these challenging questions together.

It is also our pleasure to bring to you our newsletter, Veritas, a publication of the Journal of The New England School of Theology. Please enjoy the articles and respond at our website. NEST is interested in your thoughts!

God Bless You,

John M. DeMassa, Ph.D.

This Issue:

High Risk or Higher Reward?

AIDS continues to march on; claiming lives, devastating families emotionally, and draining resources.

What Would Moses Do?

“Ma’am, I’m not going to tell you that you can’t pray, but you can’t do it here – please go somewhere else.”

The Kee to Life?

Have researchers finally figured out how life formed from a broth of chemicals billions of years ago?

YMCA: Young Muslim Community Association?

Should a community-center-mosque be built near the site of the World Trade Center (WTC) aka Ground Zero?

The Pharisee in Me: A Book Review

How do we encourage our society, and especially our Christian brothers and sisters, to take their moral responsibilities seriously and to embrace the highest standards of righteousness?

Confusion Eclipsing A Young Generation? A Movie Review
Discovering the Hidden Messages in “The Twilight Saga: Eclipse.”

High Risk or Higher Reward?

by John Demassa

Are there “high risk” groups that carry and transmit AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome—such as homosexuals and bisexuals? Activists have denied any such connection, but the White House and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now believe otherwise, according to a gender issue analyst for Focus on the Family Jeff Johnson.

Jeff Johnson observes that federal dollars have been spent on educating those in the gay community to promote safer sex. Justification for the program comes from CDC studies that show homosexuals are at 44-times increased risk of acquiring the disease.

The White House has advocated several prevention methods. According to Reuters, “The plan directs government agencies to work together more closely to focus spending where it is most needed and identify where new spending would do the most good — for instance, among hard-hit communities of blacks, Hispanics, drug users and gay and bisexual men.”

The numbers of the infected are significant. The CDC reports that 56,000 new infections are found every year and more than 1.1 million people in the United States are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS.

Some are cynical of the efforts according to the Reuters interview. Michael Weinstein of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation responded, “This will be another report that will gather dust on the shelves of the Library of Congress.” He said the \$30 million being offered to expand testing added up to “9 cents per man, woman and child” in the United States. “It took 15 months to figure out what we already knew, and we are going to fight a war without any weapons,” he said.

The posted plan specifically states, “While anyone can become infected with HIV, some Americans are at greater risk than others. This includes gay and bisexual men of all races and ethnicities, Black men and women, Latinos and Latinas, people struggling with addiction, including injection drug users, and people in geographic hot spots, including the U.S. South and Northeast, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. By focusing our efforts in communities where HIV is concentrated, we can have the biggest impact in lowering all communities’ collective risk of acquiring HIV.”

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius upon announcing the \$30 million program conceded, “We can’t expect this to be solved by a huge infusion of new resources.” Sebelius ended her comments on what has frustrated policy makers combating HIV. Money and programs have failed to stop the disease that continues to claim thousands of lives.



“Christ must prevail over opposing policies, differing views and even our own pride.”

Christian organizations offer a different approach to the matter. The White House plan was rolled out on Tuesday. The following day the group Exodus International, a Christian organization ministering to the homosexual community, hosted the 34th Exodus Freedom Conference. The event held at Wheaton College is likely to draw protesters.

Alan Chambers, President of Exodus International, welcomed news of the protest. “Ironically, there are many at this event who at one time would have been outside protesting it, but have exchanged the hurt and anger of the past for a relationship with Jesus Christ and with caring individuals in the Christian church.

“What we, as the global Christian church, must recognize is that on the other side of a picket line, are often hurting people in need of God’s unconditional love,” said Chambers. “While our views on these issues may differ, the bold love of Christ must prevail over opposing policies, differing views and even our own pride.”



What Would Moses Do?

by John Demassa



Did you know an image of Moses is depicted on the Supreme Court building?

In two places the Ten Commandments are shown with Roman numerals. Among the collected figures and reliefs decorating the building, it is Moses who represents the intimate connection between God's Law and man's law. The representation, in short, shows a traditional and legal acknowledgement of his impact on American law.

To some, the inscribed images might be interpreted to guarantee a simple recognition of religious liberties such as praying in the shadow of the Supreme Court building.

Supreme Court officials have been challenged in a recent letter to address this assumption.

