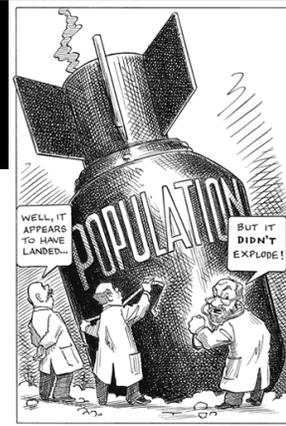


“Population” Is *NOT* A Bad Thing! – By Michael Brown

Contemporary dogma holds that the world is over populated, which is destroying the earth. This religious creed of the godless is accepted even by the God-fearing. Nothing could be further from the truth!



- **Part 1: A scourge to the earth? Or it's very reason?**
- **Part 2: My Amazing Miracles with 5 and 6-billionth Baby**
- **Part 3: How are God and Pine Trees Similar? Seeds.**

Abstract

Many intellectuals are quick to conclude that increasing the human population does nothing but bad for the Earth. Is “population” a bad thing? When we reach into the many billions, is that necessarily destructive or unsustainable? When it is destructive, isn't that a function of our teletial in-fighting and selfishness more than the number of mouths to feed? How many children would faithful, enlightened Latter-Day Saint family have? Is there a responsible stopping point? In light of the millions of children without loving homes, is it better to adopt than to have your own?

How many of us wish we'd never been born? Which is worse – Being born into a war-torn, torturous, starving hell-on-earth dominated by hatred and lies, or not being born at all? Is God, our Father, so unmerciful as to deny even the slightest hope or joy to people in such circumstances? Is the eternal joy hereafter not worth even the most tortured earth-life one could imagine? Also in this series are two miracles that happened to me, which helped me take interest in this subject. I had the 6-billionth baby!

Population 1: A scourge to the earth? Or it's very purpose?

- Yes, there are serious sustainability problems. What should we do?
- Even if God will “fix it all” someday, does that absolve us of responsibility?

Are people a scourge on the earth, or the reason for the earth? If you do not believe in or lack confidence in God's oversight, then Malthusianism seems logical. More people = more wear and tear on a delicate planet, so the best thing for sustainability would be to reduce the population. Many extremists go further and openly or secretly support forced reduction (i.e. government sanctioned mass murder), presumably figuring that “small disasters” of a billion or two beats a longer term disaster of the entire planet.

I'll admit that had I not discovered God to be real and really in watchful care of our situation, I may have subscribed to the less evil ways of restraining population. The earth does get serious wear and tear, and suffers much from the tragedy of the commons, as well as our collective character flaws wherein we exploit or fail to cooperate on a scale necessary to maintain both high population numbers and high sustainability at the same time.

But even without belief in God, it is possible to imagine a situation in which population could grow in peace, with good cooperation between people everywhere. Where science and ingenuity make it possible to produce more with less, perhaps in unexpected ways such as “farm towers” in cities. Where the negative side effects of both old and emerging technologies are dealt with in practical ways to minimize our overall footprint. Sing it with me, “Imagine all the people...”



But “Imagine” can't really happen without virtually everyone embracing God and Judeo-Christian values, which means it cannot happen until God himself removes the wicked. This is a fallen world, where the blind lead the blind. Ignorance will always be abundant. Selfishness will always be dominant. There will always be opportunist seeking to exploit pain and unmet dreams to fan flames of hatred. Like forest fires, man-made social fires always have and always will rage.

