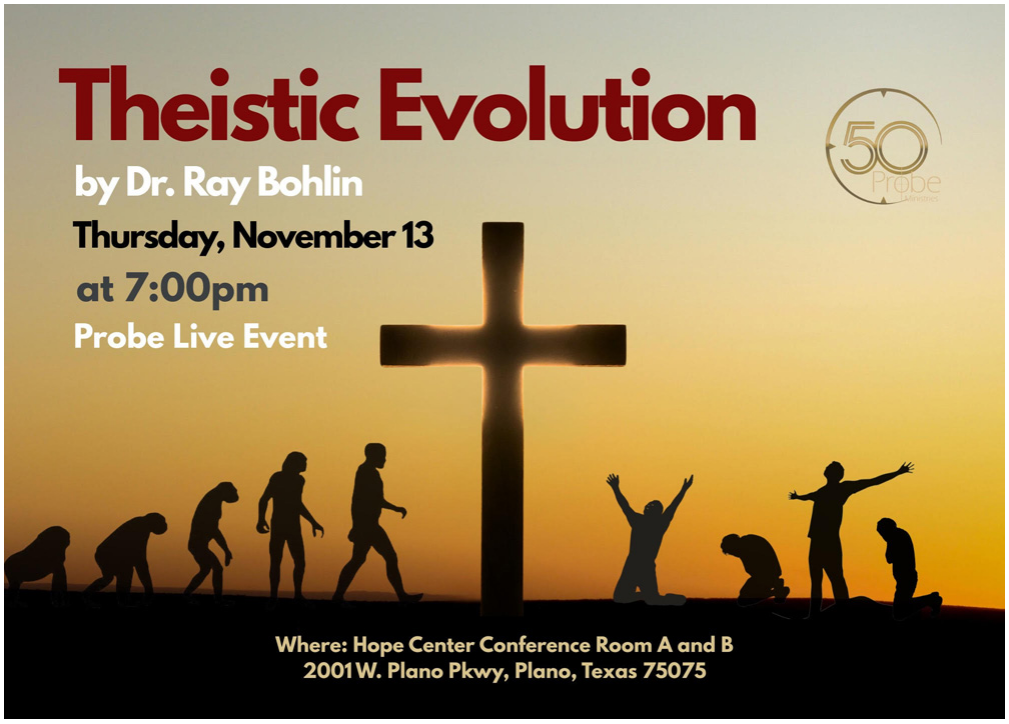
Probe Live – Theistic Evolution



Theistic Evolution is the belief that God used random, purposeless mutations and unguided natural selection to create the universe and our world. Some TE adherents believe God *had* to have used evolution as His means of creation.

Theistic Evolution is completely unnecessary scientifically, and has deep theological problems that most believers would turn away from if they understood what is being suggested. Molecular and cell biologist Dr. Ray Bohlin addressed both of these issues at our Probe Live on November 13, 2025.

Celebrating Christmas Wrongly?

Today is Christmas. Happy Jesus' Birthday!

But not everyone is on board with celebrating Christmas. I was recently in an online conversation with someone who asserts that "true" Christians would never celebrate the birth of the Savior because the scripture doesn't command us to remember it, as we are told to do with Christ's death. Luke 22:19 records Jesus' instructions to celebrate the Lord's supper: "Do this in remembrance of Me." But the Bible bears no such instruction concerning His birth. So it must be wrong . . . right?



I couldn't disagree more. One of the things I most love about being a Christ-follower and a student of the Bible is that Jesus taught that the Kingdom of Heaven was about celebrating! (See Luke 14 and Matthew 22.) Since one of my identities is "God's Party Girl," that certainly resonates with me. Jesus continually got in trouble with the religious snobs who didn't care for His habit of partying with sinners—who then turned into Christ-honoring disciples!

And Christmas, at its core, is a holy celebration of the most astounding thing that ever happened on Planet Earth—God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. Yes, there are parts of

Christmas that are linked with pagan traditions. But God knows how to tell the difference, and by using our discernment skills, we can too. That's one way we can love Him with our minds (Luke 10:27), which is part of the greatest commandment.