On May 5th, a group of young Christian students was allegedly ordered to stop praying on the steps of the Supreme Court by a court police officer who told them it was against the law.

The students from Wickenburg Christian Academy in Arizona were part of an American History class that visited the Supreme Court building. The teacher, Maureen Rigo, gathered the children into a circle at the bottom of the steps. They all bowed their heads and began to pray.

According to Nate Kellum, senior counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund, a police officer "abruptly" interrupted the prayer.

The group was ordered to cease and desist. "They were told to stop praying because they were violating the law and they had to take their prayer elsewhere," Kellum told FOX News Radio. The Alliance Defense Fund was contacted by Rigo after the incident.

Sonoran News reports that the police officer tapped Rigo on the shoulder and said, "Ma'am, I'm not going to tell you that you can't pray, but you can't do it here. Please go somewhere else."

ADF reported. "The prayer was stopped based on a statute, 40 U.S.C. §6135, which bars parades and processions on Supreme Court grounds." The statue reads in part:

It is unlawful to parade, stand, or move in processions or assemblages in the Supreme Court Building or grounds, or to display in the Building and grounds a flag, banner, or device designed or adapted to bring into public notice a party, organization, or movement.

The application of the statute however is misplaced, according to Kellum.

"Mrs. Rigo was not engaging in a parade, procession or assembly. She was speaking in a conversational level to those around her with her head bowed," a letter signed by ADF attorney Nathan Kellum explains. "There is no reason to silence Mrs. Rigo's activities since these activities do not attract attention, create a crowd or give off the appearance of impartiality. The ban on public prayers cannot hope to survive First Amendment scrutiny."

Kellum continues, "The wording of the statute does not seemingly contemplate quiet prayers like Mrs. Rigo's. Such prayers are 'not designed or adopted to bring' Mrs. Rigo 'into public notice.' Indeed, Mrs. Rigo's prayers were not communicated to anyone outside of God and her very small group." Kellum adds, "[T]he Supreme Court police have... targeted a particular viewpoint for censorship. They have singled out and censored religious prayer as the only form of conversation to be silenced."

The ADF sent a letter to US Supreme Court officials (July 15th) to stop police officers from restricting praying on building grounds.

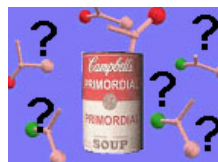
According to the World Net Daily report, Police have three weeks to respond. Failure to do so will trigger ADF legal action to protect Rigo's constitutional rights.

What should the Supreme Court officials do? What do you think? Let NEST know by posting your comment.



The Kee to Life?

by John M. DeMassa



<http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1143>

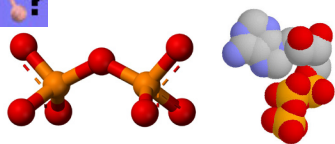


Figure 1. Left Pyrophosphate. Right Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP)

Is life in a pile of atoms? Well, the stuff of life isn't in any pile of atoms per se but according to at least one researcher the batteries of early life might be a unique kind of molecule. An origin of life researcher speculated that a molecule known as pyrophosphate might have helped bridge the energy gap needed to explain the emergence of life.

Terence Kee of the University of Leeds explains that ATP, the chemical energy storage center of the cell, may have had a direct ancestor such as pyrophosphate that powered organic matter on its march to life.

The dilemma, Kee states, is that “you need enzymes to make ATP and you need ATP to make enzymes.” The problem is that neither existed during the pre-life, primordial sea era some 4 billion years ago, prompting the question, “What kick started life?”

Pyrophosphate is simpler but chemically similar to ATP. The analogue pyrophosphate however does not require enzymes to transfer energy making it an attractive candidate to solve the riddle, according to Kee. The group produced compounds that helped make chemical linkages found in proteins. In the groups view, pyrophosphate acted like a battery that helped “power” the process of protein accumulation on the early earth. For researchers who believe life gradually formed from protein-like compounds, the news of pyrophosphate's possible role is encouraging.

Kee explains that problems remain for the theory. The first is that pyrophosphate didn't seem to be available in significant amounts in the geological mineral record, and secondly it doesn't react well without catalysts (which were absent from the ancient landscape).

Limitations for Kee's theory present a significant caveat, if not a dead end. The lack of geological evidence tends to suffocate the most creative origin of life scenario, since speculation alone poorly substitutes for hard physical proof. Kee's disclosure was accompanied by another report during the month supporting a different origin of life proposal, but that proposal was similarly hampered by serious questions.