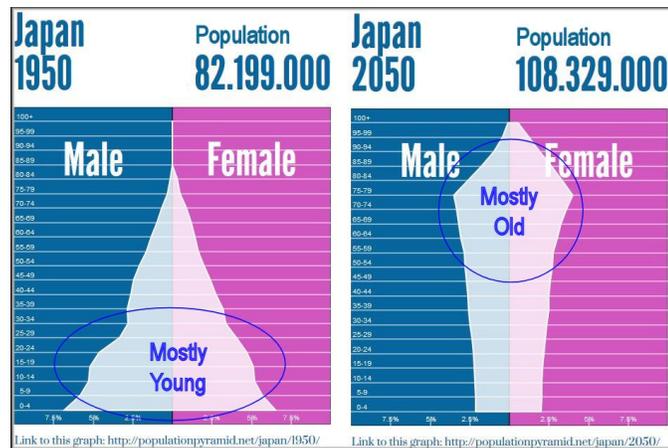
But I contend that God is real, and that he has a plan for his children and this planet. This Intelligent Designer knew billions of years ago there would be billions alive today, and he intentionally prepared the earth even back then to sustain us at this very moment. He gave us oil, coal, and abundant resources of all kinds to help propel modern society and accelerate the advancements that have created the ability for 7-billion plus to live here. He knew when he made it that we

would deplete resources, cause mass extinctions, and seriously damage the environment. Of course he doesn't excuse it. Rather, I am sure it the efforts we made or failed to make toward sustainability and correcting negative side effects will be considered in the final judgment.

But at some point he will personally intervene and declare an end to the world as we have known it, removing the wicked and establishing a righteous, enlightened kingdom where Christ reigns personally. The earth will then house only people who will be responsible. Then I believe it can hold perhaps a hundred-billion in a sustainable, "Imagine" type of state.

But in my confidence that God will make it all right with some major global cooling if we inadvertently caused global warming, I know he does not absolve from a duty toward sustainability. One of God's first commandments to Adam and Eve was to "Take care of the garden." (Genesis 2: 15). So even in seeming hopelessness, we still should personally avoid leaving a bigger footprint on the earth than is warranted, and we should support rational policies and regulations that help mitigate what footprint we do leave.

But none of that means we are ever justified in intentionally preventing births or forcibly removing existing souls. Just the opposite, God commands us to "multiply and replenish the earth." (Genesis 1:28) and even if it seems "replenished enough" to us, in God's eyes there is still room for even more of his children. And there are many practical reasons to do so. Nations who've spent decades below replacement levels are discovering the next generation is not large enough to sustain their old age. Their entire homelands are giving way to foreign cultures that did not limit growth. Even i-phones require billions of customers to generate the capital necessary for its invention and advancement.



Population 2: Amazing Miracles with 5 and 6-billionth Baby

- Miraculous “hugs from heaven” occurred for me as a direct result of pondering my size in the world after the 5-billionth baby was born, and then again with the 6-billionth baby 15 years later.
- My prayer at age 13: “Dear God, there are 5 billion people here. Do you know who I am? Do you love me?”

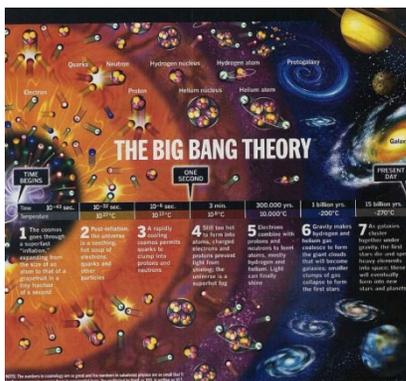
One of the most lasting, beautiful, and powerful spiritual experiences I have ever had came as personal affirmation from God that He knows me personally, and that I am not simply a spec among billions. That I and all of us are valued by God, and there is room for us here. These experiences came as a direct result of turmoil in my life as I pondered evolution and world population. I share this hoping that you can gain insight from what I believe the spirit has taught me about the truth of these subjects. It is at the heart of why God created the world.

My “identity crisis” brought on by evolution and “the 5-billionth baby”

“5-Billionth Baby Born Today” was the headline on June 2nd 1984 that was pounded into my mind with each of the 51 papers I prepared for delivery. I was a 13 year old paperboy, and the weeks after that headline were difficult as I became painfully aware that I was a spec on the earth. “I occupy half of a basement bedroom, in a tiny rural town in Utah – a town you could hardly find on the state map, let alone any other. If I died, my family would miss me I’m sure, but the world would never know or care that I had lived.” I remember thinking that there must be tens if not hundreds of thousands of people praying at any point in time, and I wondered how Heavenly Father could even hear my prayers with all that simultaneous noise, let alone know who I was.

