

DesignedPlanet

This chapter is one I feel passionate about sharing. Every one of us is given the opportunity to seek and find whatever knowledge we choose. The knowledge each of us has is only a sliver, and I hope your sliver is larger than mine. Most, if not all of us, would benefit from more time spent searching Scripture and trusting the guidance freely provided. "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me, with all your heart" Jeremiah 29:13.

Like many Baby Boomers, I was raised going to Sunday school, and fortunate that Pam Shouse's mother was my teacher for many years at Holmeswood Baptist Church. In my formative years, I came to a crossroads during my Sophomore Year at a Center High School Career Day. It was there that I heard Richard Beach give a presentation on Hal Lindsey's current book at the time, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. Beach had to negotiate, if not battle, to be present for this public school Career Day. That negotiation outcome would surely be different today. His position was that preaching is a valid career option and, thus, he should be allowed to speak. He succeeded on being included, but was limited by the school district to give a secular discussion. Beach was allowed to review Lindsey's book. It may have been considered a "secular" book, but Beach could really preach.

Beach's talk motivated me to pursue my own research on Bible prophesy, and to accept his invitation to go to the sparsely attended "5th Qtr." at Colonial Presbyterian on Friday nights, after high school games. At the time, it was unimaginable that all of the world events prophesied in the Bible, and in Lindsey's book, would come to pass, especially living in the suburbs of Kansas City in the 1970s, but all the boxes have since been checked.

I was particularly moved by how the prophesy regarding Israel had been foretold, and this country would cease to exist, with Jews dispersed throughout the world, which happened shortly after the time of Christ, to finally return in 1948, and this would be a sign of entering into the last days. I could see, then and now, no other possibility other than Divine Providence, for this specific beforehand knowledge, of Israeli Jews being scattered throughout the world, Israel ceasing to exist, but then returning to a chosen location in these last days. The fact that the world has been in such turmoil over this land mass, which is the size of New Jersey, as was predicted, should be cause of astonishment to all who give careful consideration to these historical (and current headline) facts.

Bible Prophesy as well as Creation Science were a path of revelation for me, offering confidence that my faith would become sight. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, it is the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. DesignedPlanet.com became a personal ministry digest to summarize what professionals, more astute on these topics than I, had already uncovered and made clear. I remain passionate about these studies, which leaves me beyond convinced the Bible is the revealed "Word of God."

The content of DesignedPlanet.com originated and is aimed at the Junior High level – one that I'm comfortable grasping, relaying and writing. If you would prefer to follow similar information from an esteemed Astrophysicist, much like Sheldon Cooper from *The Big Bang Theory*, with an IQ that is off the charts, but someone who is also grounded in Bible-based truth, I would recommend the books and YouTube videos by Hugh Ross. I prefer however to present, and think most would agree, these complex matters explained in a little more simplistic manner. There are many other authors on this subject, with Lee Strobel and Josh McDowell and others that I find to be well researched and presented with clarity, in common English.

My son Travis was leading a junior high boys church group after he graduated college. One of the activities they held was a father-and-son camping trip. So, with a group of about 50 fathers and sons, I was graciously invited to go along as well, although the other fathers were a generation younger than me. I've grown comfortable being the "Happy Grandpa."

The first night, we were sitting around the campfire, mostly in silence as the kids played, when one of the dads signaled for our attention and asked out loud, "Does anybody have anything they'd like to share with the group?" As you might expect, it quickly became uncomfortably silent, as junior high boys tend to not want to be first to speak up in response to a question such as this one.

It was a dark night with the sparks from the crackling fire lifting up above the silhouetted trees, accentuated by a full moon behind them. I was in a Sales position at the time and spent hours each day in the car. I had been listening that week to a series called, *Creation, Believe It Or Not*, from John MacArthur's program, *Grace to You* on Bott Radio Network in Kansas City. It's worth checking out the book or audio series. Much of the worthwhile information from that ministry broadcast was still fresh in my mind, and I was moved to share it with this junior high audience, to get the conversation going.

"I learned something interesting recently. See, that full moon," I interjected. "Do you realize that we are on a planet that is traveling 67,000 miles per hour through space, orbiting around the sun, which is 93 million miles away, and that moon is 238,000 miles away from us right now? Yet, the Moon and Sun appear to be exactly the same size to us on earth, and we can predict far in advance when they will line up perfectly together. That's because the Sun is 400 times larger than the moon and also 400 times further from the earth. That is by design. The watch on our wrist and all clocks are tuned in time to the same movements to keep precision and order, as those heavenly bodies work together to sustain all life. Even the moon's gravitational pull works to control the earth's wobble and the sea tides, and act as a thermostat to maintain our planet's temperature. That moon does that while also serving as a shield, attracting objects nearing our planet. You know we couldn't even survive on earth without the sun, as well as that moon at exactly their precise location and course. Such precise design that supports our lives, require a Designer.

Science as taught in public schools is fascinating, but the spiritual implications when combining Biblical truth with the scientific facts, and encouraging both young and older minds to consider the significance of how our designed planet and our designed universe, must require a Designer, is where all truth begins. Synchronized order does not evolve from chaos or through happenstance. Psalm 14:1 says it better, “The fool says in his heart, there is no God.” That is where DesignedPlanet began. I felt these facts, combined with a Biblical perspective, is what is needed in education, for all of us, at any age.

