Science and the Wisdom of God:
Encouraging an Appreciation for the Ingenuity that Underlies Our Evolving Universe

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Abstract

A team of faculty members from the College of Science and Engineering at Oral Roberts University (ORU) are engaged in a three-year project to facilitate the local church's consideration of the connections between science and Christian faith. This translation project began in January of 2013 and is funded by a grant from the BioLogos Foundation. In particular, it is suggested that a rigorous study of nature demonstrates the great ingenuity of the Creator. This is especially seen in the way even the fallenness of humanity assists in affording the apprehension of fundamental and vital truths. Thus, the realm of nature appears to be engineered specifically to assist God in accomplishing his purposes in the lives of human beings; primarily, by refining them into a people fit for an eternity with their Maker.

A summary of the current status of the project will be presented. Key ideas used in encouraging Christians to a deeper engagement with faith and science issues will be highlighted. Assessment data concerning the effectiveness of these ideas will also be presented. Several presentations have already been delivered to churches, schools and community groups in Northeastern Oklahoma. Positive feedback as to the need for, and the effectiveness of, these presentations has been encouraging. The challenge is to work towards unity among Christians on faith and science issues without compromising truth. This requires acceptance of some uncertainty on exactly how God accomplishes Creation.

Need for Church Engagement with STEM Fields

As a university professor and administrator, recruitment and retention concerns are often at the forefront of considerations regarding the health and success of the organization. The goal is to attract new students by effectively communicating the educational benefits to be obtained, while also ensuring a high retention rate among current students by providing those benefits in a way that meets or exceeds their expectations. An analogous situation exists concerning the success of a particular religion. Adherents hope to attract new converts through the front door, while keeping the back door closed as much as possible to those who might become dissatisfied. This is of special concern to parents of youth who are raised in a particular faith environment, although it may often be unclear as to whether the goal is recruitment or retention since God alone knows the heart of each individual.

In terms of numbers, the success of Christianity since its founding at Jesus' death and resurrection has been impressive. The Lausanne Statistics Task Force at the U.S. Center for World Mission reported in 1990 that the ratio of committed Christians (those who read, believe, and obey the Bible) to non-Christians (those who do not consider themselves to be Christians)

has been increasing steadily during this time.[1] A more recent update provides a graph of the number of committed Christians as a percentage of the world population during the twentieth century. It shows that this number has risen sharply in the last 50 years to a value of 11.2 percent in 2000.[2] It should be noted that various organizations that track these kinds of data may report significantly different numbers depending on the definition of what it means to be a Christian. The recent Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life defines a Christian as one who reports themselves to be a Christian in response to their survey, without regard for their common practices or behavior. As of 2012, they report the number of Christians in the world to be about 32 percent, which they report to have been fairly constant over the twentieth century (www.pewforum.org).

For Christians, a more alarming trend reported by the Pew Forum is the recent and rapid rise in the number of Americans who do not identify with any religion. "One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling…However…two-thirds of them say they believe in God, [and] more than half say they often feel a deep connection with nature and the earth (58%)" (www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise). The Barna Group also reports that only "about 30 percent of young people who grow up with a Christian background remain committed to their Christian faith through their 20s."[3] These and other data suggest that while Christianity may be growing in developing countries, it seems to be experiencing both recruitment and retention problems in America, and other technologically-developed countries of the world, such as Europe and Japan. Perhaps part of the problem is that Christians have neglected to properly articulate the relation and relevance of faith to scientific understandings which underpin the more materialistic worldviews that pervade the further developed countries of the world.