In this past month of ramping up to Christmas, I have not failed to be blessed by the Christmas music that's everywhere, especially radio stations. Again, using discernment, I can dismiss (actually, in my mind I use the word "flush") the non-holy Christmas songs like "Santa Baby" and "Jingle Bells," and open up my spirit to glory in the gorgeous theology expressed in Christmas carols like no other songs. I still get chills when hearing my car radio proclaim, for example, the deep truths in "Hark the Herald Angels Sing":

> Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
> Hail, th'incarnate Deity:
> Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
> Jesus, our Emmanuel!

The cheery Christmas lights in our neighborhood remind me that Jesus came as the light of the world, and I celebrate.

The Christmas gifts we give each other point to God's great gift of salvation through His Son, and I celebrate.

But can we celebrate Christmas wrongly? Is it even wrong to celebrate Christmas in the first place?

It always, always comes down to the heart, to our motives. Jesus continually pulled back the covers on people's masks and presentations to expose what was truly going on inside and allow them to see themselves in the light of truth.

Is God honored by how we celebrate His Son's birth in our hearts? When music or lights move us to a place of worship smack dab in the middle of our days, does that glorify Him? Of course it does!

On the other hand, if we are stressed by the compulsion to make our families look picture perfect on social media . . . if we have to go into debt to buy Christmas gifts we can't afford . . . if we're continually snarling and complaining at all the holiday-related traffic and social demands, does that glorify Him? Nope. That's not celebrating Jesus' birthday and it's not honoring Him.

It all comes down to motive.

It's not wrong to celebrate Christmas, but it's possible to celebrate it wrongly. Here's hoping you stay focused on Jesus. Merry Christmas!

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/celebrating_christmas_wrongly
on December 25, 2018.

Vanguard November 2018



Vanguard: Fall 2018 News for Our Donors

Relieved! How You Delivered a Wisconsin Teenager From Anxiety

Paul Rutherford

Free for the summer, Murren wanted nothing more than a little rest from her studies and to leave Wisconsin to go have fun with her friends at Mind Games Camp in Texas. Raised in church all her life by faithful parents who follow Christ, Murren had always been a "good girl" and made her confession of belief in Jesus. But inwardly she wondered, "Am I really saved? Did it really stick?"

Friends in youth group testified to their own life change when they believed in Jesus for salvation, repented of their waywardness, and found life. Secretly Murren wondered if she'd truly found life in Jesus because her testimony wasn't like theirs. She'd never given herself over to a lifestyle of outright rebellion.

That's what this summer was going to be about. Taking a break from her worries. Getting a little R&R, maybe a little bit of that southern Sun (but no sunburn). Murren had gone to a summer camp for teenagers last summer (2017)—Probe's own Mind Games Camp. She had a blast, made some great friends, and looked forward to returning this summer for the fellowship.

When she arrived in Texas it was sunny and hot. Everything was going as hoped. Camp was fun. The fellowship was great. She even saw some of the very same friends! But one subtle recurring theme stuck out to her over and over. "What does it mean to be saved?" It was like she couldn't get away from it—in group time during the talks, around the lunch table,

even conversations with other campers. This gnawing issue hadn’t stayed put in Wisconsin. It somehow followed her all the way down to Texas and settled down in the bottom of her stomach.

Finally one day near the end of camp Murren was seated in a circle for small group discussion. And in the intimacy of that environment she felt safe enough to open her mouth and release worry’s gnawing sensation in her stomach. She hoped for some relief. She let her guard down and wondered out loud through tears confessing, “I don’t have one of those prodigal testimonies. And sometimes I wonder, ‘Am I really saved?’”

The group spoke up immediately to affirm her and point her to the Word of God and to assure her that her salvation is secure in Jesus. “It’s not something you need to worry about. You are saved by grace through faith—not of your own works. It is a gift of God.” She was pointed straight back to Scripture, reminded of God’s sovereignty, of His loving kindness, of His faithfulness, and of the goodness of the gospel.

