

Summary and Selected Highlights of the 2015 AG

for the Evangelical Christianity SIG

by Larry D. Paarmann and Diane Powell

September 30, 2015



Louisville Skyline over the Ohio River

The 2015 AG met in Louisville, KY, July 1 through 5, 2015. The AG hotel was the Galt House, on the Ohio River shore. There were some 1,950 attendees at the AG, which was well above expectations. There were 160 speakers for the over 250 meetings of various types (not all presentations, some Mensa organizational, debates, games, etc.). At times there were as many as 11 things taking place at the same time. Obviously, what is summarized below is highly selective and no doubt somewhat biased.



The Galt House has Two Towers, one on either side of Fourth Street



The Conservatory linking the two towers



Lobby of the Galt House



Pool



Guest Room

The presentations summarized below were selected because there were considered to be of interest to members of the Evangelical Christianity SIG, and were attended by at least one of the above authors. Printed below is the verbatim abstract from the printed program for each event, the verbatim biographical sketch for the speaker, and then followed by comments.


Evangelical Christianity SIG Meet & Greet

Abstract This is a time for current members of the SIG to meet and greet and get acquainted, and for prospective members and visitors to see what we are about. A brief overview of the SIG, what it believes and is committed to, and what it does, will be included. Everyone is welcome.

Biographical Sketch Larry D. Paarmann is the LocSec for the Kansas Sunflower Local Group of American Mensa. He is also the Coordinator of the Evangelical Christianity SIG. He is retired from a career in electrical



engineering, having taught at three universities and also having industrial experience. For more information, contact Larry at LDPaarmann@cox.net, or visit evansig.org.



**M-SIG
Special Interest Group on
Evangelical Christianity**

Evangelical Christianity SIG

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Introduction

(Home Page)

Welcome to the **SIG on Evangelical Christianity**, where Evangelical Christian theology and the implications of Evangelical Christianity on culture, science, and all areas of life and knowledge are discussed. The idea is that members will suggest topics, and then volunteers will write position statements, suggest web links, submit book reviews, etc., that are related to and make contributions to the topic that has been identified. Members can just view the web site (no intellectual contributions are required to be a member), or take a more active role.

Comments We had about 20 people present at the Meet & Greet. The majority of those present were interested visitors. I went over the information on the home page of the SIG web site at www.evansig.org and discussed its content. We discussed plans for improving the web site, ideas for activities at local chapters of the SIG, and the interaction that takes place on our closed-group Facebook page. We went around the room introducing ourselves, and most freely had things to say. The interaction was excellent, and informative. I found it very simulating, and rewarding, and our hour and 15 minutes allotted was soon gone. Some of those present left me their names and email addresses, and a few of those have since joined our SIG.



Attendance at the SIG Meet & Greet

John Milton and 17th Century Millennialism

Abstract Did you know a reputable historian (Professor David Loewenstein of the University of Wisconsin-Madison) estimates that two-thirds of English clergymen in the era leading up the English Revolution (early to mid-1600s) were Millennialists? Did you know that John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*, believed he had experienced the Millennium? Want to see the evidence lying hidden in his early poetry? Want to leave this talk knowing more about John Milton than most English Professors? Meet the Milton no one knows – the real John Milton, explained by the person who figured out the symbolic code in his poetry.

Biographical Sketch John Scanlon: I like puzzles, and the greatest puzzle I've ever encountered is John Milton's *Lycidas*. My college Milton course was taught by the world's expert in the poem, and he admitted then that no one had it figured out. He has also generously supported my project to decipher

the poem and publish a book about it. I'm not an academic, just a smart guy who likes puzzles . . . but you knew that! I'm a Mensan! For more information, contact John at jscan256@hotmail.com.