This is one of the theses asserted by David Kinnaman, President of the Barna Group, in his book, *You Lost Me: Why young Christians are leaving church…and rethinking faith*. In a chapter entitled: Antiscience, he tells the story of a science-minded teenager named Mike, who was raised Catholic, but became an atheist. Mike was invited to a pastors' conference to share his thoughts on why he was no longer a believer. He said, "It was tenth grade. I started learning about evolution. It felt like my first window into the real world. To be honest, I think that learning about science was the straw that broke the camel's back. I knew from church that I couldn't believe in both science and God, so that was it. I didn't believe in God anymore."[4] Although Mike's wording is suggestive of the church's culpability in his decision, it is not for the purpose of blaming the church that this story is recounted here. Certainly the responsibility for rejecting the Truth and embracing atheism falls squarely on Mike's shoulders. But one interesting feature of a fallen world is that there is plenty of blame to go around. Perhaps the

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[1] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 545-6.
[2] Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19:4 Winter (2002): 15.
[3] Michael Tenneson, "Preparing Young People for a Life of Faith," *Enrichment Journal*, Fall (2012), 86.
[4] David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why young Christians are leaving church…and rethinking faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 138.

church can do better at helping young people sort through faith and science issues, such as how to understand evolutionary data in light of Christianity.

Actually, it's not just the relationship between *science* and Christianity that needs to be addressed more fully, but connections to all the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields should be explored. However, the term "science" is often used in the sense of an abbreviation for the four fields mentions above, as is the case in this article. Kinnaman reports that 52% of youth group teens in one survey aspired to science-related (medical and health professions, engineering, science, technology, and veterinary medicine) careers, but that only 1% of their youth pastors addressed issues of science in the past year.[5] Another Barna survey of youth with a Christian background provides an interesting confession of their thoughts on these issues. 52% agreed that Christians are too confident that they know all the answers. 41% agreed that churches are out of step with the scientific world we live in. 34% agreed that Christianity is antiscience. 34% agreed that they have been turned off by the creation-versus-evolution debate. 29% agreed that Christianity makes complex things too simple. And 26% agreed that Christianity is anti-intellectual.[6]

With regard to creation-versus-evolution, perhaps it is the debate-style format that is turning them off. It is suggested that a more open-ended exploration and dialogue be adopted, which gives young people permission to follow the evidence, wherever it leads. Of course, one must guard against bad science in seeking the truth, but this holds for theology as well. Christians need to understand their churches' positions on these issues. Rent surveys by an interdisciplinary group at MIT suggest that "part of the [faith and science] controversy might be defused by people learning more about their own religious doctrine and the science it endorses."[7] The Scripture admonishes each of us to "examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess 5:21). Mike Tenneson has recently provided an article which is helpful when assisting young people through this maze of information with an appropriate balance of guidance and autonomy.[8]

Addressing Faith and Science Issues in Northeastern Oklahoma

A team of faculty members from the College of Science and Engineering at ORU in Tulsa, Oklahoma have responded to a call to help Christians in this region engage more fully with scientific topics, and hopefully realize a more satisfying integration of their faith with science. The ultimate objective of this project is to help Christians gain a greater appreciation for the wisdom, ingenuity, and glory of God, especially as seen through a scientific understanding of nature, hence enhancing their faith in, love for, and worship of, their Maker. This project is funded by a three-year translation grant from the BioLogos Foundation that began on January 1, 2013. This grant is to facilitate the translation of information on the integration of faith and science from the university to the local church. 'BioLogos is a community of evangelical Christians committed to exploring and celebrating the compatibility of evolutionary creation and

[5] Kinnaman, 140.
[6] Kinnaman, 137.
[7] Eugena Lee, Max Tegmark, and Meia Chita-Tegmark, "The MIT Survey on Science, Religion and Origins: the Belief Gap," http://space.mit.edu/home/tegmark/survey.html.
[8] Tenneson, 86-91.

biblical faith, guided by the truth that "all things hold together in Christ" [*Colossians 1:17*]' (biologos.org/about).

Although this project is part of the Evolution and Christian Faith (ECF) Program at the BioLogos Foundation, the funded project involves an expansion beyond the topic of biological evolution to include other pertinent issues in faith and science. When viewed within the larger framework of all the sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the evolution of the entire universe, the emergence of complex life (however God engineered it) points to the wisdom and ingenuity of the Creator in a way that should strengthen Christians' faith, not threaten it. The heavens, and indeed all of nature, declare the glory of God, demonstrating that His good purposes will be accomplished, even in the midst of adversity, which He masterfully transforms into opportunities for additional and even greater good.