Science Daily reported, origin of life investigators from Georgia Institute of Technology (Dr. Nicholas Hud) and University of Roma (Dr. Ernesto Di Mauro) have exposed a basic compound formamide (H_2NCOH) to ultraviolet light and high temperature (130°C, 266°F) to produce guanine—one of the building blocks of RNA. Hud's scenario models an early earth that was a boiling caldron bathed in high energy light.

The findings detailed in the journal *ChemBioChem* June 14, 2010, show how one of the elusive “letters-of-life” might have been produced to make

“Nobody understands the origin of life. If they say they do, they are probably trying to fool you.”

— Ken Neelson, 2002 *Geobiologist at the University of Southern California*

RNA; a kind of twin-like molecule to the “blueprint of life” (DNA).

The working hypothesis is that watery pools containing small amounts of formamide may have existed on the early Earth. Long hot and dry periods resulted in progressive evaporation concentrating formamide in lagoons or ponds. The chemical then in the presence of certain minerals, heat and UV light bathing the earth, may transform into guanine. A build-up of this key compound may have contributed to the accumulation of RNA-like molecules subsequently assembling with other molecules into the first cell.¹

The group reports that a reaction chamber featuring an inexpensive ultraviolet light (254-nanometer photon source) was used to simulate conditions that could have been present on early Earth. The reaction vessel was also heated in excess of the boiling point of water (266°F) during the experiment to produce guanine in measurable yield. If guanine could have been made this way, the group reasons, a ready supply would have been available for RNA production.

The report, while hopeful, does not address how guanine might survive extreme temperatures for lengthy periods of time. Workers (Miller and Levy, 1998) have examined the temperature stability of guanine (G) and the other “letters of life” found in RNA/DNA, including adenine (A), uracil (U) and cytosine (C). The workers concluded that if the early earth harbored these chemicals for extended periods of time around 212 °F (the boiling point of water), the fragile compounds would have been destroyed and stalled the origin of life.²

In conclusion, it appears that Hud and DiMauro – like Kee – have significant questions to answer if they claim to have the key to life.

Is the Key to Life a Miracle?

The location of the key to life may in fact lie elsewhere, according to some origin of life researchers. The co-discoverer of DNA, Francis Crick, himself thought that the origin of life was something of a miracle.

Crick, an atheist, began his journey to this most un-natural conclusion with the hypothesis that DNA molecules may have been imported to the earth.

The concept, known as “directed panspermia,” gained some support when first proposed. The word itself is cobbled together from Greek fragments, *pasipan* (πάσ/πάν, all) and *sperma* (σπέρμα, seed) meaning the seeds of life are everywhere in the universe.

Crick's idea was immediately viewed as controversial as it was bold. He proposed that intelligent life was intentionally sent as germs in a “space ship” to earth and other planets to “seed” life throughout the universe. The idea, not without some merit, was fueled by the nature of the DNA molecule. Crick observed that DNA was both complex *and* delicate, forcing him to conclude that designer aliens must have delivered the fragile chemical.

Crick understood that the hazards of interplanetary travel offered conditions that would easily fracture sensitive organic molecules. “It now

seems unlikely that extraterrestrial living organisms could have reached the earth either as spores driven by the radiation pressure from another star or as living organisms imbedded in a meteorite.”³

Organic molecules, such as RNA and DNA, the information libraries for all life, degrade easily in the presence of light, heat, water, and other chemical compounds. How these fragile substances would survive radiation, temperature extremes, and collisions encountered during interstellar travel was a puzzle to Crick. He concluded that an intelligent delivery mechanism was needed.

Crick, an atheist, would admit years after offering the hypothesis of directed panspermia, “An *honest* man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a *miracle*, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going.”

It would appear for the moment that Ken Nealson, geo-biologist at the University of Southern California, is still correct. *Nobody understands the origin of life. If they say they do, they are probably trying to fool you.*

What do you think? Where did life come from? Miracle or Material origins: What are the keys to life?

¹RNA, an informational biomolecule found in the cell, may have formed first and given rise to life, according to materialist-origin of life advocates. This idea or hypothesis known as the “RNA world” was first used in a 1986 article by Walter Gilbert a Harvard molecular biologist. It appeared attractive since RNA could act like an enzyme and an information (Walter Gilbert, “The RNA world,” p 618 v 319, Nature, 1986.)