Comments It's difficult to find anything personal online about John Scanlon, and it appears from his biographical sketch and his talk that he is perhaps secretive about himself. I got the impression that he has pursued his interest in understanding Milton's *Lycidas* simply as a hobby, perhaps a carryover from his college days. He mentioned that his book on this subject will be out near the end of this year, with the title of *Milton Deciphered: What Lycidas is Really About*, and will be available on Amazon. He had those of us interested in receiving information about the book, once released, to sign up for it and give him our email address, which I did. Scanlon presented Milton as a convinced and devoted Christian, with the view that God is truth. He quoted Milton as indicating that "I never wrote anything that was not agreeable to truth." Scanlon seems sure that Milton, and others of his era, were convinced that the Millennium of Jesus Christ was soon to begin, and that much that he wrote, including especially *Lycidas*, was disguised and coded for political reasons, that other Millennialists would understand. What he wrote implied the soon overthrow and demise of current political structures that, if written about plainly, could get him in deep trouble with the then political authorities. Scanlon seemed very enthusiastic about his studies and discoveries, and it was therefore an entertaining presentation.

Scanlon introduced us to the Milton nobody knows based on his own analysis of the symbolic code in his early poetry. He endeavored to solve the mystery of Milton's early poetry in *Lycidas* which uses pagan deities to tell a story, especially puzzling since Milton as well as many other English clergymen of that day were known to be millennialists. For more information see material by historian David Loewenstein, Professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. For example, *John Milton Prose: Major Writings on Liberty, Politics, Religion, and Education*, David Loewenstein (editor), *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, David Loewenstein and James Grantham Turner, etc.

An existing book by Scanlon, *The Landscape of Lycidas* published in 2012, is described as follows on Amazon.com: "This monograph presents the first-ever comprehensive interpretation of *Lycidas*. Hidden within *Lycidas* is Milton's model of Mind. This model is apparent elsewhere in Milton's works. *Lycidas* is the translation key to Milton's poetry."

This same book is described on the blurb at:

<http://www.thebookpatch.com/BookStoreResults?search=John+Scanlon&ddl=authors> as

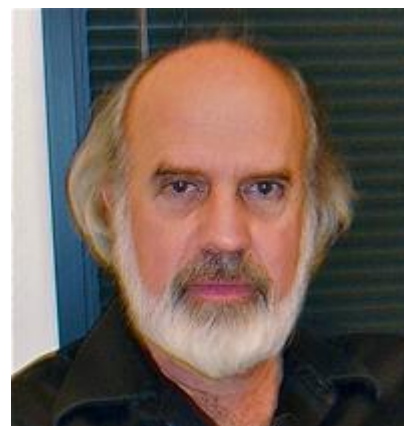
"This monograph presents a complete and comprehensive reading of *Lycidas*, John Milton's early masterpiece. Included within are explanations of the two-handed engine, the perfidious bark, the inexpressive nuptial song, and a complete analysis of the meaning and function of Phoebus Apollo's speech on fame. This is the first comprehensive reading of the poem assembled by anyone, in the over 350 years since John Milton first published this poem. It reveals a hidden landscape within all of John Milton's works. *Lycidas* is in fact the translation key to Milton's poetry. . . ."

It may be of interest that Chicago Mensa plans a Halloween event; the complete reading of Lycidas! (with Scanlon's explanations): <http://www.chicago.us.mensa.org/weem/pgmInfo.php?p=36>

Nondualism: Fact or Fiction?

Abstract In spite of their many obvious differences, all of the world's major religions and great spiritual philosophies seem to have the same core belief that links them together. Often called the "perennial truth," this idea suggests that all perceived separation is illusory, and instead, that everything you experience is, quintessentially, only ONE. Could this REALLY be true, and, if so, what would be the implications? Come and find out if "you" are really here at all!

Biographical Sketch Chuck Hillig is a Life Member of Mensa and the author of five easy-to-understand books on Eastern nondualism that have been published in seven languages. Before he retired and moved to Virginia in 2006, Chuck worked as a state-licensed psychotherapist in California for more than 30 years. For more information, contact Chuck at chuckhillig@yahoo.com, or visit chuckhillig.com.