Never-the-less, Tulsa is known as the buckle of the Bible belt, and a hotbed of Pentecostal, charismatic and fundamentalist theologies, which have had mixed opinions about evolutionary biology over the years.[9] Mike Tenneson and Steve Badger (both ordained Assembly of God ministers, and biology and chemistry professors, respectively, at Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, which is just up the road from Tulsa) have conducted extensive surveys within this community. They have concluded that Assemblies of God adherents and other Pentecostals hold diverse views on origins.[10] This diversity of views (which also exists at ORU) has made for a very challenging, but fruitful, first year for the project.

Initially, a few faculty members and administrators at ORU expressed concern that speaking about biological evolution in local churches without condemning it unconditionally could alienate a significant percentage of the university's constituencies and precipitate a drop in enrollment. This is a legitimate and understandable concern. On the other hand, it must be balanced against the strong concern that much of the constituency has for excellence in science education. Even more concerning to this group was the acceptance of grant money from a foundation that is "committed to exploring and celebrating the compatibility of evolutionary creation and biblical faith." This concern was not alleviated by an appeal to the statement in the call for proposals that "grantees need not be ardent supporters of theistic evolution." Neither was it assuaged by a subsequent agreement with BioLogos to post a disclaimer on their website stating that "BioLogos does not necessarily endorse the views expressed by the Project Leaders or their institutions, nor do the Project Leaders or their institutions necessarily endorse the views expressed by BioLogos" (biologos.org/ecf/grantees). It also seemed to matter little that ORU was keeping company with some very prestigious and well-respected institutions (i.e. Oxford, Wheaton, Fuller, Calvin, Westmont, Lipscomb, and others) who were also current ECF grantees.

But ultimately, this tension resulting from a broad diversity of views on origins at ORU has ended up being a good thing. Several positive results are already being realized. Although strong emotions were elicited during discussions (especially during the faculty meeting on this issue between the College of Science and Engineering and the College of Theology and Ministry), faculty and administrators kept their cool (for the most part) and remembered that the

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[9] Steve Badger and Mike Tenneson, "A Historical Overview of Pentecostal Responses to Biological Evolution," (paper presented at the inaugural Faith and Science Conference, Springfield, MO, June 27-28, 2011).

[10] Mike Tenneson and Steve Badger, "Perspectives on Origins: How Diverse are Pentecostals?" (paper presented at the inaugural Faith and Science Conference, Springfield, MO, June 27-28, 2011).

Body of Christ is a family; brothers and sisters that have much more on which to agree, than they have on which to disagree. And this family found itself talking about issues that it should have been talking about a long time ago. These are issues that ORU students and local Christians have been struggling with for years, and seemingly with no organized or well-resourced effort to help them sort things out. Hopefully, that is changing with the advancement of this project. In addition, it was learned that a primary aspect of the project would entail the modeling of Christian love and unity by the project team, even in the midst of a strong diversity of views on origins. Students especially benefit from watching their teachers and mentors lovingly and respectfully wrestle with each other over controversial issues, and they seem to enjoy it also.

Eventually, a compromise was reached amid the dissenting views, and the project was allowed to move forward cautiously. Another positive result that turned out to be part of the compromise was the agreement to start slow, making no presentations in Pentecostal or charismatic churches or schools during the first year of the grant. But rather, the project team is hosting a workshop and focus group at ORU for local pastors. This workshop allows them to hear a sample presentation by the project team, and provide feedback to the team on how best to approach their congregations on these topics. In addition, the early opposition to the project unexpectedly served to solidify several of the team members' commitment to the project as they came to more fully understand the serious need for these controversies to be discussed and addressed within the church.

The project also dovetails nicely with the current ORU administration's focus on globalization. In order for ORU to become a more globally-oriented campus, it must be willing to carefully consider and discuss the diversity of views among the global Christian community, including the wide range of views on origins. Former prime minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair and Craig Bardsley make this clear in their article, "Faith and Globalization: the Challenge for Higher Education," where they write, "the best way to combat religious extremism and the divisiveness that religion can sometimes bring is to create safe open platforms for people to talk to each other and work together."[11] It is anticipated that this project will further the unity of the Body of Christ while taking care not to compromise the Truth of the Gospel. And increased unity will advance the Kingdom of God through church growth. This is clear from Jesus' prayer that his followers would be one so that the world would believe that He really was sent by the Father (John 17:21).