Relief! Wonderful, marvelous, glorious relief was Murren’s at last! Modest tears continued but this time not for anxiety, but for joy! What terrific relief to be free of the worry at last. Her salvation really is up to God. It doesn’t matter what kind of testimony she has! In Christ she is free! And the freedom is wonderful!

Murren’s hope for 2018’s summer to be filled with friends and fun as a respite from worry and anxiety had been fulfilled and then blessed with so much more! Lies from the enemy held Murren captive to fear and anxiety over her relationship with God. Free in Christ she found new depths to the joy of her salvation!

Doubting University Student Transformed Into Defender of Christianity

Byron Barlowe

“I think in about ten years I will know whether to believe in Christianity,” said Indian university student Shail Karia. Probe staffer Byron Barlowe appealed to him that he may not even have tomorrow, much less ten years! They discussed more reasons to believe.

Shail is one of over 5,000 international students at the University of Texas at Dallas, where Byron co-leads a Reasonable Faith (RF) chapter. The first time Shail attended an RF meeting, he was desperately searching for what to believe.

“I needed answers to my questions. I was seeking,” he shares. Reading everything from the Bhagavad Gita to the Qu’ran to Nietzsche, Shail’s urgent questions included, “What is the correct worldview?” and “How much faith does it take to believe?”

He had to decide about the truth of it all. But how? That’s where you stepped in to guide him through the process. He and Byron talked at length about worldviews. He needed a reference point to begin—a framework to judge each competing worldview. He needed to know which worldview held together best, which one explained more, and dealt with reality most convincingly, on such important topics as life, God, the universe, and man. Thank you for providing that for him.

Shail had become a member of a campus ministry’s Bible study for non-believers. There, he dove deeply into Christian fellowship. As a Hindu background young man, his worldview was “all over the place.” He was drawn in immediately.

“My small group was one of the most pivotal things for me” Shail shares. “It made me start questioning. Initially I was hesitant, but people were sharing their deepest darkest secrets. That drew me closer to them as I shared my own secrets.” Shail experienced life with others who were vulnerable. He made deep connections. He witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit.

That’s when the meaty substance of the faith, the reasonableness, beauty and meaningfulness of Christianity, began to solidify for Shail. Byron invited him back to an RF meeting, where he heard lectures on such topics as Miracles, and the Resurrection. Shail had to decide his ultimate question: “Do I know enough to believe?” Would it take a decade more? Or did he have enough evidence already to believe– rational evidence and relational evidence?

By spring, Shail had good news for Byron. “I processed this decision, slept on it, and realized I was ready.” Shail put his faith in Christ! That couldn’t have happened without you. Thank you!

Since then Byron–along with others– shepherded him through growth in Christ. He has forsaken his Hindu gods by throwing away his idols (small statues commonly possessed by Hindu families). Shail has learned to fight Satan’s lies with God’s Word. He has been baptized. Shail is now a witness for Jesus Christ, sharing Jesus with his Hindu grandmother and fellow students alike.

The day of this writing, Byron and Shail were witnessing on campus to a Chinese student. Byron marveled at Shail’s initiative. Ironically this was happening across the room from where he’d only one year prior predicted he’d need a decade to decide what to believe. Just last week Shail led another Chinese student to Christ. Shail is dangerous for God. Your support of Probe was absolutely essential to make that happen. Thank you. You transformed a doubting university skeptic into

a witnessing ambassador for Christ.

Probe Ranked Tops Among Nonprofits

Kerby Anderson

You are a smart investor.

You give to Probe. And Probe is among the most efficient non-profit organizations in America. According to non-profit watchdog organization CharityWatch, the average American non-profit spends 75% of its budget on program costs.