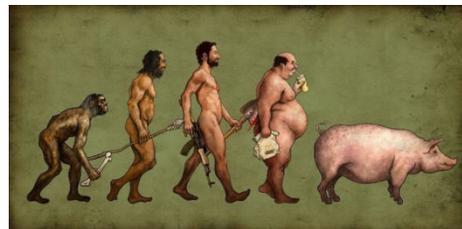


Pondering evolution made me doubtful of God’s existence



At school, the theory of evolution and the “big bang” theory seemed logical. Science seemed to know the recipes of life, and God was not needed in the recipe. I do not think it is wrong to teach evolution – it is important to understand what millions believe in. I even accept limited evolution as obvious, though I do not think small observable changes necessarily equate to human emergence from a

lightning strike in primordial sludge. I do wish



I'd had some context, or at least someone who could help me understand that intelligent design and science are not necessarily incompatible. Intelligent design should be on the table too.

I recall great mental and emotional anguish at not only feeling so insignificant, but also unsure if God existed at all! "Maybe I'm smarter than my parents. Have they been closed-minded to science? Maybe they and all those in my church want to believe in God so badly that over time they have been brain-washed into believing there is a God." (Yes, I was a teenager too, and sure I was smarter than most adults). I remember the testimonies of adults who said they "know that God lives." I thought, "Know is a strong word! How can you know such a thing?"

Pray to a being that I wasn't sure existed?

I drew upon my roots as I contemplated praying to a Being I was unsure existed. I wanted to explain to God all the turmoil of my mind and seek assurance that He loved me and knew who I was. However I was sure I would be devastated if I asked sincerely and didn't get a no-doubt-about-it answer fairly quickly. The conflict of my need to pray and fear of no response delayed my attempt for weeks if not months, but one night I felt I could delay no longer. I had to try.

"Father, do you love me?"

I explained the situation to God for what seemed like hours, but was only about 30 minutes on my knees I think. I delayed asking directly, fearing no response. Then I suddenly experienced a "leap of faith" where the Holy Spirit whispered to my heart that I should go ahead and ask my question. I had resolved to ask if my Father loved me. I figured that an answer to that would settle the question of whether God was compatible with science. But I also figured it would let me know that I was known to Him among the billions, and that He would help me when necessary.



With new found confidence born of the Spirit, audibly I asked, "Heavenly Father, do you love me?" I had barely uttered the last word when a nearly electric sensation overwhelmed my mind and heart. My whole body was tingly not unlike when your foot falls asleep and you have to beat it on the floor to wake it up. I began to laugh and cry simultaneously. The sadness and confusion was immediately replaced as my mind raced with understanding. I knew that in spite of the billions, I was known, valued, and loved. It was a true sensation of joy.



I was on cloud nine for weeks afterwards. I've since felt that Heavenly Father was just waiting for my faith and desire to build so that He could reach down from Heaven and give me the big hug that He knew I needed, and that He wanted so

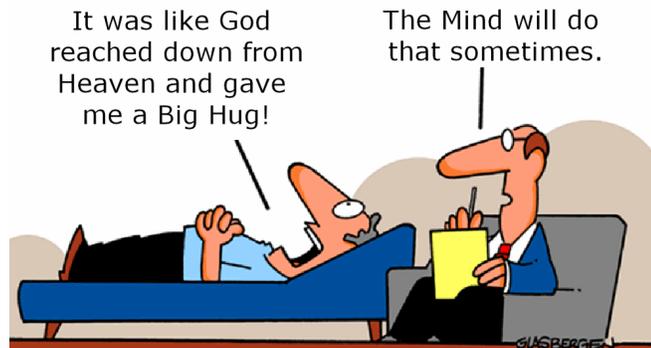
much to give. Strangely, my testimony of the Lord's true gospel came later. At this point I knew two things: God is Real, and I am known and precious unto Him among the billions, even more so than I know and love my own children.

