A highly respected physicist demonstrates that the essential beliefs of Christianity are wholly consistent with the laws of physics.

Frank Tipler takes an exciting new approach to the age-old dispute about the relationship between science and religion in *The Physics of Christianity*. In reviewing centuries of writings and discussions, Tipler realized that in all the debate about science versus religion, there was no serious scientific research into central Christian claims and beliefs. So Tipler embarked on just such a scientific inquiry. *The Physics of Christianity* presents the fascinating results of his pioneering study.

Tipler begins by outlining the basic concepts of physics for the lay reader and brings to light the underlying connections between physics and theology. In a compelling example, he illustrates how the God depicted by Jews and Christians, the Uncaused First Cause, is completely consistent with the Cosmological Singularity, an entity whose existence is required by physical law. His discussion of the scientific possibility of miracles provides an impressive, credible scientific foundation for many of Christianity’s most astonishing claims, including the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Incarnation. He even includes specific outlines for practical experiments that can help prove the validity of the “miracles” at the heart of Christianity.

Tipler’s thoroughly rational approach and fully accessible style
The relationship between science and religion has long been a tenuous one. Some have worked to put these disciplines in "dialogue" with each other, while others have dismissed any possibility of a collegial relationship. To his credit, Tipler, professor of mathematical physics at Tulane University, attempts the former. He proposes that Christianity can be studied as a science, and its claims, if true, can be empirically proven. "I believe that we have to accept the implications of physical law, whatever these implications are. If they imply the existence of God, well then, God exists." After a cogent description of modern physics, Tipler embarks on a crusade to prove that God exists, that miracles are physically possible and the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus do not defy scientific laws. The author's arguments are somewhat intriguing—his knowledge of science seems exhaustive and this may attract other scientists to consider the importance of religion. Many of his theological insights, however, are problematic. Dubbing Christianity a "science" does not automatically make it so, and Tipler seems to dismiss the centuries-old importance of the apophatic tradition in Christianity, that is, approaching the mystical nature of the Divine by positing what cannot be said about God. Tipler's interest in integrating science and religion is noble, but his method is uneven.

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The Physics of Christianity: Frank J. Tipler: 9780385514255: Amazon...

3

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the phenomenon of interest, Tipler re-invents it.

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image of Jesus on the Shroud of Turin, long debunked as a 14th-century forgery by many experts.

disappointed to find there would be no explanation of the previously reported miraculous appearance
of Mother Teresa's image on a cheese Danish in Nashville. That was unusual, given that Tipler goes
without explanation.

One thing I'd like to point out. The bottom line is, I respect the guy for putting his controversial
ideas on paper, and for sticking his neck out. He really needs to take a class on how to put together
better analogies.

Tipler's ideas are again mind-blowing, as they were with the Physics of Immortality. Some issues I
have with it, though:

1) His main flaw, is the amount of certainty he gives to his sentences. When you research what he's
talking about, you see that the facts, as they are, are much more questionable than what he leads
you to believe.

For example, he says that the Shroud of Turin is consistent with XX males. IF the Shroud of Turin is
the real burial shroud of Christ, and IF it is consistent with XX males (the only reference on the
internet to this fact comes from Tipler), then, maybe, it gives us evidence. But he doesn't use
correct qualifiers. (Qualifiers are words like "perhaps"). He states them as flat fact, which casts
doubts on his entire book. A good scientist will always qualify his statements with words indicating
the degree of confidence he has in them.

2) He tries to gain a patina of scientific-ness by using big, complicated words, and, perhaps
intentionally, explaining things in a confusing fashion. I took a quarter of quantum physics, and have
read some books on it since I graduated from college, so I have a moderate understanding in the
field, but even when Tipler is explaining things I already know, I find myself becoming confused by
his explanations. He really needs to take a class on how to put together better analogies.

3) He has a very cockeyed idea of what his reader needs to have defined for him. For example,
after the following line, "More precisely, the uncertainty principle says that the product of the
uncertainty in the position of a particle multiplied by the uncertainty in its momentum must always be
greater than Planck's constant divided by 4pi." he could have chosen to define a lot of different
things. Read more.

A few interesting thoughts, but

amazing

A little off the deep end...

A little high level on the physics but fascinating. word

11 xxxx zzzz qqqq rrrr mmmm oooo tttt iii iiii rrrr

Published 9 months ago by Terry Brown

A disservice to science and

Christianity

Since an ample number of the reviews already
written have furnished many of the details of why
Frank Tipler's "The Physics of Christianity" is
pseudo-science masquerading as...

Read more

Published 4 months ago by Doug Erdalson

Blinded by Science?

By A Customer on July 31, 2007

Format: Hardcover

By the time I was halfway through Frank Tipler's new book I scanned the table of contents and was
disappointed to find there would be no explanation of the previously reported miraculous appearance
of Mother Teresa's image on a cheese Danish in Nashville. That was unusual, given that Tipler goes
outside of his way to provide convoluted physics justifications for key Christian miracles, including the
image of Jesus on the Shroud of Turin, long debunked as a 14th-century forgery by many experts.

Moreover, whenever conventional physics doesn't provide a sufficient explanation for the
phenomenon of interest, Tipler re-invents it.

