



## Sin and Biology?

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

What does biology have to do with sin? Actually, a great deal. As we learn more and more about the workings of the body, especially the brain, there is a temptation to think that the whole concept of right and wrong (morality) is just another delusion of pre-scientific ignorance. We are being told that biology, rather than a soul, determines a person's moral compass and behavioral tendencies. Some suggest that the Y chromosome provides a tendency toward anti-social behavior, since males are more aggressive than females and are incarcerated for violent behavior far more often than females. Sexual differences

are also determined by the hypothalamus, a portion of the brain that contains sexually dimorphic nuclei and is responsible for many of the unique physical and behavioral characteristics and tendencies of male and female humans. It is interesting to note that biology is disproving the politically correct view that the perceived differences between male and female are cultural rather than innate. The politically correct myth is that male-female psychology and natural behavioral tendencies (aggression and nurture) are produced exclusively by society's faulty norms. It turns out that new biological research disagrees with that.

Some are suggesting that the hypothalamus is also at the root of homosexual tendencies.

Neurologists are now learning a great deal about how the brain functions. They can discern what portion of the brain affects various activities such as the reasoning process and emotions. They can observe and study what parts of the brain are active in reaching certain difficult moral decisions. They have also discovered that the brain's involuntary,

unconscious functions include far more than such basic actions as breathing. In fact, modern research reveals that our conscious thought is but the tip of the iceberg in determining our decisions, behavior and judgments.

Many neurologists are now maintaining that such concepts as blame, guilt, and punishment are soon to be exposed as outmoded, primitive notions. According to them, the fact that we can predictably change and shape emotions and even personalities through drugs demonstrates that personality is simply and purely a product of biology, NOT an immaterial soul. We have already come to the realization that mental illnesses such as schizophrenia are to be weighed in courtroom decisions since they render the offender to be not responsible for his behavior. Scientists suggest that this concession in our legal system is only a reflection of our limited scientific knowledge, which is growing at an exponential rate. We shall discover in the future that ALL behavior is biologically determined so that the concepts of accountability and blame are irrelevant. These scientists are not suggesting that we abandon laws or ignore

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*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

inappropriate behavior, but that we rehabilitate through biological training rather than punishment. Sin is no longer a relevant category. We are truly on the threshold of a brave new world.

Most of these scientists will also acknowledge, however, that thought and behavior are not merely functions of biological processes. They acknowledge, of course, that not all humans with a Y chromosome will participate in anti-social behavior or violence, and that two people with the same “malfunction” in the brain may react quite differently to the same stimuli. For example, they have discovered that a statistically significant number of pedophiles have a similar brain characteristic, but that this characteristic does not determine that a person will be a pedophile. If such a person is raised in a “normal” environment he is no more likely to be a pedophile than another person, but if he is raised in an abusive environment this brain abnormality evidently comes into play and fosters his aberrant sexual attraction. Thus, the question of “nature or nurture” is answered. Both are significant causes of behavior.

Most scientists will also acknowledge that our understanding of how the brain works is relatively miniscule. The complexity of the brain is, in itself, beyond our ability to comprehend. We have no way to know what future experiments will discover, so it is way too soon to make any predictions about whether or not we will be able to explain the human mind without a soul or a Creator.

Does the fact that we can now identify specific biological sources for human behavior nullify the

biblical concept of sin? No. Sin and biology have been intimately united since the beginning of time. God warned Adam and Eve that vast biological changes would occur if they disobeyed Him. He did not put it exactly that way. Rather, He said, “In the day that you eat of it (the forbidden tree), you shall die.” That curse is certainly put in biological terms. The biological change of the body from immortality to mortality is vast indeed. What would a human body that was capable of not dying look like through a microscope? Biological defects entered into the body through sin. They are part of the curse called “death.” Adam had a Y chromosome in paradise, but he was still a perfect human being. It wasn’t just the Y chromosome that led his son Cain to kill his brother, but whatever biological sources contributed to that murder were inherited from Adam after sin and through sin. The curse pronounced upon Eve was also steeped in biology, pain in childbirth. What would birth have been like before sin? Sin brought a biological change upon the whole earth, for the ground was also cursed, causing Adam to bring forth its fruits only by the sweat of his brow. And the ground he tilled would be the final resting place for his once glorious body. “Dust you are, and to dust you shall return,” the biological process of decomposition.