Was I deluded by a chemical answer to a psychological need?

A skeptic (a psychologist, for example) might hear this story and explain that because of my upbringing, my psyche needed confirmation from a God to avoid upending my world. Hence I wanted an answer so badly that I triggered a chemical release during my prayer which caused the euphoric sensation which I interpreted as God's love for me.

If such a person rejects the possibility of a God who loves us, then it is only rational to conclude something like that. It may well be that the mechanics of my euphoric sensation could be traced to a particular chemistry. So what? It is wrong to conclude there is no God simply because you can explain and label one of the Designer's

mechanisms? Even if chemistry was involved, I KNOW that the Holy Spirit was also involved, and that God truly did reach out and hug me, confirming my value to Him.



15 years later... God's awareness of me and love for me was made manifest again when my son became "the 6-billionth baby."

Fifteen years after the 5-billionth baby invoked a search that resulted in a miraculous realization of Heavenly Father's love for me, my second child Jeffery was nearing his birth. We heard on TV, "The United Nations predicts that the 6-billionth person will arrive on October 12th, 1999." Upon hearing this I recalled fondly that the most special super-natural event of my life had come directly from pondering and praying brought on largely when the 5-billionth baby was the headline of my 51 papers. My second son, Jeffery, was due to be born around that time, but it was still a few months away and I thought the chances were a bit remote.

As it turned out, Jeffery was born on that very day! I looked to Heaven and knew that not only had God just sent me a healthy boy, but also an accompanying email (eternal mail):

Mike, I still think of you, and I remember it was the 5-billionth baby that first led you to me. Enjoy your 6-billionth baby. He's one-of-a-kind. I know him. I know your family. And I know each of the other billions as well.

What are the odds? It was a special "nudge and a wink" from heaven that only I could appreciate. I know it is easy enough to chalk up to coincidence, but I sense it

was not coincidence. It was evidence once again that God knows me. It's impossible to prove, and the odds are low that the 6-billionth birth actually occurred on that day – let alone to us! But I am convinced that Jeffery really is that one-in-a-billion boy. Plus, the United Nations confirmed it! (*See their newsletter at the end of this section.*)

The “population control” deception

My need to pray helped me better understand the circumstances that led Joseph Smith to pray in the Sacred Grove. I was about the same age as Joseph Smith, and I can appreciate there is something very teachable about early teenage years where God may have found a 14-year old Joseph an ideal vessel in which to initiate the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times.

I also now realize that “population” is not something to be feared or controlled, but something to be welcomed and rejoice in – let's make room for more! I know if we do as Adam and Eve were commanded and “take care of the garden,” then we will seek to be responsible stewards over the earth. We will not allow ourselves to consume or pollute for sheer vanity. We will encourage science and actions aimed at reducing our impact on the earth, to improve the earth's ability to sustain God's very precious but very large family.

In this I am not necessarily advocating big government efforts to promote “sustainability.” It's more like the Boy Scouts and their “leave no trace” policy when in the wilderness. While it is impossible to “leave no trace” with billions, it is possible for a single individual to decide to adhere closely to that principle in their lives. By this I don't advocate living in a tent, but rather that maybe we should consider if a Hummer isn't a little too conspicuously consumptive of resources, and selfishly consumptive of dollars placed in our stewardship that could go to better uses (unless of course you have a valid use for such a machine).



Is God a delinquent father?

God's command to “multiply and replenish the earth” is still in force. He will let us know when the earth is full to His satisfaction, and we can trust Him to both take care of His family and also clean up the earth when it has fulfilled its divine purpose. Of course we should do what we can to keep His garden clean, productive, and prepared for more billions, but He will fix what we just can't.

I think it offends God when we reduce our numbers for essentially selfish reasons, cloaked in the seemingly noble titles of “sustainability” or “defusing the population bomb.” This suggests He is unfit to provide for His family, and denies him the very purpose of his mission, which is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39)



6 Billionth Baby Born to Brown's

By Mike & Alicia Brown
UN Humanitarian Affairs Reporters

Centerville, Utah, USA – According to the United Nations, the six-billionth baby was born on October 12th, 1999. This comes only a short 15 years after the five-billionth baby was born.