As a collection of half-truths and exaggerations, I was first tempted to describe Tipler's new book
as nonsense, but I soon realized that that would be unfair to the concept of nonsense. These
descriptions are far more dangerous than nonsense, because Tipler's reasonable descriptions of
I really have to wonder how many believers would even take this work seriously, and I don’t think Tipler would find much support from his fellow physicists. Dr. Tipler has no doubt that he can prove Christianity with his vast knowledge of math and physics. He must be appealing to a very small audience, because it would probably require a Ph. D. related to math and physics to be able to refute this man’s explanations. As a layman, all I can do is to provide an object lesson in the dangers of pushing science beyond its domain of validity, and using various scientific approximations as if they are completely valid in all contexts. Indeed, while he complains several times early on in the book that other physicists let their philosophical prejudices influence their conclusions, Tipler has clearly let his desires get the better of him. Based on my personal experience, I believe that Frank Tipler as an honorable man and I do not think that he intended to pervert reality to serve his goals, but nevertheless he has.

Allow me to give several cases in point: Tipler claims that the standard model is complete and exact. It isn’t. Overall this is a book that I am not sad to have bought and read, but not one I necessarily recommend to others. I really have to wonder how many believers would even take this work seriously, and I don’t think Tipler would find much support from his fellow physicists. Dr. Tipler has no doubt that he can prove Christianity with his vast knowledge of math and physics. He must be appealing to a very small audience, because it would probably require a Ph. D. related to math and physics to be able to refute this man’s explanations. As a layman, all I can do is to provide an object lesson in the dangers of pushing science beyond its domain of validity, and using various scientific approximations as if they are completely valid in all contexts. Indeed, while he complains several times early on in the book that other physicists let their philosophical prejudices influence their conclusions, Tipler has clearly let his desires get the better of him. Based on my personal experience, I believe that Frank Tipler as an honorable man and I do not think that he intended to pervert reality to serve his goals, but nevertheless he has.
The Physics of Christianity: Frank Tipler on the Virgin Birth

This will be one of the most unusual posts I have put up on this blog, which is normally devoted to issues of the interface between law (including especially canon law) and The Episcopal Church. However, as I noted in this earlier post, I recently came across Frank Tipler’s *The Physics of Christianity*, and I regard that book as one of the most remarkable books about Christianity that I have ever read. In fact, the book is so remarkable that I have decided, at the risk of my reputation as a reliable curmudgeon, who can always be counted on to tell you what is wrong with a particular act or position taken by those in charge at TEC, to tell you instead about some of the things which this amazing book shows are inescapably correct about traditional Christian belief. I use the word “inescapably” because I am a slave of logic: show me a tight logical argument leading to an inexcusable conclusion, and I will follow that argument wherever it leads, no matter what the conclusion, so long as logic demonstrates ineluctably its inevitability. (How’s that for a prose style—I managed to use the words “inescapably,” “inexcusable,” “ineluctably” and “inevitability” all in one sentence. My regular readers will. I know, forgive me, and for those of you who have landed here for the first time, please do not put off, but read on.)

The book is, as I described in my earlier post on it, written by a man who has impeccable credentials as a physicist, having obtained his doctorate under John Archibald Wheeler (the man who named the black hole and whose most famous student was Richard Feynman). The mathematics which underlie his theology are not open to dispute, having been cited by his peers for outstanding achievement. What I want to show you in this post is not his mathematics, but a first-class example of Frank Tipler’s theology—specifically, that having to do with the virgin birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For he manages to bring to this abstruse topic—about which I admit, as a lifelong Episcopalian, I have heretofore been comfortably fuzzy (“yes, of course, God can do whatever He wants, even if we mere mortals cannot fathom how He did it”)—a rigor and respect for the laws of nature, as currently maintained by thoroughly reputable scientists, that is simply breathtaking. In short, his conclusions—and the evidence he marshals to support them—will, to use a phrase from the ’60s that is perfectly applicable here, blow your mind. So please sit back, open your mind (meaning: clear it of all preconceived notions), and be prepared to embrace the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

The first task is to set the context. If you, as a scholarly Christian, or as one who is at any rate well-versed in the tenets of the faith, are already fully familiar with the issue to which the words “virgin birth” refer, then please feel free to skip the next few paragraphs. Briefly, for the rest of us, the issue is what to make of the nativity stories in Matthew and Luke which recite plainly that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was a virgin when she conceived Him through the Holy Spirit, or—to use the familiar words of the Nicene Creed—“[Jesus] was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.” To refresh your theology, here are the relevant passages from Matthew and Luke. First, Matthew, ch. 1, verses 18-25:

1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way, While his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they came
together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 1:19 Because Joseph, her husband to be, was a righteous man, and because he did not want to disgrace her, he intended to divorce her privately. 1:20 When he had contemplated this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 1:21 She will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 1:22 This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: 1:23 “Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him Emmanuel,” which means “God with us.” 1:24 When Joseph awoke from sleep he did what the angel of the Lord told him. He took his wife. 1:25 but did not have marital relations with her until she gave birth to a son, whom he named Jesus.

And here is Luke, ch. 1, verses 26-38:

1:26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, 1:27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, a descendant of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. 1:28 The angel came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you!” 1:29 But she was greatly troubled by his words and began to wonder about the meaning of this greeting. 1:30 So the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” 1:31 Listen: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 1:32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. 1:33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end.” 1:34 Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?” 1:35 The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy: he will be called the Son of God. 1:36 “And look, your relative Elizabeth has also become pregnant with a son in her old age—although she was called barren, she is now in her sixth month! 1:37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 1:38 So Mary said, “Yes, I am a servant of the Lord; let this happen to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The issue squarely presented by these two passages is this: how can a virgin conceive a child without first “knowing” a man? Having thus set the stage, I now turn the discussion over to physicist Frank Tipler.