Comments It's been said before, but one of the most valuable attributes of people in Mensa, at least as some perceive it, is a commitment to freedom of speech and a willingness to discuss most everything. Much more so than in the general population, Mensans seem to have no reluctance to discuss controversial topics on politics, sociology, and religion. If you desire but have difficulty discussing, say, the Christian influence on Western civilization with friends and relatives, chances are you will have no difficulty discussing such at a Mensa meeting. This presents a great opportunity for informed Evangelical Christians, it seems to some. But, things need to go both ways. That is, we need to be open to discuss what others value, and listen to what they have to say. A case in point is this talk by Chuck Hillig.

For whatever the reasons may be, some in the USA have rejected Christianity and have embraced Eastern religions; Chuck Hillig is one of those. In this talk he asked the audience if we are just dreaming our entire universe. How do we know we are not dreaming? He attempted to argue that all that there is, is God. In essence, we are god. This line of thinking is not, of course, new. The separation between us and God, or the lack thereof, seems to be at least part of what was going on in the Garden of Eden between Eve and the serpent when he said "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" beginning to raise the question of God's sovereignty and human autonomy. At any rate, this presentation by Hillig suggested to me the need for epistemology: how do we know what we think we know? Many want to avoid philosophy and theology, but we really can't function without it!

On Hillig's web site, he writes about himself: "Using his studies in both eastern philosophy and western psychology, Chuck's "Enlightenment Quartet" presents a world view that shows his readers how to fully

live a truly enlightened and authentic life in the 21st Century by waking up to who they really are.” His “Enlightenment Quartet” refers to four of his books: Enlightenment for Beginners, Looking for God (seeing the whole in one), Seeds for the Soul, and The Way It Is. Each of these is briefly described on his web site. For example, he writes in part about Enlightenment for Beginners as follows:

“Enlightenment for Beginners is the simple story about how (and why) you’ve been cleverly imagining yourself to be only a separate and limited Being. After identifying the Reader as ‘Black Dot #1,’ the Author then shows how Life is only a wonderful Game of pretending to not be ‘Black Dot #2,’ . . . better known as ‘The Other.’” Notice how he writes that we are imaging ourselves to a “limited Being.” In Christianity, of course, only God is the unlimited Being, and we are inherently limited.

So, while we should support Hillig’s legal right (whether he has the moral or spiritual right is another question) to express his views publicly at a Mensa AG or anywhere else, we are free to think he is incorrect in his views. But how could we possibly enter into a dialogue with him, unless we respectfully listen to what he has to say. I think we Christians have avoided such dialogues for far too long, giving the impression to many that we have no credible response. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Ethics Isn’t for Wimps – Finding Our Moral Courage

Abstract Clinical bioethicist and award-winning author Viki Kind will share practical ethical strategies to use in your personal and professional life. Attendees will learn four ethical viewpoints and how people decide which one is the right one. By understanding these viewpoints, you will be able to speak the ethical language of the person you are dealing with. Learn principles and strategies for fairness and truth-telling situations, and simple tests to determine “What’s the right thing to do?” The goal is to increase your moral courage. (Viki can’t make you a good person. Only you can choose to do that.)

Biographical Sketch There wasn’t any biographical sketch provided in the printed program: what is provided here is from her web site at <http://kindethics.com/about> “I am a clinical bioethicist, professional speaker and hospice volunteer. I am also the author of the award winning, *The Caregiver’s Path to Compassionate Decision Making – Making Choices for Those Who Can’t*, which guides families and professionals who are making the decisions for those with dementia, brain injuries and other cognitive impairments. As a clinical bioethicist, I have unique tools and strategies that provide a structure and process for making the difficult life, health and end-of-life decisions for those with varying degrees of capacity.