Hans Schmidt, a UN demographer in Muenster, Germany, said, "We have developed a new satellite sensing process which can identify the exact number of people living in a given area. We are now able to identify the exact location that the six-billionth baby was born. Our previous calculation pointed to a child in Bosnia. However, we have reviewed the data and we are certain that the six-billionth child is Jeffery Ross Brown. He was born to Mike and Alicia Brown, of Centerville, Utah, USA, at 4:48 a.m. in the LDS Hospital."

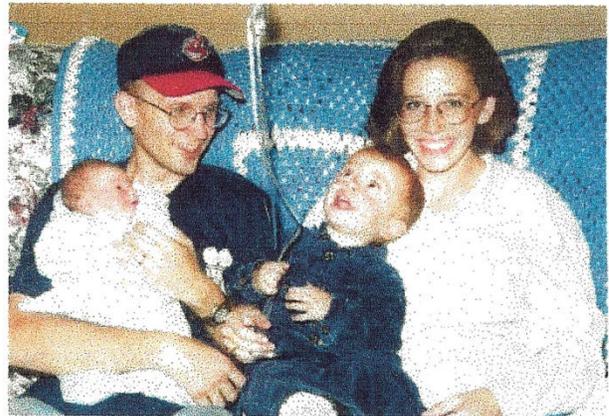
While many faithless souls see his arrival as a sign of doom and gloom, others greeted his coming with celebration. "If everyone could only know how sweet he is, they'd celebrate too. It's wonderful to have such a special child in our home. Besides, we're confident the Lord can provide for all his children," said Jeffery's mother, Alicia.

"He was born a healthy 7lbs 15 oz (3600.4 gm), and is 20 ½ inches long (52.1 cm).", said Angela Anderson, the delivering mid-wife.

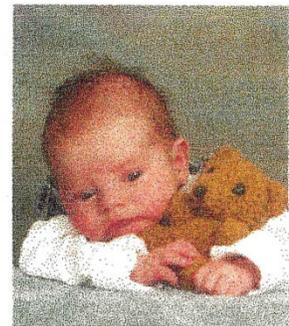
Jeffery's brother, Kevin, has been a bit jealous of the attention that a world icon receives, but he is adjusting just fine and really loves his famous sibling. ♦

Special Note:

Mike and Alicia have requested that we send a copy of



6-billionth child, Jeffery Ross Brown, with family



this particular print to family and close friends. In addition, the famous family would like to wish you a ...

Merry Christmas and..
Happy Millennial New Year!

Population 3: How are God and Pine Trees Similar? Seeds.

- How is a God like a tree? Both have innumerable “seeds.”
- Of the millions of seeds, how many must fully mature for the tree’s purpose to be fulfilled.
- Is starvation and all the potential tragedies that can befall us worse than never being born?
- How can Latter-Day Saints claim there is but one God, and yet believe we have the potential to become gods?

I once had a mission companion who encouraged me to look for truth in everything. He’d say, “You see that oil spot on the road, there is probably deep meaning you can find in that.” I’m still looking for meaning in that one, but I did gain some useful perspectives by applying his method to observations of a pine tree.

The many seeds of a tree

I noticed that a single pine cone has perhaps over a hundred seeds, and a single tree may have hundreds of cones in a season, and the tree may see hundreds of seasons. $100 \times 100 \times 100$ is potentially millions of seeds in the life of a tree. What is the purpose of these seeds? When so many are lost, is it still worth it?

How God is like a tree

God commands all living things to “multiply and replenish the earth,” and informs us that all living things can have joy in their posterity. A pine with a million seeds would undoubtedly love to become the parent of a giant forest, seeing all of its seeds survive to maturity. But there is usually much opposition that will result in many never germinating, and others living a short time but crowded out by stronger ones. But the tree’s ultimate purpose is to replace itself. It will be successful and can find joy if only one of these millions rises to its own stature. Likewise the tree can find joy in the short-lived lives of those that sprang forth even if they never reach their full potential. “Better to have been born and die early than not be born at all.”