We should not be surprised to find sin’s mark upon the brain. Sometimes people ask me how I would respond to a discovery that the source of homosexual tendencies can be located in the brain (nature instead of nurture). I would answer that it wouldn’t surprise me and that it doesn’t change the moral judgment of Scripture. I am quite certain that the brain is also the

source of heterosexual lust, and that is also sin. In fact, it is possible that a brain malfunction could be at least partially responsible for alcoholism, kleptomania, violent temper, anti-social behavior, and all kinds of sexual perversions. The holy law still condemns drunkenness, murder, homosexuality, lust, greed, stealing, hatred, etc., etc. Some, like Lady Gaga, will argue that if we are “born that way” God cannot condemn our behavior or tendencies. But we don’t have to wait for biology to discover that we are sinful to the very core of our being! The Bible teaches precisely that. King David did not just confess his bad behavior, but acknowledged, “I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps 51:5). He confessed that sin penetrates his very nature, and consumed him as soon as he received a body (conception). St. Paul confessed the same when he agonized over the fact that he desired to do the right thing, but that sin dwelt within him. He saw in his members a law waging war and making him captive to the law of sin (Rom 7:13-24). Ultimately he cried out, “wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Just as biological research is now confirming the wonder of the works of God in the womb (Psalm 139), so it is now confirming the doctrine of original sin. But how can God command us to do what we are physically and mentally incapable of doing? How can God condemn us for doing what we cannot avoid doing? That is a question that was debated in the church long before the scientific age. The answer is that the law is not meant to make us holy – the Bible clearly indicates that it cannot do that (Rom 7:7-12). The Law is intended to show us our ruined

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## Biology, cont.

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condition. Biology is only now arriving at the conclusion that the law has been exposing for centuries. Furthermore, the law cannot change this biological curse. AFTER the great flood God said, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." One would expect to hear that man learned his lesson from the destruction of the flood, but we hear just the opposite. Same biological condition – same result. No punishment can change man's corrupt nature.

The good news of Scripture is that our Creator has seen our lost condition and sent His Son to redeem lost and condemned people, not by gold and silver, but by His holy precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death. This redemption required the biological miracle called incarnation. "Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:14-15). The fact that the Son had no sin was also demonstrated biologically in the Biblical observation that His body did NOT suffer decomposition after death (Acts 2:27 quoting Psalm

16:10). St. Peter comments that "it was impossible for death to hold Him." Just as sin shows itself in biology, so also does this redemption. Jesus was raised from the dead and promises that those who live and believe in Him will also live. Redemption in Christ does not just free us from this body of death, but renews this body to life. Death will not reign in our resurrected bodies. Our obedience in heaven will not come from the curb of the law, but from a new heart and a new mind, created in Christ Jesus. The biology of Eden will be restored forever.

Most biologists today see life in the world as the developing, ever improving product of evolution. We Christians know that they are really examining the degenerate ruins of a once glorious creation. The two frames of reference and contradictory assumptions result in two magnificently different conclusions. David Eagleman, a thorough-going evolutionist and neurology researcher, has, however presented a very candid analogy of the limitations of current research in his book, "Incognito: The Secret Life of the Brain." He compares modern scientific study of the brain to primitive, ignorant people who find a radio on their forgotten island. They notice the various parts and

"BUT HE WAS **PIERCED** FOR OUR  
TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS **CRUSHED**  
FOR OUR INIQUITIES;

THE PUNISHMENT THAT BROUGHT  
US PEACE WAS UPON HIM,

AND BY HIS **WOUNDS**  
WE ARE **HEALED.**"



ISAIAH 53:5, NIV

wires and may even be able to connect the parts to their purpose or function, but if they don't know anything about radio towers and waves, they do not have the knowledge base to even begin figuring out how the voice comes through the box. Beautiful analogy! Biological research without knowledge of the Creator will grope in darkness, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Blessings,  
Pastor Huebel

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**Nursery  
Volunteers  
Needed**



**If you can help out once in a while  
during the Sunday School hour,  
please see Schel Hoebelheinrich.**

## *Teaching the Mind How to Learn* by Stephen Inglehart

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Okay, I admit it. Math has never been my strong suit. As far back as I can remember, math has been frustrating and intimidating. Fortunately for me, I live in the age of computers and calculators! No more adding columns of numbers, no more working through a problem of long division, no more trying to figure out percentages! I can just whip out the handy, dandy Texas Instruments calculator, punch in the numbers, and see what comes out on the other side. Isn't that wonderful?