“I recently keynoted four Alzheimer’s Association conferences in Wisconsin as well as in Monterey, California. Spoke at the National Geriatric Care Manager’s conference, National n4a conference, Texas and California NASW conferences, National Elder Law Foundation conference, National AHCA/NCAL conference, Mid-American Institute on Aging conference, the



Washington, Idaho, Florida and Texas Guardian conferences and many Area Agency on Aging conferences. Lectured to physician audiences at over 400 events.”

Comments Her training as a bioethicist has prepared Viki Kind for her role serving on hospital boards who deal daily with ethical dilemmas. She spoke of four ethical strategies and the need to discern which one is being used by her clients. She must do so in order to help them to decide what is the “right” thing for them to do in a particular circumstance. Decision-making strategies are as follows: consequences or results-based, rule-based, virtue-based, and rights-based. For example, virtue-based is about what kind of a person you would be if you did this. Other issues involve confidence-keeping, truth-telling, trust and promise-keeping, and also fiduciary matters – the responsibility to do what we say we will do regarding business and financial matters.

Kind presented a fictional case: a train fast approaching will hit either 6 children playing by the track or the man who carefully chose his path to avoid this, yet due to track malfunction he is at risk also. By your action you could switch the train but you can’t save both – who will live – the six kids or the man? Why?

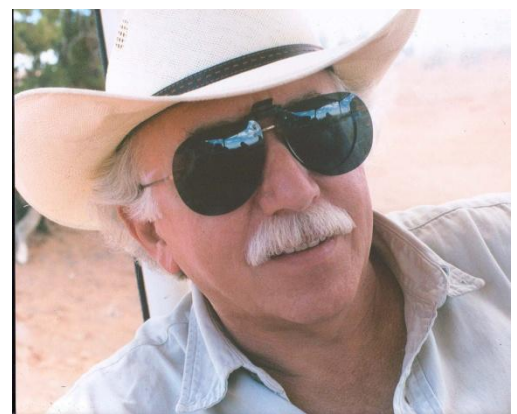
Kind presented us with another challenge. While truth-telling is highly regarded by most cultures – is a small “white” lie ever permissible? She suggests that we focus on what the function is of any particular “white lie”? Can the truth be used to hurt someone?

Anyone interested in more information on these moral issues may contact Viki Kind at: wiki@kindethics.com or another source she mentioned: <http://www.josephsoninstitute.org>

Is the Universe Ringing Like a Crystal Glass?

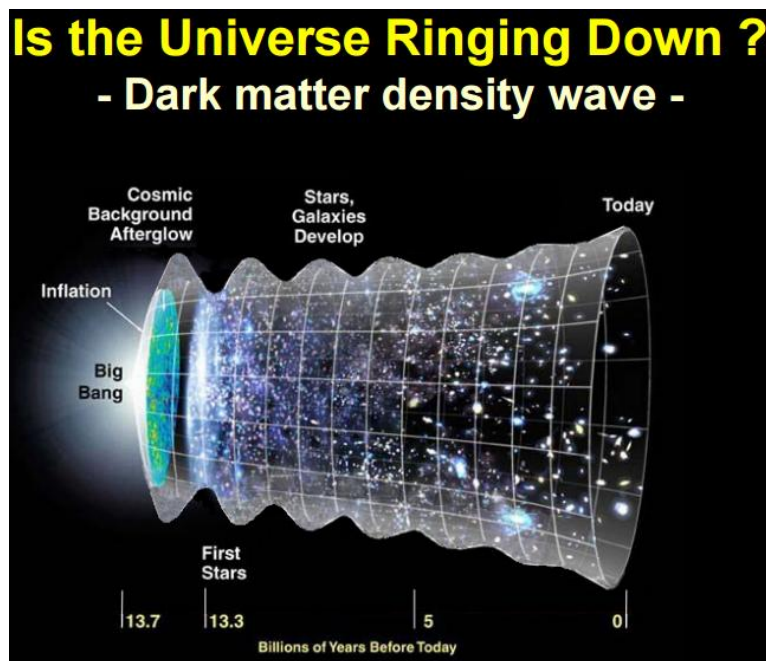
Abstract We know the universe has been expanding since that discovery by Edwin Hubble in 1929. In 1998, it was discovered that its expansion has been accelerating for the last 6 billion years toward “the big rip.” In 2014, I have found that the universe is not only accelerating its expansion but also is ringing while expanding – in a sense “breathing.” I’ll talk about my latest research on the expanding, accelerating, ringing universe.