As any proper theologian would, Professor Tipler begins with the texts themselves. And with regard to the texts, the most prominent issue is the word translated in both passages above as “virgin”, which I have put in bold for easy reference. In all three cases, the word used in the Greek manuscripts that we have for Matthew and Luke is patrhesos, which was the word used by Greeks in the first century for “an unmarried young woman, a virgin.” Matthew’s passage actually is referring to and quoting an Old Testament text, Isaiah 7:14, in which the Hebrew word used is ‘aimah, a word that generally means “young woman” and in some contexts (e.g. Genesis 24:43) means “virgin” as we understand it. However, as Tipler points out, there is a more specific word for “virgin” in modern Hebrew: batulah. In a very well-informed discourse that takes up more than eleven pages in Prof. Tipler’s book, the reader is treated to one of the best elucidations I have ever read about the state of the current scholarship on the use and interpretation of these three words in the Bible, and on what Matthew and Luke understood by their use of the (Septuagint) word patrhesos. In addition, the reader is introduced—for the first time, to my knowledge, in any commentary on these books of the Bible—to a well-grounded discussion of exactly what first-century readers would have believed or understood about the subject of human reproduction at that time.
And here Professor Tipler scores, in my view, a real coup against traditional Biblical scholars: he shows that first-century readers of the passages in Matthew and Luke would also have understood references in Mark, John and the Pauline epistles (where the word pathetic does not expressly appear), based on the contemporary understanding of how babies were conceived, to refer to a virgin birth for Jesus—i.e., a baby conceived without the aid of a human father.

All this, however, is served up just as an appetizer. So we have most of the authors of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, plus the apostle Paul—capable of being read as supporting a virgin birth for Jesus in accordance with their contemporary understanding of what occurred in His case. How does that realization assist us in the twenty-first century, with our so much greater knowledge of science and biological facts? Please, I invite you, sit down to the main course, and read on.

Frank Tipler is first and foremost a scientist, and only secondarily a top-notch physicist. As a scientist, he makes it his rule to understand any discipline which he endeavors to expound. And his native genius ensures that he can use his knowledge of physics and mathematics to apply himself to other scientific disciplines as he may require to support the faith that he has, through his efforts to follow the truth wherever it may lead him, uncovered. (Remember that he was, as most scientists today are, an agnostic when he began to explore the mathematical consequences of standard current physical theories.) With my background in physics and mathematics, I can follow to a certain extent his mathematics, and the physical conclusions he draws from the mathematics. But I have to say that I am here only as a simple reporter of what he says about biology and genetics. I have no extended training in either of these fields. If anyone more knowledgeable in these sciences can demonstrate what Prof. Tipler says to be false, then so be it, and the wonderful edifice that he has constructed will fall. To give him his due, he would be the first, as a scientist, to recognize any falsity in his biological and genetic claims. But I have to give him full credit for his unstraining willingness to follow his rational beliefs to the farthest extent to which he is able to push them—even if the result was that he had no other option than to become a devout believer of Christianity, and could no longer sustain his agnosticism. Indeed, this is Frank Tipler’s most singular achievement: as a scientist, he has demonstrated mathematically that if the laws of physics are true (and everything we do at every single moment of every day is premised on the assumption that those laws are true), then God must of necessity exist. No rational scientist, he implies, could believe otherwise—even though most of his peers think he is nuts (and those at his own University have as a consequence, he reports, deliberately deprived him of ordinary salary increases—see my previous post). Well, I have to confess that my love of logic resonates with his mathematical reasoning, and since his own peers have given him accolades for his mathematics, there is no other conclusion I can draw than that he is, like John the Baptist, a “voice crying in the wilderness”—and being punished for it as well.

But I digress, in my admiration for the main thrust of his book. Back to the issue at hand: the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. How could such an event scientifically take place? And, even more important: if there were a scientific explanation for such an event, how could we prove today that it actually happened? These are the questions to which Professor Tipler brings his expertise, and to which I now invite your attention.

In what follows, you must first appreciate the theological purity of the explanation. That is to say, Professor Tipler has devoted the earlier chapters of his book to demonstrating first, not only the necessary existence of God according to the laws of physics, but also the necessary existence of the Trinity—God, Son, and Holy Ghost, from before time and space began. By jumping to his discussion of the virgin birth, I am skipping over all the earlier discussion which proves the necessary existence of the Holy Trinity as Three Persons in One. (I will come back to that in a later post, after having established Prof. Tipler’s bona fides on a topic as readily approachable, as well as fantastic, as the virgin birth of Jesus.) So in the passage that follows
(from p. 166), please understand that for Professor Tipler, there is no question that Jesus the Son of God predated all creation, and coexists with the Father and the Holy Ghost, while Jesus the man was indeed conceived of a virgin:

I shall now describe a simple mechanism, completely consistent with known physical law, whereby a virgin birth can occur via the action of the Father through the Holy Spirit. In this mechanism, the mind of the virgically conceived Jesus would be in resonance with, and in complete harmony with, the Son from the instant of formation of the mind in the nervous tissue of the embryo. He would be completely human, with the rational mind of a human, but nevertheless be the Son. Furthermore, I shall show that if the Virgin Birth occurred in the manner I propose, the Virgin Birth hypothesis can be verified by direct experiment. The Virgin Birth would no longer rest on Mary’s word alone. We would be able to show directly, without reference to human testimony, that Luke and Matthew merely reported the facts as related to them by a completely truthful Mary. A direct experimental confirmation of the Virgin Birth would also support the claim that Matthew and Luke were just reporting the facts when they described the risen Jesus.