Hence, I know God can be satisfied with His Creation if even only one person makes it all the way. Fortunately many more, perhaps even billions, will indeed make it all the way, resulting in a great forest of magnificent children, which will undoubtedly bring joy and honor unto their Father.

It is sad that billions never germinated – a full 1/3rd followed Satan (Revelation 12:4). It is also sad that billions more who did germinate here on earth will not grow to full spiritual maturity. But even of those, there is still joy to be had. Even if many don’t achieve their full potential, there is still much to be proud of in most

of their lives. They will still receive a measure of joy in this life and the next even if they never reach their full potential.

Hence God can be sad for us and glad for us at the same time, much the same as we can be sad when we see our children choosing paths that lead away from God and towards pain, but glad in spite of the pain and loss when we think of the upside. They at least got life, experience, and most do many noteworthy things even if they happen to be rotten in other ways. We know the 3rd Kingdom (Telestial), while referred to as “hell” in some senses, is actually not as bad Dante described it for all but just a handful. It is far inferior to even better places, which makes it “like hell” in comparison.

Imagine the sense of joy in seeing one of His children embrace the truth, overcome tremendous obstacles, and grow to full maturity! This is God’s purpose, and His purpose is fulfilled if only one among the billions walks the entire path. With millions of seeds, a tree need only replace itself to have served the measure of its creation. God likewise need only have one child progress to Godhood to make the entire creation worth it. Even if billions don’t, they will still be better off than had God just said, “Oh well, if most won’t be Gods, then let’s just forget about even the possibility of any being Gods and not even bother.”

I told this to an LDS friend once, and he thought the tragedy of the many who never make it to the Tree of Life, or leave once there, outweighed the success of the few who make it and stay. He thought that for God to see anyone not attain the Highest Kingdom must be devastating to God (as he knew it would be for him if his kids didn’t make it). If my kids choose foolishly, I too will feel tremendous loss for them, but I know I won’t be so pained as to wish they’d never been born (unless they do something that earns that label – which things are enumerated in the scriptures and are not many). I will take a measure of joy and pride in the goodness of their lives even if there’s a lot of bad to go with it. I’ll be glad they got to live and choose. I think they too will praise God for His justice, and for the blessings He offers in whatever Kingdom they know they warranted.

Which is worse, starvation or never being born?

Many argue that perhaps it is better to limit family sizes in places that seem predestined to experience intense human suffering (Africa comes to mind) to avoid exposing so many people to the suffering. How do you eliminate human suffering? Two ways: eliminate suffering, or eliminate humans. Eliminating humans is easier than eliminating the wide array of things that can cause intense suffering. How do you eliminate humans? In decreasing order of wickedness: After birth (genocide, murder, euthanasia); after conception (abortion); or through simply not engaging righteously in the process of creating and raising humans.





With this life being a simple spec in the grand vision of eternity backward and forward, I am convinced that if bad things are hoisted upon us and we suffer intensely for the short span of our lives, it will pay great dividends in the next realm. The list of tortures and tragedies that has happened to our brothers and sisters is very long and painful. We are lucky we do not have omniscience to know all the evil that others have perpetrated. But if I were called on to suffer as Job, or even as many in Africa or elsewhere, I still like to think I'd at least be glad I had been born. Or if the "glad I was born" is too hard to comprehend due to the magnitude of the suffering and the lack of offsetting joyful experiences, I would at least hope for a better, infinite world which if gained would indeed make the fact of intense pain in this life worth the reward. So to be born is always better than to not be.

How big should our families be then?