Biographical Sketch Dr. Harry Ringermacher is a retired senior research physicist from the General Electric Global Research Center. He earned his Ph.D. in physics from Washington University. He is now associated with the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Ringermacher has published in the fields of general relativity, astrophysics and cosmology in peer-



reviewed journals. He is the Chairman of the Copper Black Creativity Award Committee and is the only Mensan to win the Copper Black Award twice. For more information, contact Harry at ringerha@gmail.com, or visit www.ringermacher.com.

Comments This was a very interesting presentation. His talk was given in a packed room, with much interest shown by those in attendance. His contribution to research in this area is that the expansion of the universe is not uniform, but rather oscillates. However, to some, of more interest is that only 5% of the universe is observable (made up of atoms), the rest is 27% cold dark matter, and 68% dark energy. Note this! Only 5% of the universe we can see and/or measure. The other 95% is only theoretical! It must be there, but so far we can't see it or measure it. Interesting, is it not? Ringermacher says that "The nature of dark energy and dark matter is still a mystery." It is noted that without dark matter and dark energy, there are things in the universe that do not follow the known laws of physics. For example, the stars and other objects in the arms of a spiral galaxy such as our Milky Way galaxy do not rotate around the center of the galaxy following the laws of physics. The outer planets of our solar system rotate around the sun much more slowly, in terms of rotations per unit time, than inner planets. For example, Jupiter takes 11.86 earth years to rotate around the sun once. However, this sort of thing is not observed by the stars orbiting around the center of the Milky Way galaxy: the arms of spiral galaxy orbit together. They all orbit the center with the same period! That is one reason why dark matter and dark energy is speculated: huge amounts of unobservable mass must be somehow present for what is observable to follow the known laws of physics. There is much in the universe that we do not know! There are lots of interesting information, presentation slides, copies of papers, etc. on Ringermacher's web site, and for those interested, it is recommend you visit his web site.

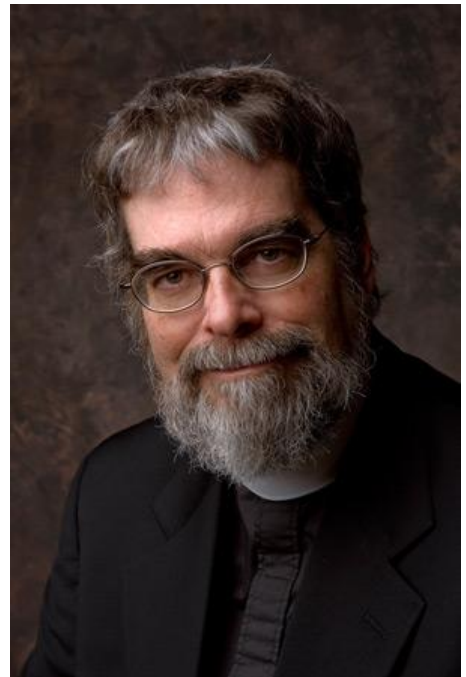


This type of science is fascinating, and gives the Christian all the more reason to glorify God, who has created the heavens and the earth. We should be all for studying these things as best we can, but given the limitations of our measurements, the huge distances involved, the theoretical difficulties requiring such things as dark matter and dark energy to make things work, things for which we have no direct measurements to indicate that they really exist, indicates just how much we don't understand. The Christian, it would seem, can easily accommodate the uncertainty and ignorance implied in these studies. But how the unbeliever can accommodate such things, knowing how little is really understood without it also suggesting to them that maybe there are many other things, such as spiritual realities, that may be indeed beyond their grasp, is a mystery.