Extraordinary words, are they not? (Do you begin to see why I felt that this book is worthy of your attention?)

There follows an extensive discussion on the phenomenon of parthenogenesis (literally, from the Greek “virgin birth”) in animals as well as in humans. (Yes, I said humans—Prof. Tipler cites the scientific references.) Then he stakes his claim:

I propose that Jesus was a special type of XX male, a type that is quite rare in humans but extensively studied [footnote omitted]. Approximately 1 of every 20,000 human males is an XX male. . . . An XX male results when a single gene for maleness in the Y chromosome (the SRY gene) is inserted into an X chromosome. One possibility is that all (or at least many) of the Y chromosome genes were inserted into one of Mary’s X chromosomes and that, in her, one of the standard mechanisms used to turn off genes was active on these inserted Y genes. (There is an RNA process that can turn off an entire X chromosome. This is the most elegant turnoff mechanism.) Jesus would then have resulted when one of Mary’s eggs started to divide before it became haploid and with the Y genes activated (and, of course, with the extra X genes deactivated) . . .

I hope I have quoted enough here to enable qualified geneticists to ascertain the basis of Professor Tipler’s claim to have an explanation for the Virgin Birth of Jesus. As I understand it, the genetics of Jesus would have marked him as an unusually rare male of the species, and if we could somehow have access to a blood sample, we could determine whether or not Professor Tipler’s theory was correct. And to give him his due, Prof. Tipler states as much:

If a sample of Jesus’ blood and/or flesh could be obtained, my proposal could easily be tested by carrying out two distinct DNA tests for sex: (1) test for the Y genes and (2) test for the two alleles (different gene forms) of X chromosome genes. In other words, a male born of a virgin would have two X chromosome genes for each of its counterpart Y genes. Normal males would only have one X chromosome gene for each Y counterpart gene. This pairing would apply to each of the thirteen genes on the Y chromosome that has an X counterpart.

The odds of such a “virgin birth” would truly be fantastic, as Professor Tipler calculates here:

Such a virgin birth would be improbable. If the measured probability that a single Y gene is inserted into an X chromosome is 1 in 20,000, then the probability that all Y genes are inserted into an X chromosome is 1/20,000 raised to the 28th power, the
power corresponding to the number of Y genes. (Assuming that
the insertion of each Y gene has equal probability and that these
insertions are independent.) There have been only about 100
billion humans born since behaviorally modern Homo sapiens
evolved... . .

Thus, the virgin birth of such an XX male would be unique in
human history even if there were only two such Y genes inserted
into an X chromosome. (Assume an upper bound to the rate of
virgin birth is 1/300. Then the probability of a virgin birth of a male
with 2 Y genes is 1/300[20,000]/20,000 = 1/120 billion.) But... . .
if such an event had to occur (for God to exist according to
physical laws that have shown themselves thus far as true), then
the Virgin Birth probability would become 1; that is, certain to
occur. In other words, it would be a miracle!

But how can we today test the evidence available to us for proof of such a
birth occurring more than 2,000 years ago? The answer, according to
Professor Tipler (and a growing number of scientists), is to conduct scientific
analysis on the bloodstains that allegedly were left on two pieces of cloth that
are claimed to have enshrined the body of Jesus as laid in the tomb outside
of Jerusalem. The principal cloth, used to wrap his body, was the Shroud of
Turin, and the second cloth was one that was put over his face, and called
today the Sudarium of Oviedo. Note that they have entirely independent
histories, and reposes in two different places. The age of the cloth of the
Shroud has supposedly been established by radiocarbon analysis as dating
from the 14th century, but Professor Tipler provides an exhaustive review
(based on the physics with which he is most familiar) as to why that dating is
most probably wrong. And indeed, as he shows from the available scientific
evidence, the correlation in the location and type of bloodstains between the
two cloths establishes a strong possibility that they once covered the same
corpse. Given that the Oviedo cloth is known to have existed as of about 1000
A.D. — four centuries or so before the "known" dating of the Shroud according
to radiocarbon decay analysis, the accuracy of the latter is called into
question.

However, this conclusion—that the Shroud of Turin and the Oviedo Sudarium
are intimately related—is almost trifling compared to where Professor Tipler
goes next. Scientist that he is, he asks whether anyone has conducted a DNA
analysis of the bloodstains on the two cloths, to determine whether (a) the
cloths have the same DNA imprint, and so are unquestionably related, but (b)
whether it is possible, from the analyses that have been conducted and
reported in the literature, to ascertain whether, assuming that the blood on both
cloths was that of the crucified Jesus, its genetic profile was consistent with his
hypothosis of an unusual (i.e., miraculous) XX male birth.

It turns out, as Professor Tipler reports, that DNA analyses have been
conducted of both the bloodstains on the Turin Shroud and on the Oviedo
Sudarium:

In January 1993 a group of Italian researchers, led by Professor
Marcello Canale of the Institute of Legal Medicine in Genoa,
conducted a DNA analysis of the blood on the Shroud. This group
included several workers who had invented the standard DNA test
for gender... . .

This group simultaneously tested the blood on the Oviedo Cloth.
Imagine his surprise, therefore, when he could not obtain, through the usual
library channels, a copy of their published results. Even more, it developed that
the results the group had obtained were published in a very non-standard form:

... The results were published, in Italian, in the very obscure
journal devoted to the study of the Turin Shroud. Furthermore,
only the raw data were published. That is, the Genoa team
published black-and-white Xerox copies of the computer output of the
DNA analyzer. This is never, never done. Always, the data are

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presented in a neat table or figure, and they are accompanied by a discussion of their significance. The Genoa team made no effort to interpret their data. . . .