Well, convenient, yes, and easy, most definitely, yes, but wonderful? Perhaps it isn't as wonderful as I would like to believe. Perhaps it would be better for me to have to reason and think for myself, rather than having a machine think for me. Mathematics is an exercise in logic. It is the consistent application of rules to a problem to arrive at a solution. It trains the mind to think in an orderly fashion, to learn how to apply the right rules in the right sequence to come up with a correct answer. It requires the mind to examine and evaluate the problem so that the appropriate rules are chosen so that they may be applied to the problem. One has to learn the rules, and memorize certain basic things like addition and subtraction, multiplication and division tables. While it would be much simpler and easier to learn how to manipulate the keys on a calculator, my mind and intellect will have been much less equipped to use my God given reason to evaluate the other questions and conundrums that will present themselves to me during my lifetime and arrive at correct and true conclusions.

On a seemingly unrelated topic, I have just, after searching for a few years, located a copy of the Walter

Edmonds classic, "Drums Along the Mohawk." I am not referring to the movie, starring Henry Fonda, which also has a place in my video library, but the book. It's pretty much a plain jane copy, with no illustrations other than the cover art, just pages and words. While I enjoy the movie, there is a certain mindlessness about sitting on my sofa and watching the tale unfold before me on a screen. Someone else has done the imagining for me. I don't have to read all those words (applying certain rules of spelling, grammar, and syntax as I go), and form in my mind's eye a mental picture of the events. I don't have to go look up vocabulary that may have fallen into disuse, or try to discover what a musket is, or try to understand why news of the arrival of a peacock feather might cause a minor stir of admiration and wonder amidst the inhabitants of a very rural, rustic, 18th century community. There is a certain exercise of the mind that is required when one is reading a book that is not required when one is watching a film.

This is not to say that one should never watch a movie or use a calculator or a computer. They are fast, efficient, and oftentimes very helpful. I am using a computer as I write this, because it is much easier to edit, to correct spelling, and to present the finished product in a form that would can actually be deciphered by my intended recipients, which would not necessarily be the case if you, dear reader, were required to wrestle with considerably atrocious penmanship. Computers have their place. But they should not be allowed to hold too much sway, especially during the stages of life when developing minds may shortcut and bypass those mental exercises which train and

sharpen the mind to be able to think critically and logically.

There was a reason that when Messiah Lutheran Church was considering the possibility of starting a school to educate our children, and the children of other members of our community, the congregation elected to adopt the method of Classical Education, with its progressive stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Instead of taking the more common approach of simply teaching subjects, it was recognized that it is of more value to teach the mind how to learn, so that any subject approached in the future will be within reach of the student. In the beginning, the amount of subject matter ingested by the student is perhaps less than those students who are immediately immersed in subject matter. Students in a Classical environment, however, are exposed more to learning those processes by which subject matter may later be learned, and will often eventually surpass those who only studied subject matter, without understanding how they learned that subject matter to begin with. Classical education prepares students of lifelong, proficient learners, who are able to more easily set their minds to learning new subjects as their lives progress.

This is all well and good, you may be thinking, but what has this got to do with the Church? Martin Luther stated that our minds are God's greatest temporal gift to us. It is through our minds, through the use of language and the written word, that the Holy Spirit comes to us and works in us the miracle of faith. It is through the use of our minds that the Holy Spirit works in us to help defend us from error and falsehood.

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## Teaching, cont.

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When St. John wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Test the spirits, to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1), he was challenging us to engage our minds, as led by the Spirit through God's Word, to apply the teachings of Holy Scripture to any claim presented to us, so that we may divide truth from error, and be defended from being deluded by the

Deceiver. When Satan tempted our first parents, he did so by engaging their minds with a lie, "Did God really say....?" To be sure, our fallen nature corrupts our minds so that apart from the Holy Spirit's work, we are still subject to deception. To paraphrase Luther, "educate a devil, and all you have is an educated devil." But an educated mind

directed by the working of the Holy Spirit is enabled to "test the spirits."

Dear Lord, help us to treasure our school and support our teachers to continue training the young minds entrusted by God to their and our care.

## Thank You from the Peace Riders

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**THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!** The annual Nelson Children's Ministry Toy Run was a huge success! With your help, the Peace Riders delivered over 430 toys and \$850! Thank you so much for your donations and your prayers.