² “At 100°C...the half-lives (of these chemicals) are too short to allow for the adequate accumulation (in the primordial soup) of these compounds (... for A and G = 1 yr; U = 12 yr; C = 19 days). Therefore, unless the origin of life took place extremely rapidly (<100 yr), we conclude that a high-temperature origin of life may be possible, but it cannot involve adenine, uracil, guanine, or cytosine.” Stated another way, even if guanine could form under the Hud’s proposed conditions (UV + 130°C heating) extended exposure to high temperatures for a relatively short period on the origin of life time scale, would degrade these “letters of life” to insignificant levels.

³F. H. C. Crick and L. E. Orgel, “Directed Panspermia” p 341-346 v 19, *Icarus*, 1973.

YMCA: “Young” Muslim Community Association?

by John DeMassa

Following our initial report on of the proposed Ground Zero Mosque in Manhattan, please see our update which follows it.



Should a community-center-mosque be built near the site of the World Trade Center (WTC) aka Ground Zero? This question was taken up by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) in New York City.

According to Margot Adler with NPR, in a tension filled community meeting in lower Manhattan, visceral shouts burst out opposing a plan for Cordoba House. The proposed building location is on the site of the

former Burlington Coat Factory located two blocks from ground zero. The Cordoba House has been a long held vision of Feisel Abdul Rauf and his wife Daisy Khan who see a kind of Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) or Jewish Community Center (JCC) – not simply a house of Muslim worship. The latter two organizations have a long history of promoting community activities for families, businesses and other organizations modeling Rauf’s vision.

Imam Rauf is an orthodox Sufi Muslim who does not share the extremist position of those who attacked the WTC. At present, their offices are found in Riverside Church, a liberal-interfaith church.

Numbered among the proponents of the community-centered-mosque project were Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer and 8th district Congressman Jerrold Nadler. Nadler’s district includes the west side of Manhattan from the Upper West Side down to Battery Park, and the WTC site. Other presentations were given supporting the initiative.

Rauf’s wife Daisy stated, “Our religion has been hijacked by the extremists.” “This center will create a kind of counter momentum which will amplify the voices of the moderate Muslims. If we have to defeat the extremists, Muslims have to be leading that effort.”

Vocal opponents outnumbered proponents, according to reports (3/1), and believe the BCF building should be “landmarked” making it a permanent undeveloped site. Landmarking a building is a rather common practice in New York City according to the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ).

“...it’s a fact that of the 22,000 landmarked buildings or sites in NYC, some 6% have been designated because of their historical significance alone. Among the structures landmarked for historical reasons: a building that signifies the importance of the rise of the Labor Movement and the struggle for workers rights, a site to promote equality based upon sexual orientation, a clinic where Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, is remembered for her advocacy of abortion rights, and even a building where the terrorist organization, Weather Underground, detonated a bomb.”

Approval of the landmarking measure would create a roadblock -to the proposed Muslim community center. Justifying landmark status, Barbara Paolucci offered, “The landing gear from one of the planes of the Sept. 11 attack crashed into that building.” Sam Nunberg of the Center for Law and Justice likened the Islamic community center to erecting a Japanese memorial in Pearl Harbor. “It would be like removing the sunken ship in Pearl Harbor to erect a memorial to the Japanese kamikazes killed in the attack.” Adler also reports results from recent polling on the question of the Islamic community center project.

A recent poll on the question of the mosque showed that 52 percent of New York City residents opposed the center. In more liberal Manhattan, 46 percent of residents approved it and 36 percent were opposed.

Maurice Carroll of the Quinnipiac poll says the most noteworthy statistic is that while 55 percent of New Yorkers say Islam is a peaceful religion, “22 percent say that it encourages violence. They would not say that about Jews or Catholics, or Protestants and the explanation of that has to be that the terrorists have poisoned people’s minds.”

Sekulow’s organization is attempting to block the Muslim community center and mentions among the reasons, suspicions about Imam Rauf’s goals. Sekulow, reviewing a recent book by Imam Rauf, bluntly states

that counter to the claim that Rauf's book is attempting to "cultivate mutual respect between Islam and America. It is not."