Being the scientist that he is, Frank Tipler went to work on the raw data of the Italians’ tests, and reported triumphantly (the italics are in the original):

But I was able to interpret the data at once. They are the expected signature of the DNA of a male born in a Virgin Birth. The data are presented in standard tabular form in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 . . .

The standard DNA test for sex is the amelogenin test I mentioned earlier. The Italians performed this test, which gave 106 base pairs for the X form of amelogenin and 112 base pairs for the Y form. There is a phenomenon called sputtering, which can cause the actual value obtained to differ by 1 base pair from the expected value.

The Turin Shroud data show 107 (106 +1) but no trace of a 112 base pair gene. The Oviedo Cloth data show 105 (106 -1) but no trace of a 112 base pair. The X chromosome is present, but there is no evidence of a Y chromosome. This is the expected signature of the simplest virgin birth, the XX male generated by an SRY inserted into an X chromosome. It is not what would be expected of a standard male.

Thus The Physics of Christianity not only provides a physical explanation for how the virgin birth reported in the New Testament would be possible, but it also uses the available physical evidence to provide a stunning verification of Tipler’s hypothesis—a verification which is all the more amazing because it is based on reported results that were never properly presented or interpreted by those who obtained them.

It is for this reason alone that I commend Frank Tipler’s book to all who wish to ground their faith on the physical evidence and common sense that God has given us. Professor Tipler is a unique breed: he is someone who has followed the available evidence, and who has worked out the consequent mathematics, to a conclusion which, no matter how much his colleagues might wish to avoid it, shows that:

A. There is definitely a God Who created the universe in which we find ourselves (to be faithful to his proof, I should use the plural, “universes”---but more on that later);

B. This God indeed has an only-begotten Son, Jesus, who together with the Holy Spirit constitute three separate persons forming one indivisible trinity;

C. The Son—Jesus—although existing before (and throughout) all space and time, came to this planet and took on the form of a man, the product of a unique and one-time Virgin Birth; and

D. Evidence for that unique and one-time birth, as well as for His Resurrection itself, has been waiting for nearly two thousand years for mankind to develop the skills and technology needed to assess it.

It is, as I say, a remarkable thesis, in what is an even more remarkable book. As time permits in the coming weeks, I shall return to it, because this synopsis of just one chapter in it does not begin to give it its due.
11 comments:

Tregonsee said...
>>one of the foremost physicists of our day.
Not exactly. He is a competent physicist, one of many, but nowhere near "foremost." He is primarily and widely known because he authored an excellent introductory physics textbook used by more than a generation of physics students who remember it fondly.

This is not a comment on his conclusions, and I have ordered a copy of his book. However, it is best not to oversell a source, especially to those in the field who will smile tolerantly at a layman's naivety.
Monday, November 10, 2008 at 7:49:00 AM PST

A. S. Haley said...
Thank you for that comment, Tregonsee. I have removed my exuberance, and simply described the man's credentials.

However, should even some of his claims about Christianity be verified (and he suggests a number of ways in his book that it could be done), he would have to be regarded as more than just competent.
I hope you enjoy the book!
Monday, November 10, 2008 at 8:05:00 AM PST

The Underground Pewster said...
Does this make Tipler a chimera: some sort of genetphysicist or physigeneticist? Perhaps he had one of his physicist alleles and this has allowed the expression of his latent geneticist tendencies. Interesting stuff though, life has just not been the same since they discovered reverse transcriptase.
Monday, November 10, 2008 at 12:15:00 PM PST

Perpetua said...
Slightly off topic, but does he confirm that the blood from both the shroud and the oviedo cloth are the same DNA?
Monday, November 10, 2008 at 4:16:00 PM PST

A. S. Haley said...
Perpetua, there is no outright statement by him to that effect. I am not a biologist or geneticist, so I hope someone with that expertise would help here. His table for the Oviedo Cloth results is much shorter than the table for the Turin Shroud, leading me to think that the DNA samples were more degraded on the Oviedo Cloth. But both samples show the same-size base pairs for the X-form of amelogenin (after correcting for the "sputtering" he mentions), so I think that would be a strong indicator that the blood on the two cloths is the same. (After all, how many relics from that era could there be with the rare blood of two different XX males on them?)

There is a good summary of all the points of similarity between the Shroud and the Oviedo Cloth [here]. Written in 1998, it says the results of the DNA tests on the blood are still "pending"—apparently because that refers to different tests done later. Only Tipler seems to have written up the Italians' results in English, since I can find no other mention of them on the Web.
Monday, November 10, 2008 at 6:39:00 PM PST

Truth Unites... and Divides said...

California Supreme Court to Consider Constitution...
Bishop Wartland Knows His Canons
Hypocrisy? You Call That Hypocrisy??
Celebrating the Election? Think Again
Understanding Rowan Williams for the First Time
A Question for the Ages (Especially This One)
Somewhere There's a Saying . . .
The Lead Offers an Unwitting Lesson for TEC
Blog Changes - Politics Can Be Fun!
The Unrarnished Truth
The Physics of Christianity: Frank Tipler on the V...
"Know the Enemy": the Office of the Presiding Bishop...
The Church of Enablers
What Republicans Can Do with Their Yard Signs Toda...
Vote Early, and Often—Not Just in Chicago
"Know the Enemy": Episcopal Beginnings

- October (13)
- September (18)
- August (53)
- July (18)
- June (9)
- May (12)
- April (7)
- March (5)
Dear A.S. Haley,

I share your exuberance! Keep posting more on this series about Tipler’s book.