Motivating Christians to Go Deeper into Faith and Science Issues

For the most part, the modern day Christian community has adopted a very selective relationship with science. The array of sciences, including biology, chemistry, physics, and the social sciences, have largely been approached by Christians from a traditionally creationist viewpoint. Many Christians accept the ultimatum that science can only be true if it somehow aligns with a literal interpretation of Genesis. Young people often seem more open to a diversity of views on origins, but how can adult Christians be motivated to go deeper into faith and science issues?

While genuine Christ followers will hold to faith in the words of the Creator as absolute truth, they will also make a distinction between the words of God and a particular interpretation

[11] Tony Blair and Craig Bardsley, "Faith and Globalization: The Challenge for Higher Education," Liberal Education 99:1 Winter (2013): 32.

of those words. This distinction will allow widespread opening up to the same exploratory conversations that scientists and theologians are engaging in right now. After all, should Christians not pursue the evidence indicating the beginning of the universe if it does tell of human origins and give hints to the purpose of human beings here on the earth? Truly faith-filled Christ followers should be pursuing this evidence more avidly than non-Christian scientists, as the study should afford an abundance of indicators of God's hand in the beginning of and in the present state of human existence. Christians are not given the option in the Bible of being in continual conflict with, or independence from, those who are called and dedicated to the realm of science.[12] In the Great Commission, Jesus instructs His followers to go into *all* of the world and to *every* creature (Mark 16:15-16). The only option then is to begin again a dialogue with those in the field of science, in hopes of furthering the integration of faith with science as a part of the culmination of humanity's search for truth.[13]

One of the primary challenges of the project team is then motivating the surrounding Christian community to not only consider the full range possibilities of the ways God created and currently runs the universe, but also to engage others in their communities, whether Christian or non-Christian, to join this conversation as a stepping stone onto the path of the pursuit of truth. Hence, teachers of those who will teach others must learn the process of motivation well: well enough to pass on the findings to others who can then effectively pass them down the line of truth-seekers. Raymond Wlodkowski, one of the world's leading investigators of adult motivation, records five major characteristics that must be present for effective motivation in adult learners: expertise, empathy, enthusiasm, clarity, and cultural responsiveness.[14] While his work should be referenced directly for additional affective details and explanations on each of these five "pillars of motivation", much can be drawn from the basic definitions he assigns to each of his pillars.[15]

Pillar one is *expertise*, or knowing "we know something beneficial for adults, we know it well, and we are prepared to convey or construct it with adults through an instructional process."[16] From this pillar, it is seen that not only depth of knowledge, but also passion for the depth of knowledge and the communication of that knowledge are vital parts of enhancing the motivation of others. The second pillar, teaching with *empathy*, means constantly searching out the learners' worldviews, understanding their views and goals, and repeatedly adapting the training to the learners' current level of progress.[17] Pillar three, *enthusiasm*, shows instructors surprising tips to motivational success: to be committed to their instruction, value their commitment, and "display their commitment with appropriate degrees of emotion and expressiveness."[18] Pillar four, *clarity*, moves the focus of motivating components from direct instruction to the preparation process. Unprepared knowledge will be unclear knowledge, and

[12] Benedict M. Ashley, O.P. and John Deely, *How Science Enhances Theology* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2012), 5.
[13] Ashley and Deely, 5-6.
[14] Raymond Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching All Adults* (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), ?.
[15] Wlodkowski, ?.
[16] Wlodkowski, ?.
[17] Wlodkowski, ?.
[18] Wlodkowski, ?.

long-term unclear knowledge will turn into nothing.[19] Wlodkowski's final pillar, *cultural responsiveness*, sums up the need for an instructors' ability to create safe learning environments for each individual, engage each individual, and relate classroom knowledge to each of the learners' backgrounds and current circumstances.[20] Taken back-to-back-to-back, perhaps Wlodkowski's pillars do not appear as illuminating as in his original form, but consider Wlodkowski's ideal motivating instructor: an empathetic expert who clearly and enthusiastically passes on knowledge that is effectively oriented to influence each individual learner.

