

## Off by Only 142 Million Light Years

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In general, our modern society places a huge premium on “scientific” data. Often, modern “findings” are used to “prove” that God does not exist or that the Bible is not an accurate portrayal of verifiable reality. Scientific journals suggest that scientists have produced all the evidence any reasonable person would need to accept such theories as the evolution of humans from lower mammals or the Big Bang. But this simply is not the case. Data that evolutionary scientists present often are flawed, do not verify what they allegedly prove, and should be rejected.

For instance, Big Bang cosmologists assert that modern scientific observations of the Universe, using high-powered observation equipment such as the Hubble Telescope, confirm that the Universe formed from a huge explosion about 14 billion years ago. But when we consider critically the methods and findings of much that is called astronomical or cosmological science, we realize that lofty claims of factual information fall far short of reality.

For example, for the last 23 years, researchers thought that a galaxy named NCG 5011C was a huge galaxy far away from our own. Its small appearance, they suggested, was due to its great distance. But recent “findings” suggest that they were wrong—seriously wrong. Initially, astronomers placed the galaxy in the Centaurus cluster, which they believe to be located about 155 million light years away. [NOTE: A light year is the distance light travels in a year. The actual distance in miles is about 6 trillion.] The new information, however, seems to indicate that NCG 5011C is **not** a huge galaxy 155 million light years away, but is instead a **dwarf** galaxy only about 13 million light years away (Goudarzi, 2007). As researcher Ivo Saviane stated: “Our new observations with the 3.6-m ESO telescope thus confirm a new member of the nearby Centaurus A group whose true identity remained hidden because of **coordinate confusion** and **wrong distance estimates** in the literature for the last 23 years” (as quoted in Goudarzi, emp. added). To put this mistake in numeric form, researchers were wrong about the distance of NCG 5011C by 732 quintillion miles or 732,000,000,000,000,000,000! That is a considerable miscalculation! And that is assuming that the **new** “findings” are accurate.

While not all scientific research is plagued by such egregious error, the generally accepted

idea that modern scientific “findings” trump every other source of information is simply false. In regard to scientific research in general, John Ioannidis stated, “Most published scientific research papers are wrong.... [S]mall sample sizes, poor study design, researcher bias, and selective reporting and other problems combine to make most research findings false” (as quoted in Kleiner, 2005). Ioannidis concluded that about one out of two (50%) randomly picked scientific papers is wrong (2005).

More specifically, astronomical findings that relate to cosmology—the study of the origin of the Universe—contain an enormous degree of subjectivity and inaccuracy. Geoffrey Burbidge and his wife Margaret were honored with the Gold Medal for Astronomy, the British Astronomical Society’s most prestigious award. At the ripe old age of 80, Burbidge said: “As you get older, you realize that you really **don’t know very much**. Cosmology has progressed very slowly. Mainstream cosmological theory is like the emperor **who had no clothes**” (as quoted in Davidson, 2005, emp. added).

In truth, information in science books changes from year to year. A science book is virtually out of date the moment it comes off the press. Yet the biblical text has stood for centuries. Its integrity has surpassed that of any book ever printed. And the scientific information in it coincides perfectly with all **factual** data. Truly, science texts will come and go, astronomers and cosmologists will miscalculate by quintillions of miles and billions of years, but “the word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25).

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## A Glimpse of Encouragement

Kyle Butt

Those who labor in the Lord's Kingdom understand that God deserves all the credit for any good work that is done. As Paul stated about his own labors: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). In fact, in ministry situations, the far-reaching results of the labors are rarely even brought to the attention of those doing the work. But every now and then, workers in the Lord's Kingdom are shown a tiny glimpse of the impact that the Lord is making with their materials. Such heartwarming glimpses have the potential to encourage workers in the church to "keep on keeping on." Recently, we at Apologetics Press were blessed with the opportunity to catch such a glimpse. The following text is from an e-mail sent to our offices.

About a year ago I ordered 30 copies of the *Truth Be Told* to give to my son's first grade class at a discounted price. After asking the school administration, they allowed me to deliver them on the last day of school and present it as a "present" from my son. This way every student got a copy. I also gave a copy to the school library, the principal, and my son's teacher. Since then several other teachers have asked where to purchase these books....

The exciting part of this story just occurred a couple of weeks ago. One of the students, now in second grade, brought his copy of the book to school to discuss something in

class about fossils. From my son, the teacher told the student that your book could not be true, but the student (who does not attend a church of Christ) informed him that "the book made more sense" than what the teacher had been teaching. It made me feel good that at least one child has been reading the book and that it seemed to be making an impact on his life. I happen to still have an extra copy of the book that I plan to give this teacher. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be able to afford the books to give to the students. It has made me and my son very proud of what has and may still come of that effort.

To God be the glory for all the good that is being done in His Kingdom. It thrills us to know that God is using our efforts to encourage others to stand for the truth.

Is there a way that you could use our materials to further the cause of Christ? Could you donate them to your child's class? Could you send some books, tracts, or videos to the library down the street, or mass-mail them to those in your neighborhood? Could you put A.P. tracts on the racks in your church building, or send them in-bulk to summer camps?

It is our prayer that we can multiply our efforts so that "one child" reading our materials will become thousands of children and adults across the globe.

## IN THE NEWS

In their book *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs*, George Gallup, Jr. and D. Michael Lindsay reported that a Gallup poll taken in May 1997 showed that only 56% of Americans held a firm conviction in the existence of hell (1999, p. 30). One reason that a growing number of Americans disbelieve in the reality of hell is likely due to its virtual disappearance from our vocabulary. Non-Christians basically use it only as a profane expression. Christians rarely address the subject in their discussions. Sermons on the subject of hell have been in decline for years. One denominational "pastor" was quoted in *U.S. News & World Report* a few years back, saying: "My congregation would be stunned to hear a sermon on hell" ("Revisiting...," 1991, 110[11]:60). I once heard the late evangelist Wendell Winkler tell about preaching in a meeting in Oklahoma. After preaching a lesson on hell, the local preacher, who had been in that city for 22 years, told Winkler that in those 22 years, the church there had held 44 gospel meetings (two per year). During those meetings, a total of 527 sermons had been preached. Wendell Winkler's lesson was said to be the first one on the subject of hell that they had ever heard in those meetings.

Preaching about eternal hell appears to be so rare that when a notable religious leader addresses the issue, it draws attention even from many major media outlets. Recently, Pope Benedict XVI, in a speech delivered outside of Rome, stressed that the impenitent risk "eternal damnation." Hell "really exists," he said, "and is eternal, even if nobody

talks about it much any more" (as quoted in Owen, 2007). *FOX News*, the *Boston Herald*, *Times Online*, and the *Melbourne Herald Sun* are only a few of the media elites who carried this story. "The pope really believes in an eternal hell."

Warning others about the judgment to come is not popular. Teaching in the streets and churches about an eternal hell is as sparse as rain in the Sahara. Although the papacy itself is unscriptural (see Pinedo, 2005), Christians can appreciate the fact that Benedict XVI would address such a politically incorrect subject. Truly, it is high past time for faithful Christians around the world to get back to teaching a truth that Jesus and the Bible writers repeatedly taught: hell is **real** and **eternal** (Matthew 5:22; 25:41,46; Mark 9:43; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

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