I love your statement here: "Thus The Physics of Christianity not only provides a physical explanation for how the virgin birth reported in the New Testament would be possible, but it also uses the available physical evidence to provide a stunning verification of Tipler’s hypothesis—a verification which is all the more amazing because it is based on reported results that were never properly presented or interpreted by those who obtained them."

Best Regards,

Truth Unites... and Divides

Tuesday, November 11, 2008 at 2:27:09 PM PST

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Martial Artist said...

AC,

You asked: "How’s that for a prose style?"

I think it is an inestimable piece of allusion on your part, and immeasurably comprehensive.

Blessings and regards,

Keith Toepfer

Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at 2:33:00 PM PST

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James Redford said...

Actually, Tregonyee, as regards Prof. Tipler, whatever one’s feelings about him, we’re quite conservatively talking about the most elite physicist who has ever lived. His Ph.D. is in the field of global general relativity (the same rarefied field that Profs. Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking developed), and additionally he is also an expert in particle physics (i.e., the Standard Model), computer science (e.g., computational complexity theory), and quantum cosmology. Not even Profs. Penrose and Hawking have all those qualifications, let alone Einstein or Newton.

Furthermore, if one accepts that he has proven God to exist according to the known laws of physics and that he has given the world the physical Theory of Everything (both of which one must accept if one desires to be veridical according to the known laws of physics), then this just cements Prof. Tipler’s primary importance within physics all the more.

Tipler is Professor of Mathematics and Physics (joint appointment) at Tulane University. His Omega Point Theory has been published in a number of prestigious peer-reviewed physics and science journals such as Reports on Progress in Physics (one of the world’s leading physics journals), Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (one of the world’s leading astrophysics journals), Physics Letters B, the International Journal of Theoretical Physics, etc.

Prof. John A. Wheeler (the father of most relativity research in the U.S.) wrote that "Frank Tipler is widely known for important concepts and theorems in general relativity and gravitation physics" on pg. viii in the "Foreword" to The Anthropic Cosmological Principle (1986) by cosmologist Prof. John D. Barrow and Tipler, which was the first book wherein Tipler’s Omega Point Theory was described. On pg. ix of said book, Prof. Wheeler wrote that Chapter 10 of the book, which concerns the Omega Point Theory, "rivals in thought-provoking power any of the [other chapters]."

God has been proven to exist based upon the most reserved view of the known laws of physics. For much more on that, see Prof. Frank J. Tipler’s below paper, which among other things demonstrates that the known laws of physics (i.e., the Second Law of Thermodynamics, general relativity, quantum mechanics, and the Standard Model of particle
physics) require that the universe end in the Omega Point (the final cosmological singularity and state of infinite informational capacity identified as being God):


Out of 50 articles, Prof. Tipler's above paper was selected as one of 12 for the "Highlights of 2005" accolade as "the very best articles published in Reports on Progress in Physics in 2005 [Vol. 68]. Articles were selected by the Editorial Board for their outstanding reviews of the field. They all received the highest praise from our international referees and a high number of downloads from the journal Website." (See Richard Palmer, Publisher, "Highlights of 2005," Reports on Progress in Physics. [http://www.iop.org/EJ/journal-page/extra-highlights/0034-4885] Reports on Progress in Physics is the leading journal of the Institute of Physics, Britain's main professional body for physicists.

Further, Reports on Progress in Physics has a higher impact factor (according to Journal Citation Reports) than Physical Review Letters, which is the most prestigious American physics journal (one, incidently, which Prof. Tipler has been published in more than once). A journal's impact factor reflects the importance the science community places in that journal in the sense of actually citing its papers in their own papers. (And just to point out, Tipler's 2005 Reports on Progress in Physics paper could not have been published in Physical Review Letters since said paper is nearly book-length, and hence not a "letter" as defined by the latter journal.)

See also the below resources for further information on the Omega Point Theory:

Theopysics [http://geocities.com/theopysics/]


The leading quantum physicist in the world, Prof. David Deutsch (inventor of the quantum computer, being the first person to mathematically describe the workings of such a device, and winner of the Institute of Physics' 1998 Paul Dirac Medal and Prize for his work), endorses the physics of the Omega Point Theory in his book The Fabric of Reality (1997). For that, see:


The only way to avoid the Omega Point cosmology is to invent tenuous physical theories which have no experimental support and which violate the known laws of physics, such as with Prof. Stephen Hawking's paper on the black hole information issue which is dependent on the conjectured string theory-based anti-de Sitter space/conformal field theory correspondence (AdS/CFT correspondence). See S. W. Hawking, "Information Loss in Black Holes," Physical Review D, Vol. 72, No. 6, 064013 (October 2005); also at arXiv:hep-th/0507171, July 18, 2005. [http://arxiv.org/abs/hep-th/0507171]

That is, Prof. Hawking's paper is based upon proposed, unconfirmed physics. It's an impressive testament to the Omega Point Theory's correctness, as Hawking implicitly confirms that the known laws of physics require the universe to collapse in finite time. Hawking realizes that the black hole information issue must be resolved without violating
Some have suggested that the universe’s current acceleration of its expansion obviates the universe collapsing (and therefore obviates the Omega Point). But as Profs. Lawrence M. Krauss and Michael S. Turner point out in “Geometry and Destiny” (General Relativity and Gravitation, Vol. 31, No. 10 [October 1999], pp. 1453-1459; also at arXiv:astro-ph/9904020, April 1, 1999 http://arxiv.org/abs/astro-ph/9904020), there is no set of cosmological observations which can tell us whether the universe will expand forever or eventually collapse.