Since birth is wonderful for the one who now exists, and the world can handle it in spite of the creative lies to the contrary, I believe God wants us to raise as many children as we get the chance to have – especially for those who will train them to be righteousness. If we do not prevent it, but God sends no children (infertility or lack of marriage opportunity), then look at it as an opportunity to get involved in raising other people's kids. (Adoption, foster care, role modeling, service). If you do have kids, it often takes tremendous faith to believe you can refrain from going berserk or broke if you have more (Alicia and I are berserk on even months, broke on odd months). I do believe that God knows us very well and if we listen to the Spirit we can tell when He is satisfied. I also believe that if we have faith we can survive any number of children.



Many think it is blasphemous to say we can become gods, yet all living things testify that "children" become "fathers!"

One of the hardest things for people to accept about Latter-Day Saint doctrine is the notion that we can become "like God" – literally. I wonder if Christ intentionally discourages modern spokesmen from using that as the opening conversation starter because it violates the "milk before meat" principle. I too am reluctant to speak on what I've learned of the subject before an unprepared audience. However, I suppose the majority of those reading this are likely to be LDS. If you're not, perhaps I can provide some rationale that can help you at least withhold judgment on this concept until you learn of the more basic elements of the Gospel.





First, we call God “Our Father,” and we are “His Children.” Where in all the world can you find offspring without the potential to grow up to be like its parent? Like caterpillars and butterflies, it is hard to tell they are the same species, but we are in fact the same species as God. As God’s children, created in His image, He is trying to tell us that we can be like Him. We can become gods. But how then do we reconcile this with the truth that there is

but one God who created all things and to whom we owe our worship?

If “children” grow up to be “parents,” then logic demands there must be many gods. How can we say there are many, but also just one God?

Think of it this way. I have one father. My brothers and sister rightly say that we have but one father, and we owe our entire existence to him and my mother as our creators. They created “all things” on which we depend, through their employment and labor for us. Still, there are other parents with their own families. There is but one God **for us** on this earth. He created all the things in the universe that are relevant to us. This does not in itself negate the possibility that there are other gods for other earths, or diminish the important role our Father plays over our lives. The infinite universe is a pretty big place, and could surely fit other creators into it.

If there are many gods, wouldn’t their space conflict with our Father’s space?

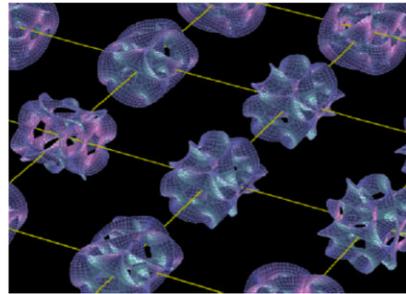
One might think that “an infinite God with infinite creations” would not leave any room for anyone else. This is all very difficult for our finite, mortal minds to comprehend, but simple mathematical observations can be enlightening. How many times can I divide up a pencil? Infinite. How many pencils can there be? Potentially infinite. If there were infinite pencils, would that consume all the space of the universe that there could be no room for infinite oranges? No, because infinite pencils could all be in a row, and oranges in a different row. There is an infinite number of infinities. There is likewise potentially an infinite number of gods with infinite works and infinitely large domains. We will not comprehend this until we’re there. But I’m not giving up just because I don’t get it.

Where does one infinity stop and the next begin?

Is there a flashing light somewhere out in space that demarks the end of our God’s universe and if you go two more feet that direction you’re into some other God’s universe? I’m sure it’s not like that, but I’m also sure that the answer is beyond our capacity to comprehend. It’s similar to how we comprehend the concept of infinity, and at the same time we don’t comprehend it. This is hard to accept when you first hear it, but what if it actually is the case?

“String Theory,” aka the “Theory of Everything” may be part of the answer.

I saw a fascinating PBS program on String Theory lately. It is pretty complex math, and apparently exists only as math (not presently provable by observation). It says something like matter is really made up of energy particles billions of times smaller than the atoms they make up, and possibly billions of them in an atom. Einstein once remarked, “We have been all wrong. What we have called matter is energy, whose vibration has been so lowered as to be perceptible to the senses. There is no matter.” Not that I’d know, but it seems to jibe with his $E=mc^2$ thing, which we all know makes a pretty big bang of pure energy from matter. The energy is “strings” because I guess the theory suggests they would be circular and vibrate like strings. The style of their vibration (shape and speed) is what defines the style of matter or energy that they are. There also seems to be lively discussion in the scientific community about “conscious energy,” or “living matter.”