Astronomy, God and the Search for Elegance

Abstract Scientific theories must do more than merely satisfy the data; they must do so in a way that is (to use a term much favored by mathematicians) “elegant.” By looking closely at a handful of astronomical images, we'll explore the way that one proceeds from an emotional appreciation of the beauty of the stars and planets to a deeper understanding that satisfies both reason and emotion. Ultimately, this link between “elegance” and rational truth has profound theological implications.

Biographical Sketch Brother Guy Consolmagno, SJ, studied planetary sciences at MIT and the University of Arizona (Ph.D. 1978), before entering the Jesuits in 1989. Since 1993, he has served at the Vatican Observatory as an astronomer and curator of meteorites, and in 2014 became president of the Vatican Observatory Foundation. Along with more than 200 scientific publications, he is the co-author of several popular astronomy books. For more information, contact Brother Consolmagno at gjc@as.arizona.edu, or visit vofoundation.org.



Comments Most of these comments are taken from Consolmagno's paper, *Astronomy, God and the Search for Elegance*, posted on http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20080403_1.htm

“[T]hose who would put up a watertight barrier between science and religion miss a very important point. Science and religion do intersect without doubt in at least one point: in the human being who is the scientist, in the human being whose ultimate motivations and yearnings are, overtly or not, religious.”

“Science is done by scientists. Scientists are people. People make choices... choices about what to do with their lives, what careers to follow, what questions to ask, what experiments to perform, what

theoretical models to construct. The philosophers of science tell us that every piece of scientific data is ‘theory-laden’; they mean that, every time you do an experiment, you already have in the back of your mind an idea of what you’re likely to see; how else do you know it when you’ve seen it? And that colours the way you take your data, and how you interpret your results.”

If you google search his name and search for elegance, you will find a number of additional hits for more information.



Explore the Bible: The Most Influential Book in History

Abstract There can be little doubt that the book known as “The Holy Bible” is the most influential book ever written. More copies of the Bible have been hand-written or published, translated, distributed and read than any other book, by a wide margin. Come explore this most-influential book with longtime Mensan and longtime biblical student, Dr. Garrison “Bud” Klueck. Review how the Bible came into being, who are its authors, how the canon of the Bible was adopted, how the various forms of the Bible are structured and many other facts about this very important book.

Biographical Sketch Garrison Bud Klueck has been a Mensan since the late 70s. Bud holds three master's degrees and a doctorate (JD), including a Master of Religious Studies. He has studied the Bible both as literature and as the Word of God. Professionally, Bud wears a variety of hats as an attorney, a mediator, a judge pro tem, an adjunct professor, a writer and a therapist. For more information, contact Bud at Editor@sandiegomensa.org, or visit www.FamilyLawSanDiego.com.



Comments Klueck described himself as a “cradle Catholic” who later became a serious student and teacher of the Bible. He currently practices Law and Family Therapy in San Diego. In his talk, Bud referred to a course on the Bible that was popular on the UCLA campus for over 20 years. He later was able to teach such a course and transitioned it from being labeled a literature class to being titled “The Bible as the Word of God” which he agreed to teach since by that time he had become a believer. According to a Google search, the topic “Bible as Literature” remains popular today (over 170,000 hits), including various listings, discussions and coursework.

Why does Klueck regard the Bible as “the most influential book ever written”? His material is most persuasive. For example, compared with other ancient writings, the Bible is the oldest text with the most original copies and has been translated into more languages than any other book. What this means is that 95 % of the world’s present population is able to read the Bible in their own language. For those who wish more information on the status of translation efforts you may visit the Wycliffe site at: <http://www.wycliffe.net/statistics> The Bible also makes the unique claim to have been directly written through the inspiration of God.