There’s a very good reason for that, because that is dependant on the actions of intelligent life. The known laws of physics provide the mechanism for the universe’s collapse. As required by the Standard Model, the net baryon number was created in the early universe by baryogenesis via electroweak quantum tunneling. This necessarily forces the Higgs field to be in a vacuum state that is not its absolute vacuum, which is the cause of the positive cosmological constant. But if the baryons in the universe were to be annihilated by the inverse of baryogenesis, again via electroweak quantum tunneling (which is allowed in the Standard Model, as $B - L$ is conserved), then this would force the Higgs field toward its absolute vacuum, cancelling the positive cosmological constant and thereby forcing the universe to collapse.

Moreover, this process would provide the ideal form of energy resource and rocket propulsion during the colonization phase of the universe.

Prof. Tipler’s above 2005 Reports on Progress in Physics paper also demonstrates that the correct quantum gravity theory has existed since 1962, first discovered by Richard Feynman in that year, and independently discovered by Steven Weinberg and Bryce DeWitt, among others. But because these physicists were looking for equations with a finite number of terms (i.e., derivatives no higher than second order), they abandoned this qualitatively unique quantum gravity theory since in order for it to be consistent it requires an arbitrarily higher number of terms. Further, they didn’t realize that this proper theory of quantum gravity is consistent only with a certain set of boundary conditions imposed (which includes the initial Big Bang, and the final Omega Point, cosmological singularities). The equations for this theory of quantum gravity are term-by-term finite, but the same mechanism that forces each term in the series to be finite also forces the entire series to be infinite (i.e., infinities that would otherwise occur in spacetime, consequently destabilizing it, are transferred to the cosmological singularities, thereby preventing the universe from immediately collapsing into nonexistence). As Tipler notes in his 2007 book The Physics of Christianity (pp. 49 and 279), “It is a fundamental mathematical fact that this [infinite series] is the best that we can do. ... This is somewhat analogous to Liouville’s theorem in complex analysis, which says that all analytic functions other than constants have singularities either a finite distance from the origin of coordinates or at infinity.”

When combined with the Standard Model, the result is the Theory of Everything (TOE) correctly describing and unifying all the forces in physics.

Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 12:44:00 PM PST

A. S. Haley said...

Wow, James Redford, thank you for that affirmation of the main post! I also recommend your Weblog to those readers who want more of the physical/mathematical detail which I have not yet introduced them to. Your comment will figure prominently in my subsequent posts on Prof. Tipler’s book—so thank you for taking the time and trouble to post it here for our benefit.

Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 6:26:00 PM PST

A Future Metaphysician said...

Tipler’s theory has some significant theological implications. Here’s my quick take on how Tiplerism would affect theology.
(1) It makes the genealogy of Jesus theologically important, which makes the pedigree of Jesus important.

(2) This changes how we read all the Old Testament laws that affect "who marries who" (including kosher laws, since food taboos are one of the most effective ways of keeping groups apart—"lips that touch bacon will never touch mine")

(3) In the Book of Acts, the Gentile believers were excused from following the Old Testament laws of racial separation. This makes perfect sense if these laws were given to concentrate the gene pool to lead to Jesus.

Monday, January 18, 2010 at 5:35:00 AM PST

Consiglieri said...

"I authored an excellent introductory physics textbook used by more than a generation of physics students who remember it fondly."

This is not true. The "Tipler" you are talking about is "Paul Tipler". This Tipler in this article is "Frank Tipler".

Indeed, I liked the article.

Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at 9:43:00 AM PDT

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Picture Window template. Template images by compassandcamera. Powered by Blogger.
Frank Tipler is a crackpot. At one point in his life, he did very good technical work in general relativity; he was the first to prove theorems that closed timelike curves could not be constructed in local regions of spacetime without either violating the weak energy condition or creating a singularity. But alas, since then he has pretty much gone off the deep end, and more recently has become known for arguments for Christianity based on fundamental physics. If you closely at those arguments (h/t wolfgang), you find things like this:

If life is to guide the entire universe, it must be co-extensive with the entire universe. We can say that life must have become OMNIPRESENT in the universe by the end of time. But the very act of guiding the universe to eliminate event horizons – an infinite number of nudges – causes the entropy and hence the complexity of the universe to increase without limit. Therefore, if life is to continue guiding the universe – which it must, if the laws of physics are to remain consistent – then the knowledge of the universe possessed by life must also increase without limit, becoming both perfect and infinite at the final singularity. Life must become OMNISCIENT at the final singularity. The collapse of the universe will have provided available energy, which goes to infinity as the final singularity is approached, and this available energy will have become entirely under life's control. The rate of use of this available energy – power – will diverge to infinity as the final singularity is approached. In other words, life at the final singularity will have become OMNIPOTENT. The final singularity is not in time but outside of time. On the boundary of space and time, as described in detail by Hawking and Ellis [6]. So we can say that the final singularity – the Omega Point – is TRANSCENDANT to space, time and matter.