Among Sekulow's noted concerns he lists Rauf's advocacy for Shariah Law in the U.S. He points out that Rauf has written, "[It] also would not be a violation of church-state separation to have a subsidiary entity within judiciary that employs religious jurists from diverse religious backgrounds to comment on the compliance of certain decisions with their religious laws and to provide guidance to their religious communities on how kosher or Shariah-compliant these decisions are."

Rauf's proposal amounts to establishing a religious organ within the judiciary to determine compliance with Shariah, and so crossing an unacceptable line according to Sekulow.

Among Rauf's additional activities he leads The Shariah Index Project. The mission of the project is to build a rating index to assess the compliance of a nation to Shariah law.

Rauf is not alone in his desire to recognize Shariah law. Shariah Law is considered to be the basis of human rights according to the 57 member nations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) who tried last year to install an anti-defamation resolution through the U.N. The idea is to make a ban on criticism of Islam mandatory worldwide. Full implementation would ban "criticism" of religions worldwide.

According to Linda Vessey the advocacy director for Open Doors, "authoritarian governments (would have) virtually unrestrained power to attack individuals whose message they don't like." Open Doors President Carl Moeller recently describes what could happen under the proposal. The resolution would "silence words or actions that are deemed to be against a particular religion, and that religion is Islam. While the stated goal seems relatively innocuous – blocking defamation of people's deeply held religious beliefs – in practice the statement is used to silence those whose only crime is to believe in another faith, or no faith at all."

Religious free speech would have been compromised at least on the U.N. books had the resolution been adopted. Despite its failure, the OIC continues to pursue the resolution. The OIC resolution is based upon the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, which urged "that all rights are subject to Shariah law, and makes Shariah law the only source of reference for human rights."

Imam Rauf's vision for a Muslim community center at the heart of the 9/11 attack might be just a kind of Muslim YMCA with the mission of impressing upon Americans the peaceful side of Islam. According to others, however, it is not only a slap in the face to 9/11 victims but also represents the continuing efforts to lay the groundwork for Islamic jurisprudence in U.S. territory. Ironically, in the week following the heated LPC meeting, Elena Kagan, the Supreme Court nominee, supported Shariah while dean of Harvard Law School.

Update: First Hurdle to Mosque Cleared

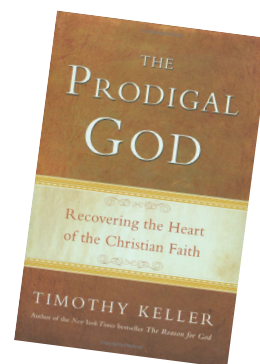
The New York City LPC on August 4th has denied landmark status to the site of the former Burlington Coat Factory located two blocks from ground zero. The LPC rejected the request unanimously in a 9-0 vote. Despite the fact that a landing gear from one of the ill-fated hijacked airliners crashed into the building, the panel did not grant landmark status.

Should the mosque-community center be build near Ground-Zero? NEST wants to know your thoughts! Post it on-line now.

The Pharisee in Me: A Book Review

by Ray Pennoyer

How do we encourage our society, and especially our Christian brothers and sisters, to take their moral responsibilities seriously and to embrace the highest standards of righteousness? In other words, how do we best challenge one another "toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24)?



There is probably no simple answer to this kind of question, and indeed when we look at the entire Hebrews passage I just alluded to, it would seem to encourage us to wonder about the subject:

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds

But even if there is no simple answer to this question, an important part of it is addressed head on in the little book by Timothy Keller entitled *The Prodigal God*. I can't recommend this work too highly. Interestingly, nowhere in the work does Keller set out to "define" godly standards of behavior. In my opinion, what exactly those standards are is something that the church must determine through serious biblical reflection and humble dependence on the Holy Spirit. Those standards cannot be safely derived from human tradition – whether that tradition is old and revered ("That's the way we've always done it!"), or contemporary and popular ("All the young people are reading him!").

What Keller sets out to do, rather, is to show us in a striking way the right attitude, perspective and context in which to approach the whole question of the moral reformation of our neighbors. He does this through a reflection on the "The Prodigal Son," a parable which Jesus gave in the context of his conflict with the Pharisees. The Pharisees in Jesus' time were on a righteous mission to reform their society and make devout, godly, individuals. "What could be wrong with that?" someone might ask. Well, as it turns out, plenty; and Keller shows us exactly where and why Jesus and the gospel differ so radically from the Pharisees. In our dealings with the world and with our Christian brothers and sisters, it is imperative that we avoid the attitude of the Pharisee, which – despite good intentions – turns out to be poisonous for all parties. This is an attitude that is, unfortunately, ever close at hand and a constant temptation to you and me.