Probe spends 85%. And that makes you a smart investor. Every dollar you give to Probe works hard to accomplish the mission. The national benchmark for fundraising costs is 10%. Probe spends 8%. You not only make a spiritually and eternally significant impact with your gift, your donation is being utilized in a way that's among the most efficient organizations in America today.

You may already know Probe Ministries is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. That means your dollars invested are hard at work accomplishing the mission you gave to. The vast majority of Probe funds are spent on ministry and very little on fundraising. Your gift directly impacts our mission. That makes you a smart investor!

Just what exactly are you investing in? As 2018 ends, I am excited to share with you some of what your partnership has accomplished. Because of you, classes have been taught in churches. You have ministered overseas, teaching believers and non-believers alike in countries such as South Africa and Hungary, as well as stateside in places like Oregon, Missouri, Arkansas, New York, and Oklahoma, as well as in Texas.

Because of you, the reach of Periscope, Probe's 49-day

experience for churches and small groups, continues to increase. The marketing being done by Grace101.org is first rate. Through you, Periscope has been placed in several different states just this year. You are reaching people in churches who need to be freed from cultural captivity. But you and I know we can reach even more with additional funds provided by you and other interested donors.

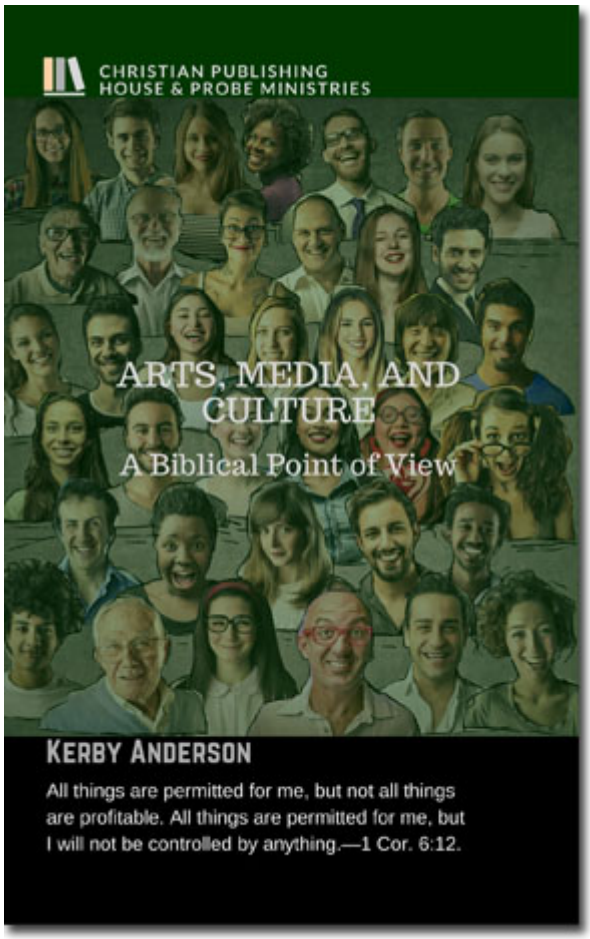
Let me also share with you Probe's vision for the future. Probe will continue to minister through speaking, writing, broadcasting, and the Internet. The Probe radio program that began in 1982 still reaches a large audience, thanks to you, and has recently been reformatted with a new host and new music to equip even more with a Christian worldview. And because of you Probe continues working to increase the number of people (Christians and non-Christians) who visit the Probe website.
We also have exciting plans to expand the ministry of Probe through a new podcast format that can reach a different audience than our radio program. I ask you to be in prayer about these new plans that are just now being implemented.

As you can see, the reach of Probe is expanding due to your prayers and financial support. That is why I ask you to consider how you will invest in this ministry before the end of 2018 so we can end the calendar year in the black and be ready to develop new opportunities for 2019. Thank you for you investment, and thank you in advance for your year-end gift.