All of the signs of classic crackpottery are present; the vague and misplaced appeal to technical terminology, the spelling mistakes and capital letters, the random use of “must” and “therefore” when no actual argument has been given. Two paragraphs later, we get:

Science is not restricted merely to describing only what happens inside the material universe, any more than science is restricted to describing events below the orbit of the Moon, as claimed by the opponents of Galileo. Like Galileo, I am convinced that the only scientific approach is to assume that the laws of terrestrial physics hold everywhere and without exception – unless and until an experiment shows that these laws have a limited range of application.
Compares self with Galileo! 40 points! There is really no indication that the person who wrote this was once writing perfectly sensible scientific papers.

Perhaps you will not be surprised to find that Tipler has now jumped into global-warming denialism. In just a few short paragraphs, we are treated to the following gems of insight (helpfully paraphrased):

- People say that anthropogenic global warming is now firmly established, but that's what they said about Ptolemaic astronomy! Therefore, I am like Copernicus.

- A scientific theory is only truly scientific if it makes predictions “that the average person can check for himself.” (Not making this up.)

- You know what causes global warming? Sunspots!

- Sure, you can see data published that makes it look like the globe actually is warming. But that data is probably just fabricated. It snowed here last week!

- If the government stopped funding science entirely, we wouldn't have these problems.

- You know who I remind myself of? Galileo.

Stillman Drake, the world's leading Galileo scholar, demonstrates in his book "Galileo: A Very Short Introduction" (Oxford University Press, 2001) that it was not theologians, but rather his fellow physicists (then called "natural philosophers"), who manipulated the Inquisition into trying and convicting Galileo. The “out-of-the-mainsteam” Galileo had the gall to prove the consensus view, the Aristotelian theory, wrong by devising simple experiments that anyone could do. Galileo's fellow scientists first tried to refute him by argument from authority. They failed. Then these “scientists” tried calling Galileo names, but this made no impression on the average person, who could see with his own eyes that Galileo was right.

Finally, Galileo's fellow “scientists” called in the Inquisition to silence him.

One could go on, but what's the point? Well, perhaps there are two points worth making.

First, Frank Tipler is probably very “intelligent” by any of the standard measures of IQ and so forth. In science, we tend to valorize (to the point of fetishizing) a certain kind of ability to abstractly manipulate symbols and concepts – related to, although not exactly the same as, the cult of genius. (It's not just being smart that is valorized, but a certain kind of smart.) The truth is, such an ability is great, but tends to be completely uncorrelated with other useful qualities like intellectual honesty and good judgment. People don't become crackpots because they're stupid; they become crackpots because they turn their smarts to crazy purposes.

Second, the superficially disconnected forms of crackpottery that lead on the one hand to proving Christianity using general relativity, and on the
other to denying global warming, clearly emerge from a common source. The technique is to first decide what one wants to be true, and then come up with arguments that support it. This is a technique that can be used by anybody, for any purpose, and it’s why appeals to authority aren’t to be trusted, no matter how “intelligent” that authority seems to be.

Tipler isn’t completely crazy to want “average people” to be able to check claims for themselves. He’s mostly crazy, as by that standard we wouldn’t have much reason to believe in either general relativity or the Standard Model of particle physics, since the experimental tests relevant to those theories are pretty much out of reach for the average person. But the average person should be acquainted with the broad outlines of the scientific method and empirical reasoning, at least enough so that they try to separate crackpots from respectable scientists. Because nobody ever chooses to describe themselves as a crackpot. If you ask them, they’ll always explain that they are on the side of Galileo; and if you don’t agree, you’re no better than the Inquisition.

"The Physics of Christianity" — Frank Tipler’s latest book
Review By Sean Carroll | May 30, 2007 11:29 am

It’s only with some reluctance that I even mention Frank Tipler’s latest book, The Physics of Christianity. But people keep telling me about it, so, it’s like, my duty or something.

Now, I’m all in favor of writing about the physics of imaginary things; it can be a very enlightening exercise to compare the laws of the actual world to ones that we make up for purposes of fiction. And The Physics of Christianity is such an obvious title that you knew someone would write such a book eventually. And Frank Tipler, in his youth, did some pioneering research on closed timelike curves in general relativity, so he has credentials as an honest physicist.

But, if there remains an interesting book to be written about the physics of Christianity, this isn't it. And I say that in full confidence, not having actually read the book. Usually I like to defer judgment about crazy-sounding books that I haven’t even looked at, but in this case I’ll make an exception. Reviews by Vic Stenger or Lawrence Krauss tell you everything you need to know. From Lawrence’s review:

As a collection of half-truths and exaggerations, I am tempted to describe Tipler’s new book as nonsense — but that would be unfair to the concept of nonsense...

Tipler, for example, claims that the standard model of particle physics is complete and exact. It isn’t. He claims that we have a clear and consistent theory of quantum gravity. We don’t. He claims that the universe must recollapse. It doesn't have to, and all evidence thus far suggests that it won't. He argues that we understand the nature of dark energy. We don’t. He argues that we know why there is more matter than antimatter in...
the universe. We don't. I could go on, but you get the point...

[Tipler] argues that the resurrection of Jesus occurred when the atoms in his body spontaneously decayed into neutrinos and antineutrinos, which later converted back into atoms to reconstitute him.

Not much motivation for reading further than that. I've said many times (even if people don't believe me) that I have a great deal of respect for intelligent and thoughtful religious people, even if I disagree with them on some deep truths about the universe. But man, those people don't seem to get a lot of press, do they? The crazy stuff is much bigger box office, which perhaps is not a surprise.

Neutrinos and antineutrinos! That kills me. Everyone knows that Jesus shifted through the extra dimensions onto another brane, where he chilled for three days before coming back.

CATEGORIZED UNDER: Religion, Science and Society
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