As evidence for the pervasive use of biblical names and imagery, Klueck provides a long list of familiar biblical phrases which are common to other language traditions. Also of note is the fact that the game show Jeopardy periodically uses biblical categories to test their contestants. Klueck notes the intriguing use of “El” (meaning “of God”) by the creators of the Superman series, Siegel and Shuster, making Kal-El the birth name of Clark Kent and Jor-El the name of his natural Kryptonian father.

Other common biblical phrases are: the popular burial line, “for dust you are and to dust you will return.” [Gen. 3:19] Lines from Handel’s Messiah [Isaiah 40] which begin “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God . . .” Daniel 5:5 referring to the “writing on the wall” at Belshazzar’s palace. Eccl 1:9: “. . . there is nothing new under the sun.” I Cor 15:52: “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

TED: Why Mensans Should Love Ideas Worth Spreading

Abstract TED began as a conference for leaders in the technology, entertainment and design fields to get together and share their passions and insights in crystallized, 18-minute presentations. Over the last three decades, TED has expanded and evolved into one of the world's premiere vehicles for the dissemination of Big Ideas. Major TED conferences are held all over the world, and independent TEDx meetings showcase local leaders in dozens of major cities. Thousands of videos are available at TED.com and have been curated into topic-specific Netflix bundles. Come learn the origins, history, highlights and future of this fantastically influential meme machine.

Biographical Sketch Alan Baltis is an alpha geek, an app/website/database developer, consultant and author. He's a music lover, game player, puzzle solver, movie buff, comic collector, pattern finder, fan of stand-up comedy and live theater. He's a hiker and traveler who's been to 48/50 state capitols with his wonderful M wife, Colleen. He hugged 833 people in one hour. He won Jeopardy. He's determined to live until at least 141. He spreads good memes, hence TED. For more information, contact Alan at alanbaltis@thesmartlife.com, or visit facebook.com/alanbaltis.



Comments TED was organized in 1984 and was originally an acronym for Technology, Entertainment, and Design. TED is now a nonprofit organization, and has broadened its scope to almost anything. Anything, that is, that can be presented in 18 minutes (some presentations are over 18 minutes) in a powerful, convincing way. There are numerous, free, presentations (and transcripts) available on many topics at the TED web site: <https://www.ted.com>. For example, there are many presentations on religion. But, only three on Christianity.

TED now gathers 70 speakers every year for 5-day conferences and challenges attendees to fit their message into a concise 18 minute segment. Such a compact format helps guarantee a wider opportunity for their message on a global scale. Baltis describes several levels or phases of this TED project – the last being the “Empire” phase which will include prizes, fellowships, institutions, and educational curricula. Prizes have already been offered at conferences and are determined by an audience vote. Another application will be using this technique in the field of education to prepare more interesting and relevant curricula. Baltis noted that major universities such as M.I.T and Cal-Tech are offering coursework online. A Google search using the restrictive wording: “online college courses for credit” yielded nearly 6,000 hits!

The innovative use of technology to both inform and persuade is intriguing. For example, Seth Godin (2001) wrote *Unleashing the Ideavirus*. He recounts the story of the Post-It notes phenomenon which nearly didn't happen. It was headed for cancellation until a secretary at 3M sent Post-Its by the case to the secretaries of all the other Fortune 500 companies. The rest – as they say is – history. Godin refers to these key people as “sneezers” who then spread the “virus” (some unique idea or product) far and

wide. We might describe the “sneezer” as the person who is in a position to exercise critical influence in the promotion of his product.

Brief digital online videos are now employed by Prager University to effectively promote Judeo-Christian values – such as the Ten commandments – in a culture which appears to have forsaken them: http://www.prageruniversity.com/Ten-Commandments/#.VczUH_IViko

Even more exciting is the use of such media in a gospel outreach known as The Jesus Film Project. In the last 35 years over 200 million people have come to know Christ through such ministry. The project has grown increasingly more sophisticated and diversified in order to fulfill this goal and then to develop discipleship programs as well: <http://www.jesusfilm.org>

One of the TED programs is by paleontologist Jack Horner, titled *Building a Dinosaur From a Chicken*, and is on the TED web site. While it will for sure remind many of you of the movie *Jurassic Park*, things don't work out quite so simply. However, it, along with other things in publications and other media, does point out the fascinating fact that soft tissue has been found in many dinosaur “fossils,” which raises questions as to just how old these “fossils” may be.