Social Media, You and Your

Family

Probe Ministries hosted a presentation by Kerby Anderson on "Social Media, You and Your Family" on October 16, 2018 at the Hope Center in Plano, Texas. All attendees received a free copy of the new book *Arts, Media, and Culture: A Biblical Point of View*. (You can order it from our online store here.)



You can download a recording of Kerby's message here.

We are all the beneficiaries of the information on the Internet. But scientists have also been able to document that our digital devices and social media are altering the way we think and altering our ability to concentrate.

As one psychologist at Tufts University explains, "We are not only what we read. We are how we read." The style of reading on the Internet is different and profoundly changing the way we read and acquire information. Our brains are able to reprogram themselves on the fly through a process called "neuroplasticity."

There is a crucial need for Christians to evaluate the impact of media in their lives. We need to develop discernment and

pass those biblical principles to our children and grandchildren.

The new media represents an even greater threat to our discernment processes and can easily conform us to the world (Romans 12:2). Media is powerful tool to conform us to group think and thus to a secular worldview taking us captive to the false philosophies of the world (Colossians 2:8).

Let’s look at how we can harness social media to use for good while, at the same time, protecting ourselves and our children from potentially harmful effects.

Bohlins in Belarus 2014

Why We Love Celebrity

(April 26, 2011) So I guess there’s going to be a royal wedding “across the pond” on Saturday. Just like when the groom’s mum and dad got married, there will be pre-dawn wedding watching parties over here in the States (since for some reason, the Brits couldn’t be talked into waiting for American prime time, I suppose).

The royal festivities have put Kate Middleton, about to become “Princess Catherine,” in the celebrity spotlight. And oh, how we love our celebrities! Celebrities are people who are famous, sometimes simply because they are celebrities and not

because they've done anything especially noteworthy.

Technology makes it possible to feed our insatiable hunger for "celebrity news." 24/7 news channels have to fill their time somehow when there isn't any *real* news, so they create news by reporting on people's divorces and pregnancies, what's happening in the entertainment world, and show pictures of unrealistically and artificially beautiful women strutting and posing in their gowns on a red carpet somewhere.

Why are people so taken with celebrity, anyway?

I think it is yet another reflection of the brokenness of our fallen world. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I believe God hard-wired us to worship Him because He is the source of life and all that is good, beautiful, and true. I think He created us as worshiping creatures because He knew it would "fill our tanks" and deeply bless and nurture our souls to pour out adoration and worship on One so infinitely worthy of praise. In the same way that we love to see great beauty in spectacular sunsets and want to share it with someone else, in the same way that we love falling in love, in the same way that we love being part of a crowd when our team is winning—we were created to long for a connection to the transcendent, especially the transcendent God.

God creates us for Himself; He creates us to love us and draw us into intimate fellowship with Father, Son and Spirit. Our natural response to that kind of unimaginably huge and powerful love is worship.

But then sin entered the world, and the Fall distorted and messed up everything. Instead of relating rightly to our Creator and the Lover of our souls, upright with faces upturned in love and adoration, we were bent and twisted. After the fall, when we reach out, we are no longer reaching up—because of our "bentness," we reach out to other parts of the creation. (See also: idolatry) Yet we are still hard-wired

to worship.

So we worship each other.

And celebrities, distant and unattainable, function well as objects of worship since we usually don't see how they are flawed and fallen just like everyone else. Like us.

Cue hordes of screaming, worshiping fans at rock concerts and movie premieres.

Cue tears of loss and sorrow when a movie star gets married and takes himself out of the pool of eligible bachelors that fuel girls' fantasies of marrying "Prince Charming."

Cue "entertainment news" anchors reporting breathlessly about the latest Hollywood gossip and speculations as if TV, movie and music stars were more important than other people.

Celebrity, I submit, is broken, misdirected worship of the creature instead of the Creator. It is yet another way in which we see the brokenness of a fallen world.

But there will come a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:11). There will come a day when Jesus will come with the clouds, and every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7). And we will worship rightly.

Because Jesus is the *ultimate* rock star.

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/why_we_love_celebrity
on April 26, 2011.