So I hope you will consider reading Keller's little book, which is full of profound lessons on the gospel, grace, humility, and what true transformation is all about. These are lessons desperately needed in the church today. In fact, it's probably time for me to reread it.

*By the way, we will be using another book by Timothy Keller called *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* as one of the texts for this fall's "Introduction to Christian Apologetics." We hope you will consider joining us for the course if you are in the Connecticut region.*

NEST wants to know your thoughts on *The Pharisee in Me*. Add to the discussion online.

Confusion ‘Eclips(ing)’ A Young Generation?

by John DeMassa

The hot July 4th holiday weekend brought an overheated response at the box office as “The Twilight Saga: Eclipse” raised its total receipts to \$175.3 million after just six days, according to studio estimates. The vampire romance from Summit Entertainment finished at No. 1 over the four-day weekend.

The movie itself is the offspring of Stephenie Meyer’s award winning novels (selling some 100 million) and captured the imaginations of countless young people. The series includes four books: *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse*, and *Breaking Dawn*.

The vampire Edward is portrayed as a good man in many ways. The neo-vampire does not feed on people, but animals, and though 100 years old has never been in love. He and his family fight against their natural desire to feed on people. The eternally young vampire at age 17 finds his first love and a sexually tension filled story develops. Belle his human girl friend is portrayed as a loving and caring, though awkward teen.

One News Now approached Beth Felker Jones, assistant professor of theology at Wheaton College in Illinois, about the movie. Dr. Jones is the author of *Touched by a Vampire: Discovering the Hidden Messages in the Twilight Saga*. She instructs parents and interested teens about the series.

“I wrote my book as a guide to try to help readers think about the themes of the book, so I will say to people that I don’t feel like it’s my job to say ‘Read these,’ or ‘Don’t read these.’ But rather, it is to give people the tools to think carefully and faithfully.”

Though dimly representing themes of love and salvation, Dr. Jones cautions that its themes are not biblical. For example, on relational love



Belle’s love is obsessive – and practically speaking – bound to disappoint.

“My concern is that this love story between Edward and Bella is about making your whole life about the other person in the romance. Especially for Bella, she seems like she is willing to erase herself. She doesn’t have any other plans, she doesn’t have any other hopes and she doesn’t have any other dreams. It’s all about him. It is not wrong to have deep longings in our hearts. I think we all have had them, but I think again it is a problem when it takes over everything. One of the obvious things that can be wrong is when that love disappoints. All other human beings will disappoint us. Nobody can fulfill us, and if we expect this other person to come along and make our lives perfect and fulfill us and meet all of our needs, we’re going to be disappointed. There is a reality there that’s needed. We can’t expect a person to be our everything. On the other hand, we can expect God to be our everything and we won’t be disappointed.”

Jones also tackles the belief of some Christians that the book promotes sexual purity. Perhaps so but it would seem there is more to the story.

“I’ve heard some Christians celebrate these books as an example of sexual purity, because the characters do wait until they get married. But I really question that. They do wait, but it is very much a kind of desperate, erotic waiting, and I think that a parent would want to know that these are erotic books. Even if they have heard that these characters abstain until they get married, they are no less about sexual desire, and that’s what drives the books. There is also a fair amount of sexual explicitness when the characters do get married in the book *Breaking Dawn*, and I have some concerns about the way that is portrayed as well.”

It seems the books and the movies should be approached thoughtfully if parents allow their children to view the material. Moreover, if parents believe that the themes of love, redemption and salvation are positive, it would be helpful to discuss how they differ from a Christian Worldview.

Should Christians read or watch “The Twilight Saga: Eclipse?” What are your thoughts? Post your comments on-line. NEST wants to know.



VERITAS Newsletter is provided to subscribers and friends alone. Those wishing to be removed from our list please unsubscribe by sending an e-mail. If you wish to comment on any of the topics please send us your thoughts. Acceptable letters will be considered for posting at our website.

All commentary and views are not necessarily held by all within the school community.

The New England School of Theology is offering an Introduction to Apologetics at our Fairfield location in the Fall of 2010. For more information and registration please contact Dr. John M. DeMassa

at
john.demassa@nestheology.org
or call **203-554-0850**.