If you'd like to learn more about Peace Riders Motorcycle Group or see photos of the toy run, check us out at [www.peaceriders.org](http://www.peaceriders.org). *Peace Riders Motorcycle Group was formed by Christian brothers and sisters.*

## Meet the Danielsons by Stephanie Gutierrez

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Many members may remember some of our newest members, **Rick and Jane Danielson**. They have returned to Texas after eleven years in Galesburg, Illinois.

Rick and Jane are natives of Nebraska and enjoy visits there often. They have two boys who are in college. Patrick is the oldest and a student at Concordia in Mequon,

Wisconsin. He is studying physical therapy and currently working on a Doctorate of Physical Therapy. Thomas is attending Virginia Tech and works as a research assistant in Material Science. His research involves nuclear materials and he may pursue a career with NASA after graduation.

Rick and Jane love to travel, read and go to the movies. They have been married for twenty six years. Jane is a lifelong Missouri Synod Lutheran who brought Rick into the LCMS from the American Synod when they married. Please welcome Rick and Jane Danielson back to Messiah!



Our first new hymn for 2012 will be LSB #683 *Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me* for the month of February. The text was written by Paul Gerhardt, and the music by Norman Cocker.

**Paul Gerhardt**, sometimes referred to as the “sweet singer of Lutheranism,” lived during the

17<sup>th</sup> century. He was born near Wittenberg, Germany on March 12, 1607 and trained to be a Lutheran pastor. Gerhardt wrote 123 hymns during his 69 years of life. His writings were meant to be set to music and sung in church, or learnt by heart by children at home.

“Gerhardt’s hymns combine an objective faith in justification as a free gift from God with his warm subjective experience of that gift.” [Quote from a biography on Gerhardt, *The Hymns and Carols of Christmas*] If you turn to pg. 999 in our hymnal, you will find 17 of those hymns. I would recommend them for personal devotions and/or prayers. Each is a wonderful meditation. *Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me* was written in 1653 and later translated by John Wesley in 1739. Gerhardt ranks, next to Luther, as the most gifted and popular hymn writer of the Lutheran church.

**Norman Cocker** lived from 1889-1953 and was born in Yorkshire, England. He went on to become a chorister at Magdelene College, Oxford. He trained to be an organist but never completed his degree. He was appointed Assistant Organist at Manchester Cathedral in 1920 and later held appointments in various churches and cinemas in the city. As best I could tell, this was the only Gerhardt prose he set to music.

1. Jesus, Thy boundless love to me  
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;  
Unite my thankful heart to Thee,  
And reign without a rival there!  
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am;  
Be Thou alone my constant flame.

2. O grant that nothing in my soul  
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;  
Oh, may Thy love possess me whole,  
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!  
All coldness from my heart remove;  
My ev’ry act, word, thought be love.

3. This love unwearied I pursue  
And dauntlessly to Thee aspire.  
Oh, may Thy love my hope renew,  
Burn in my soul like heav’nly fire!  
And day and night, be all my care  
To guard this sacred treasure there.

4. In suffering be Thy love my peace,  
In weakness be Thy love my pow’r;  
And when the storms of life shall cease,  
O Jesus, in that final hour,  
Be Thou my rod and staff and guide,  
And draw me safely to Thy side!

Public domain

The scriptural references complete the hymn ‘picture’ ...

Ephesians 3:16-21 . . . *that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

1 John 3:24 *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*

John 15:9 *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*

Blessings be upon your singing and earning of this hymn . . .

## It's Greek to Me!

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God chose the Greek language to put His New Testament Word into writing. It is a beautiful, carefully structured and precise language.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to read the Bible as it was originally penned?

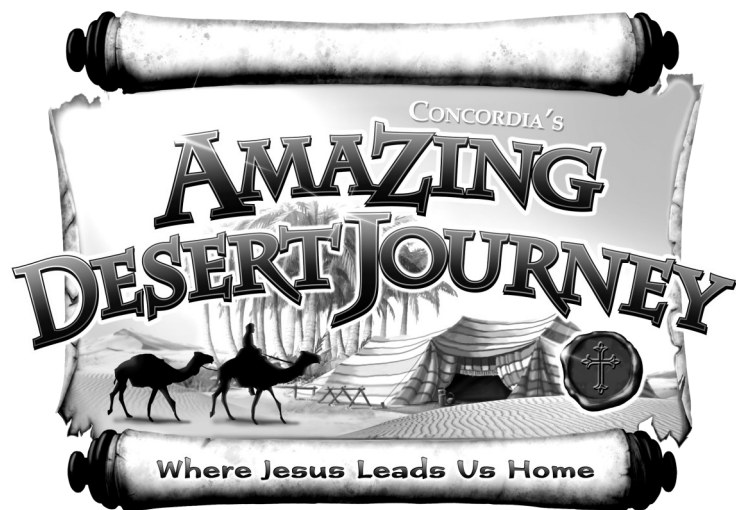
Pastor Huebel is willing to teach the basics of Biblical Greek if at least 5 students are eager to learn it. This course will not enable you to speak conversational Greek or make your way through modern Greece, but it will enable you to begin searching the Scriptures in a whole new light.