So what does all this mean for motivating Christians to explore faith and science a little deeper? First of all, according to Wlodkowski, if an adult has no motivation to learn, then a teacher cannot provide such motivation; they can only enhance an existing motivation.[21] But a personal passion for understanding in faith and science can enhance an existing interest, even if only slight. To have empathy, the team must attempt to gain some understanding of what the learners currently believe about origins, and why they believe it. This will be challenging but not impossible, and may necessitate pre-presentation interviews with typical congregants or their pastor. The team will demonstrate enthusiasm in relating how their understanding in faith and science has allowed them to draw closer to God and enhance their worship. Clarity is a particular challenge since some of the biological issues, such as ancient human population studies using mathematical models based on genetic data, are quite complex. The team will have to judge ahead of time how deep they should go based on the age and education level of a given audience.

Finally, the team will consider those aspects of the local culture that make the integration of faith and science particularly relevant. For example, it is well known that parents with high school- or college-age children who are choosing to pursue science-related careers can be exceptionally motivated to go deeper in faith and science since their children are probably asking questions indicating that they are already wrestling with these issues. Another way to demonstrate cultural relevance is by recognizing the pervasiveness of advanced technology in modern society. Nearly all people in developed countries live in a highly engineered world. They appreciate the advantages afforded by the ingenuity that results in devices like smart phones and air bags. This facilitates communication of a model of God as Engineer of the natural realm, and an appreciation for the ingenuity that is so clearly displayed in nature.

However, it also presents the challenge of explaining the negative aspects of the human condition, such as evil, pain, and suffering. Although a complete answer regarding these aspects may never be realized in this life, the study of both Scripture and nature provide some good reasons to believe that God has good reasons for allowing humans to endure such experiences. Those who study world missions have documented the powerful effect that hardship can have in turning a nation towards the Lord. Patrick Johnstone writes, "We are living in the time of the largest ingathering of people into the kingdom of God that the world has ever seen."[22] Moreland and Craig add that, "It is not at all improbable that this astonishing growth in God's kingdom is due in part to the presence of natural and moral evils in the world."[23] This appreciation for divine ingenuity is the primary theme of the project, and will be covered in more detail in the next section.

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[19] Wlodkowski, ?.
[20] Wlodkowski, ?.
[21] Wlodkowski, ?.
[22] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 25.
[23] Moreland and Craig, 545.

Appreciating and Trusting in the Wisdom and Ingenuity of the Creator

With regard to content, it should first be emphasized that the presentations associated with this project are not intended to be coercive or persuasive with regard to a particular stance on origins. People adopt a position by interpreting and evaluating the evidence in light of their philosophical presuppositions. The main purpose of the presentations is to educate the church with regard to the evidence and presuppositions associated with the various positions and let people decide for themselves. It will also be emphasized that Christians with various views of creation have much more in common than they have in dispute, and that these are not issues that will determine anyone's salvation. Even so, it is important to engage in charitable dialogue about such disagreements in an effort to learn from each other, grow in our understanding of how science and faith interact, and ultimately know God better, including how he works in the world. When it comes to creation, the major commonality that virtually all Christians already appreciate, at least to some extent, is the way God's glory is revealed in the realm of nature. To many believers, this may be primarily experienced in terms of beauty, which appears at so many levels in nature. This is well and good, as far as it goes, but when it comes to appreciating God's handiwork, outward beauty is only the beginning of a much deeper and more profound reality.