TED is based on the modern challenge of presenting the most significant ideas using the most effective and economical means possible. It is about the global dissemination of vital relevant information using major conferences as their vehicle, and then making that information available free through the internet. Major thinkers from diverse fields meet and develop what they regard as the Big Ideas of our time.

The Olympics of Professional Services – Is It Possible by 2025?

Abstract The modern Summer and Winter Olympics captivate billions of people every four years – but could humans create the equivalent for Intellectuals and Mental Athletes? The presentation explores the history of professional educational competitions throughout the world, the emergence and promise of hackathons, and the future of “intellectual sports” for talent acquisition, corporate innovation and product adoption. We provide an overview of analytical world championships and contend that science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competitions will become commonplace in the decade ahead – including the world's first Intellectual Olympics by 2025.

Biographical Sketch John R. Persico is an international leader on professional services strategy and analytical workforces. He is founder and executive director of the Professional Services Champions League, a world championships series for the global professional services and consultancy industry, representing over 10,000 participants in 110 countries annually. For more information, contact John at john@psclglobal.com or visit pscl.co.



Comments Australian John Persico asks an amazing question, “Could the interest captivated by the Winter and Summer Olympics ever be rivaled by the Mental Olympics?” Persico reeled off a series of figures regarding how many players and how much money had been invested in the pursuit of various game categories (ESPN, Business Professionals, Games, and Sci-Tech). He presented an analysis of various world championships and asserts that he expects that Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) competitions will become much more popular.

He speculated that one intriguing technical item, a vest which samples the wearer’s vitals and displays them in real-time, may someday become part of the interview process as a measure of the candidates’ stress tolerance. Also, it may be that success in the game arena will be viewed as evidence of one’s creative problem solving ability and be viewed positively by prospective employers.

Possible benefits are many. One exciting possibility is that such games could bring renewed prestige and interest to the intellectual and problem-solving capacities of man. Persico noted with alarm that U.S. students have been performing very poorly when compared with other developed countries around the world.

Science Fiction Aspects of Today's Science and Technology

Abstract Science fiction authors do not, in general, craft stories as predictors of the future. It sometimes turns out that way when science fiction readers are trained in the sciences and become researchers inspired by the fiction they have read. This presentation will examine some current research, science, and technology inspired by science fiction, including such fields as computers, energy, health care, materials, and space.

Biographical Sketch Frank Dolinar is a consultant and software developer by trade and a science fiction addict since childhood by lucky accident. He is the author of essays examining the history, trends and implications of science and technology, a Mensan for 15 years, a speaker of complete sentences (given the opportunity) and an enthusiastic amateur space nut. He is currently employed by IBM as an analytics consultant and is a master’s candidate in predictive analytics at Northwestern University. For more information, contact Frank at frank.dolinar@comcast.net, or visit nanosteps.net.



Comments Dolinar has written extensively on the history and technology of science-fiction themes. In the case of science-fiction the author creates his scenario by asking the question, “What if?” The author uses his story to answer the question- to persuade the audience to invest in the world-view he is offering.

Fiction writers may choose to set their story in a field with technical relevance such as health care or energy research. For credibility this requires some researching of the relevant knowledge and issues.

The storyline might then extrapolate from there and presume a certain direction of development. It is for this reason that although science fiction is not generally considered to be predictive, it may at times seem predictive of actual developments in various technological fields such as computers, energy, health care, materials, and space. Two of the terms used to describe science fiction are to classify them as either “hard” (more scientifically possible) or “soft” (at the other end of the spectrum).