If you are interested, please let Pastor Huebel know.



## VBS 2012—The Planning Begins Now

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**VBS 2012**  
**JUNE 18 - 22**  
**8:45 a.m. -- Noon**

Many volunteers are needed to make this week a success. We'll have a building full of eager children needing youth and adult help to sing, learn, participate in Bible challenges, play games, and do crafts. Even if you've never helped with a VBS before, please consider joining in the fun this year.

Volunteer forms can be found on the counter by the mailboxes. Fill one out today and place it in the Towers mailbox.



## Messiah Lutheran Church & School

*The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K—8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

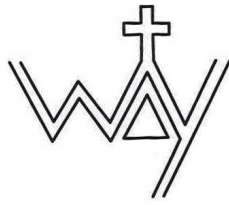
Mrs. Natalie Anderson, Principal, Classical Academy

Mrs. Alison Smith, Principal, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mr. Joseph Sustrik, Financial Director

[www.messiahkeller.org](http://www.messiahkeller.org)

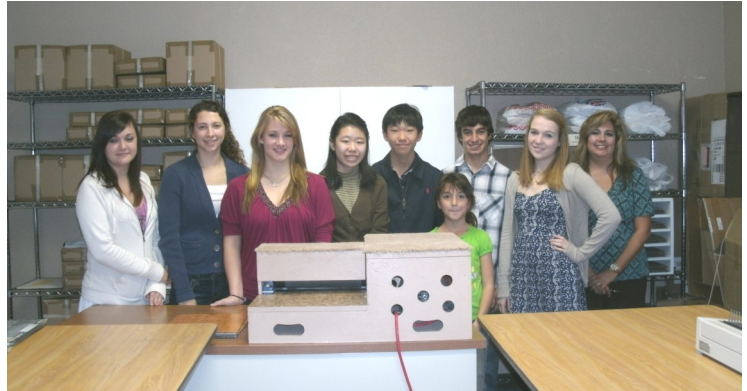


## Youth News

The youth group Bible Verse: "In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."  
—Colossians 2:3

Now is the season of Epiphany. With the start of the year, there are new Sunday school lesson plans and an upcoming confirmation class to be added to the youth group near the spring. We have some exciting events coming up, so please continue to scan the calendars and consult the youth news segment for dates and times.

Upcoming Events:  
February 3–4: Lock-In  
February 12: Braille Workshop  
February 25: Sockhop



## MLCA Math Team

12 students from MLCA's 5th – 7th grades participated in the DFW Lutheran School's Math Competition at Prince of Peace in Carrollton on January 13.

The following students participated: 5th Grade team: Samantha Anderson, Avery Davis, Hannah Essen, and Max Hedman. 6th grade team: Payne Chapa, Christian Reich, Joseph Schinnerer, and Emily Walker. 7th grade team: Kyle Anderson, Matthew Blaschke, Chase Carter, and Brian Lang. Max, Kyle, and Matthew each brought home 2 ribbons and Chase Carter brought home 1 ribbon.

Great job to all of our students who participate in this annual event!

## Artsonia Artist of the Week

Each week, Artsonia, an online children's art museum, chooses art work in different age brackets to be voted on for their Artist of the Week contest. A few weeks ago, Sarah Trollope was chosen in the 4th—6th grade bracket. Although she did not get enough votes to win (we are competing against much larger schools, public and private) she is definitely MLCA's Artist of the Week. The artwork chosen is a self-portrait in paper mosaics.



Go anytime to [www.artsonia.com](http://www.artsonia.com), search for Messiah Lutheran Classical, and you can see all the artwork done by our talented MLCA students. We have almost 4500 pieces in our museum!