The great magnificence of science is that it allows us to gain a window into the mind of God, and appreciate his great ingenuity and wisdom, as seen in the manner in which he accomplishes his purposes in the world.[24] This is one of the major themes of this project, which is evident from the title, "Science and the Wisdom of God: Encouraging an Appreciation for the Ingenuity that Underlies Our Evolving Universe." What is also clear from the title is the way in which evolution is not placed in an up-front, in-your-face kind of position. This is intentional and represents what we believe to be the best way to gently approach many of the audiences we wish to address. This is not done in order to be "sneaky," but rather to help people past the common knee-jerk reaction to the concept of evolution, thus affording its nuances a fair hearing.

The evidence for biological evolution will be presented within the larger story of God's creation, as seen in the origin and development of the universe and our planet. God has blessed scientists with the ability to discover the mathematical laws of nature by which he governs the cosmos. The incredible account of the history of our evolving and finely tuned universe in an important part of the story of the emergence of life on earth. It is believed that this background will help audiences to see the way God works regularly through natural laws, and begin to see how God could be working through the biological laws that undergird the theory of evolution. It will also encourage their consideration of the scientific evidence that supports controversial theories such as a God-directed version of common descent.

The project team is currently working together to produce a standard multimedia presentation suitable for church congregations, Sunday schools, youth groups, Christian high schools, and home schools. Presentations in both a short form (30 minutes plus Q&A) and a long form (60 minutes plus Q&A) are being developed in order to meet the time constraints of various audiences. Longer forms will also be developed for use in settings where there is additional time

[24] Dominic Halsmer and Taylor Tryon, "Affordance-Based Reverse Engineering of Biological Systems as Part of the Cumulative Case for a Christian Worldview," (paper presented at the inaugural Faith and Science Conference, Springfield, MO, June 27-28, 2011).

for more details to be presented. Both team presentations and individual presentations are planned, depending on the audience and circumstances. The presentations will open with a brief prayer for divine guidance, and close with a variable length question and answer period, depending on time constraints and audience interest. The body of the presentations will consist of the following six modules, containing the indicated subunits,

1. Wrestling with Science and Theology (A match made in heaven)
    a. Appreciating God's general and special revelations
    b. Dismantling the warfare model and committing to a more positive approach
    c. Defining technical terms like "evolution" and "religion"
    d. Recognizing the role of human interpretations
    e. Approaching conflict with humility, as an opportunity to learn and grow
2. Participating in the Scientific Adventure (Science as an act of worship)
    a. Considering the wonder of our comprehensible cosmos
    b. Defining the scientific adventure
    c. Recognizing the limits of science
    d. Harnessing engineering to help unravel the mysteries of science
    e. Thinking God's thoughts after him
3. Discovering Natural Laws and Fine Tuning (An outstanding law-abiding universe)
    a. Appreciating the mathematical elegance of nature
    b. Understanding the nature of the universe's origin
    c. Recognizing the Role of Natural Law in God's plan
    d. Producing the building blocks of life via the laws of physics and chemistry
    e. Considering the evidence for fine tuning of laws, constants and conditions
4. Understanding Evolutionary Biology (Reverse Engineering the Machinery of Life)
    a. Defining biological and evolutionary terms
    b. Contemplating the mystery of life's origin
    c. Appreciating the immense biodiversity, speciation and extinction
    d. Considering mechanisms and evidence for common descent
    e. Understanding the historical context of evolutionary models
    f. Taking a look at the future: genetics and epigenetics
5. Interpreting the Bible Faithfully (Discerning the Authors' Intentions)
    a. Understanding inspiration, inerrancy, and the genres of Scripture
    b. Investigating textual concerns and original language issues
    c. Recovering the historical, cultural and author/audience contexts
    d. Considering the possibility of accommodation
    e. Interpreting Scripture in light of general revelation
6. Interpreting the Bible's Creation Accounts (What in the world is God doing?)
    a. Surveying the Bible's multiple creation accounts
    b. Discovering the historical and cultural context of Genesis 1-3
    c. Analyzing Literary and language issues in Genesis 1-3
    d. Considering possible interpretations and their implications
    e. Contemplating the theological compatibility of common descent

The presentations will be very lively and quick-hitting since each of the modules will only be approximately five minutes (short form) or ten minutes (long form) in length. However, the length of each module may be adjusted (or the module deleted) if it is deemed necessary. It may be found, for example, that more time is needed to cover the module on Understanding

Evolutionary Biology, in which case other modules will be shortened accordingly. Early presentations are currently being evaluated to determine what changes would be appropriate to increase effectiveness. Surveys have been developed and are administered after the presentations to assess the extent to which participants' perspectives on science and faith issues have changed. This is discussed further in the next section.