Math that suggests “living matter?” Seems more like religion than science – especially because it seems to suggest things like “infinite parallel universes, unlimited dimensions,” etc. I’m sure I am slaughtering the theory – I’ve hardly tried to study it yet. But at least I see there could be a path for how God and His wonders can be perfectly scientific and explainable, and not just magic. One of the miracles of our Lord that “learned men” scoff at is the claim that Jesus turned water into wine. It seems too magical, mystical, anything but mechanical and scientific. But math has held up in the past, and maybe it will with string theory. It was hard to put much credence in Einstein’s magic equation until it blew up two Japanese cities!

Suppose the wild ideas evoked by this math hold water (or wine). Accept for a moment that matter is made of small vibrating energy strings, and even accept that those energy strings have some form of consciousness (life if you will, or an “I am” self-consciousness). Christ, having mastered the priesthood and earned respect of all conscious things (or small “I ams”), could easily say to water “turn to wine,” and the strings would simply respond to a respected Organizer (since we know matter is organized and not created), under the authority of the Great I AM and vibrate into wine. Seems like 99.99% of highly educated, rigorously scientific minds by this world’s standards cannot accept God in part because they cannot conceive of the mechanism that causes lifeless, mundane elements to suddenly “jump to attention” when the right voice commands. “Magic” doesn’t exist after all. It does seem to draw you into the make-believe realm of Yoda, who mentally moved rocks by some strange “force.” Makes for a good show, but shouldn’t get much serious thought,



or so the thinking goes.

The crazy thing is that the truth may be very close to “The Force.” Perhaps like Yoda, God knows the science for tapping into the vibration of strings. God has said that all matter is “intelligence.” This works perfectly with the concept of “conscious energy.” I think, therefore I am. God is the Great I AM, or the most developed of the highest order of intelligences. All conscious energy is an “I am,” and knows and respects the Great I AM. So when God speaks personally or through an authorized servant, perhaps what we normally think of as inanimate matter suddenly responds, and strings vibrate such that one can walk on water, or brain tumors suddenly vibrate away, or sight suddenly vibrates back to the blind! All of the sudden, Christ’s miracles become not magic, but something akin to “a Jedi knight who is in harmony with the truth of the Force” – a master of scientific realms to which we may have at best just scratched the surface.

Strings are cool, but basics rule

There are good reasons to stay away from conversations like this with most people. It goes in circles, gets deeper and deeper, and leaves many thoroughly confused and convinced either you’re loony, or “if this is what LDS believe, then they are even more whacked out than we thought.” Even if the truth is not so far from this (and it may be far from this), it is of limited value against the fundamental need to stay true to the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel. For me, I have a strong testimony of God and His True Gospel and have found it very rewarding to exercise logic skills and spiritual vision or discernment to connect what I know of science with what I know of God, and discover they can easily be in perfect harmony. That sense that it is possible to reconcile God and science has been sufficient – knowing the answer is less critical than knowing that there is an answer. God’s science is SO beyond us, but such wonderful mathematics and miniscule discoveries as God has allowed mankind to make seem to provide glimmers of vision into what may be Real, True, and Beautiful.

I have found that while we cannot know with certainty the answers to many things, at least finding reasonable responses to difficult questions fortifies my faith – questions not always from others but more often from within the recesses of my own mind. When a seemingly “fatal flaw” arises in the doctrine, I have always found a rational explanation, or at least a strong potential for a rational explanation. Much of that doctrine came from Joseph Smith, who had little to gain and instead lost so much. It would make little sense for him to pursue such a “hoax” to his death. That’s why it wasn’t a hoax. God required him as a martyr to firmly seal an otherwise hard to believe testimony with his blood, making it all the harder to deny.