

The 'tone' of contributions

As a relative newcomer to *CEN Tech. J.*, I am glad to find an excellent publication, though marred for me personally, and I suspect others, by the 'tone' of responses and counter-responses to some articles. I would like to ask your correspondents to consider a little more carefully how they word what they write, and avoid getting so carried away with 'winning' their adversarial point that they lose their hallmark of Christian charity.

Whatever our sober estimates of ourselves and the importance of the message that we 'burn' to get across, the truth is that ... none of us is omniscient, and any lasting value our work has is attributable to Christ — no one else! If our communication is corrupted with self-justification or invective, it fails to glorify Jesus and is useless — *'though I have ... all knowledge ... and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing'* (1 Cor. 13:2).

I can appreciate that it is galling for many hours of carefully crafted work to be ignorantly rubbished, misconstrued or misunderstood. God's word insists that all things happen for good and so, dear Author, whether your work makes an impact or not, God's purpose will be being achieved, and we should rejoice in that. None of us should try to 'prove' our worth, because God is no 'respector of persons', and, to the contrary, we have an obligation to love and esteem others better than ourselves [Phil. 2:3].

I'd like to appeal to all writers to look through back issues of this journal and determine whether or not this appraisal is a fair one and act accordingly. Perhaps, if felt appropriate, the editor could add a suitable phrase or two to the 'Instructions to Authors' printed on the inside back cover of each issue.

As Job's comforters discovered, truth does not perish with us: God delights in the good work of writing



A note from the editors — play the ball, not the man

We are in broad agreement with the sentiments in the first letter, and (as our instructions to authors now indicate) we do wish to actively discourage this sort of thing henceforth. We have already resisted publishing some contributions for that very reason.

We were in a dilemma with this *TJ* issue, having already received the letters (following) on the 'Starlight and Time' controversy. In the end, we decided to publish them this once, especially since various authors were claiming to be defending themselves against similar personal attack.

However, in future, submitted items which feature similar *ad hominem* statements will almost certainly be either rejected or require rewriting.

Speaking of *ad hominem*, we

received an item for publication from Del Ratzsch, of Calvin College, the author of the book *The Battle of Beginnings*. Ratzsch is critical of the review of his book by Carl Wieland which we published in 12(1):23-28, 1995. Among other things, the item claimed that the reviewer repeatedly cast doubt on the author's integrity.

We decided not to publish the submission. First, because it had already been published elsewhere (intending contributors take note). Secondly, because (as stated) we are trying to pare down/eliminate emotive issues in this journal. Dr Wieland says, *'My comments concerned what I perceive as the author's bias (not necessarily all conscious) toward theistic evolution (the view stridently pushed by his College). While standing by my general opinion of the book, no personal offence was intended.'*

He's prepared some of us to excel in it, but only if executed in grace. Let's make the *Technical Journal* excellent in both content and the 'tone' it is presented in!

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Humphreys' new vistas of space

In his recently published article,¹ D. Russell Humphreys makes some disparaging assertions about me and my associates, and I would like the opportunity to respond.

Long before [Humphreys' book] *Starlight and Time* went to the publisher, I reviewed the work and encouraged Humphreys to change his mind about publishing. I based my appeal on well established, well understood science, including the fact that the universe is filled with

'clocks' (time-dependent phenomena in stars and galaxies) that refute Humphreys' fundamental premise about time variations in the history and 'geography' of the cosmos. Humphreys dodged the issues I raised, diverted to side issues, and eventually resorted to attacking my expertise as a scientist, as well as my character and theology.

I am 'disturbed' (as he says) but not at all 'threatened' (scientifically, intellectually, or in any other way) by *Starlight and Time*. My motive is to save the Christian community, including Humphreys himself, from embarrassment and from unnecessary scorn. Since Humphreys had no respect for my views on his work, in early 1995 I asked four physicists (all of whom accept the five doctrinal statements which appear on the inside front cover of your journal) to appeal directly to Humphreys. They reviewed his material in detail and concluded that it should be withdrawn. While Sam Conner (MIT doctoral candidate in astrophysics) wrote the technical