Current Results and Status of the Project

Thus far, a total of 17 presentations have been made to diverse groups totaling 543 people. Generally, the feedback from audiences has been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. During 4 of these presentations, audiences were requested to fill out and submit a short survey to assist with impact assessment. This survey contains 7 questions pertaining to the effectiveness of the presentation based on a 5-point Likert Scale, and 2 optional questions where respondents could write additional comments. A blank survey is included in this report as Figure 1. A total response rate of 78% was realized from these 4 groups since 155 people submitted surveys, out of the total of 200 in the 4 groups. All participants in the 4 groups were given the opportunity to submit surveys.

These 4 groups consisted of (1) 110 undergraduate engineering and physics students and faculty members at ORU on January 9, 2013, (2) 40 interested members of the public along with several members of the Sapulpa Ministerial Alliance at a Sapulpa Lions Club Meeting on March 6, 2013, (3) 14 interested members of the public at a Reasons to Believe Meeting in Tulsa on May 9, 2013, and (4) 36 congregants of the Church of the Holy Spirit (Anglican) in Tulsa on August 9, 2013. Figure 2 illustrates the average scores for the answers to the 7 questions for each of these groups.

The data and the comments indicate that a large majority of people in every group benefited greatly from participating in these seminars. Averaged over the 4 seminars, 87% agreed that it helped them understand problems in science and faith, 77% agreed that it increased their enthusiasm for science and engineering, 84% agreed that it helped them appreciate the ingenuity that underlies our universe, and 64% agreed that it increased their knowledge of God, and hence their relationship with Him. The data also indicates areas for improvement. Currently, the weakest aspect of the seminar appears to be in the area of helping people better understanding the Bible's creation accounts. Only 47% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. It is planned to strengthen this area of the seminar for future presentations. This will be accomplished by spending more seminar time discussing creation accounts and proper principles of interpretation.

The next step in the project, which is currently being pursued, is the organization of a workshop and focus group session on the campus of ORU for clergy of Pentecostal and charismatic churches. In addition, as suggested by the BioLogos Foundation, a project advisory board of pastors and theologians has been formed to help the project team make connections within the local community. This diverse group of influential leaders has assisted the project team on multiple occasions, and is greatly appreciated.

Much has been learned since the start of this project on January 1, 2013. Internal dialogue among faculty members and administrators has been lively, but healthy. Strong opinions were voiced, but such disagreements did not result in a break up of the family. The family learned how to compromise, and continue loving each other even though its members hold varying perspectives on science and faith issues. It was realized that this is exactly what

should be modeled for the local community of faith through this translation project. With God's help, through the power of the Holy Spirit, this effort will further the unity and effectiveness of the Body of Christ, while holding fast to God's Truth.

Figure 1: Impact Assessment Survey (Science & the Wisdom of God)

Please circle the number that best describes your reaction to each statement.

1. Participation in this seminar helps me understand problems in science and faith.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. Participation in this seminar increases my enthusiasm for science or engineering.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Participation in this seminar helps me appreciate the ingenuity that underlies our universe.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. Participation in this seminar increases my understanding of evolution as it relates to Christianity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. Participation in this seminar helps me understand the relationship between God and the universe.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. Participation in this seminar helps me to better understand the Bible's creation accounts.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. Participation in this seminar deepens my knowledge of God, and hence my relationship with Him.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Optional: Please provide further details on any of the above statements:

Optional: What suggestions would you offer for improving this seminar?

Figure 2: Impact Assessment Survey Results (Averages) for Four Representative Groups
1. Engineering Students & Faculty Seminar, 2. Sapulpa Lions Club Meeting,
3. Reasons to Believe Meeting, 4. Meeting at Church of the Holy Spirit Anglican