I spent much of my free time over the next year putting together similar facts and condensing them onto easy-to-follow brief digital slides. I researched books and videos on the subject like *The Case For The Creator* by Lee Strobel, the DVD *The Privileged Planet*, and *Improbable Planet* by Hugh Ross.

I worked on this project at night for a year, wanting to create a website digest of Bible truth. I settled on the name DesignedPlanet, as it was an available internet address. The name was also available on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, so I secured them all. I bought an expensive projector with the intent to use it for school presentations. However, ultimately, the reception from schools, even Christian schools, revealed little interest. No, actually there was absolutely no interest. Eventually, that projector was never used and returned to Nebraska Furniture Mart.

It was not until our church, Westside Family Church in Lenexa, Kansas, asked for volunteers to mentor prisoners at the Lansing Correctional Facility, where the church service was broadcast each week, did I find my first *captive* audience for DesignedPlanet. I met weekly to lead a discussion for prisoners on life choices, with what I expected would be a difficult audience. I was surprised to find how quickly these nights became thoughtful and constructive. Prisoners have a lot of time to think about their life choices and what they need to change. They welcome any friendly contact from the outside world. Every week, I’d print off four or five slide handouts for discussion, from the best of the content I had researched. After a month or two, they told me, “We’ve been discussing of who it is you remind us, and we decided it’s Andy Griffith.” That was better than had it been Barney Fife. It also got me thinking, if I did have a TV dad growing up, it was Andy Griffith. Shucks, I still remember the scheduled day and network these shows were on when I was growing up:

Monday_—Andy Griffith, Lucy, Gilligan’s Island, The Monkees, Carol Burnett, Laugh-In

Tuesday_—Red Skelton, Mod Squad, I Dream of Jeanie, Petticoat Junction

Wednesday_—Beverly Hillbillies, Green Acres, Gomer Pyle, Dick Van Dyke.

Wednesday–Thursday_—Batman

Thursday —Bewitched, That Girl, Tom Jones, Flip Wilson, Dean Martin

Friday —Hogan’s Hero, The Man From U.N.C.L.E., Sonny & Cher, Love American Style

Saturday—_Hee Haw, Jackie Gleason, Get Smart, Andy Williams

Sunday—_Walt Disney, Ed Sullivan, Glen Campbell, Smothers Brothers, All In The Family, Mash

What great shows. TV at its best. What happened? We didn't have many stations to choose from and we didn't need them. In those days, only quality entertainment with traditional family values would rise to the top to reside on network television and be available in the homes of America. The times and TV shows are different now, but not better.

I launched the website DesignedPlanet.com and, through Google Analytics, was able to track the daily visitors, as well as posting regularly on Twitter and sending emails out that contained the PowerPoint slides. The daily website visitor and email open rate could be tracked and I was pleased to see it could be as high as 250 people a day, from all over the world. Even on a slow day the reach is between 25-50 people. This self-funded non-profit venture is worthwhile, even if it only reaches one person a day, and even if that one person it helps is me—which it does. I know it has been used by Ministers and Bible Study leaders as a resource for discussions and sermons. All of this is very rewarding.

One of the key takeaways of the biblical messages is that we are all sinners, and any good that is in us or in my or your efforts, is from above and not of ourselves, lest any should boast. I'm sure my knowledge of God's truth is very limited. Yours may be greater than mine. I hope it is and for that, I'm grateful. All our knowledge combined is surely only a fractional sliver of His Truth. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Proverbs 9:10.

TV has great influence and impact in our lives, at least for today, but the Cliff Notes collection of DesignedPlanet's messages does have eternal value for those who choose to explore and share it with others.

I share the following not to pat myself on the back, but to highlight how anyone can be a vessel, as I endeavored to stand for positive traditional values in my career in free over the air TV. We were able to contact The Billy Graham Crusade, and broadcast in primetime his quarterly 1 hour messages. We made room for the good news in the community and showcased the work of non-profits. We assisted our local church to produce Christmas, Easter and 4th of July Specials that ran in key time periods across the country in the over 200 local stations our company owns. We aired local news segments provided by Paul Harvey and Focus On The Family. These quality family shows were in need of receptive programming executives with an open door, then and still today. My only credit is being open to opportunities to share uplifting content.

Dolly Parton shared her thoughts on these issues, in her song on her recent Christmas Special:

"The Seeker"

I am a seeker
A poor sinful creature
There is no weaker than I am

I am a seeker

You are a teacher
You are a teacher
So reach down
Won't you reach out and lead me
Guide me and keep me
In the shelter of your care each day
'Cause I am a seeker
You are a keeper
You are the leader
Won't you show me the way

I am a vessel that's empty and useless
I am a bad seed that fell by the way
I am a loser that wants to be a winner

And you are my last hope
Don't turn me away

Oh, I know you are a mountain
From which there flows a fountain
So let its water wash my sins away
'Cause I am a seeker
You are a keeper
You are the leader
Won't you show me the way

I'll close this chapter with words from one of my favorite national ministers, David Jeremiah.

"When we commit our way to the Lord, we take all of the issues we are dealing with in our life and give them to Him. We take the inequities we see in the world, where bad people get promoted and we get passed over. We take the financial challenges that happen to us, where we trusted people we thought were honest and good, and we learn they are not. We try to manage ourselves but there comes a time for all of us, that have to bundle all of that up and say, "Lord, this is way too much for me and I am casting it all to you. Thy will be done."