(Matthew 28:19).

I have many Korean friends who are philosophers, astronomers, and physicists and are born-again Christians. Ultimately, their logic is based on the belief that we cannot explain everything with our scientific knowledge. Although there have been enormous advances in all scientific disciplines, we humans, they say, don't know everything. If God exists (which skeptics cannot easily disprove), then every miracle in the Bible is possible. Furthermore, they all know the agnostic view of Bertrand Russell and atheistic views of many famous scholars, and they boast that they have overcome these satanic temptations. I neither think that my achievement in science is better than those born-again scientists, nor do I think I’m smarter than them. Then why do they so firmly believe those events in the Bible that I reject?

The answer lies in human weakness. Throughout the Bible, those who had great faith received great rewards from God. Belief can make any scientific genius blind. Once they start, they strengthen their belief by exercising many rituals, which are self-brain-washing procedures. I was shocked by the mottos posted on their walls: “Doubt creates mountains, but faith removes the mountains,” and “Live by faith, not by sight.” How many educated people have tried to cure their physical diseases by prayers and supernatural healing powers? I know several cases that required many years of “deprogramming.”

These born-again scientists cope well with scientific discoveries that apparently conflict with biblical stories. All they have to do is look up and find any verses that may have some relevance. If there are no applicable verses in the Bible, then the discoveries may be wrong. They say that God creates and man only tries to discover. They believe that all will be revealed after they enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and that their work is similar to Sisyphus’ effort to reach the summit, which is never achievable. Sometimes they argue this using the uncertainty principle in quantum mechanics!

Another important reason for the recent growth in religion is a “You have nothing to lose” spirit. The eternal life that God promised is infinite relative to our earthly life span. How can you miss this opportunity, given the eternal condemnation that is in store for non-believers?

There are linguistic, anthropologic, historic, archeologic, and social scientific analyses of the Bible. Most Christian arguments are based on the belief that the Bible was written by prophets with the assistance of the Holy Spirit—therefore everything in the Bible is literally true. Ironically these studies were originally carried out by theologians. They reveal many contradictions, errors, and political agendas of prophets who wrote the Bible. These studies are well summarized in such recent books as Who Wrote the Bible by Richard E. Friedman and Bandits, Prophets, Messiahs by Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson.

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Soon we are going to live in the twenty-first century. We are now witnessing the dismantling of Eastern Europe’s aged dogma. Yet millennia-old Christian dogma stands strong in the United States and is expanding in Korea.

Koreans have been bombarded only by Christian material for a long time. We should educate and communicate with the religious. We should also show believers and unbelievers in Korea clear humanist visions and values that can be alternatives to religion, so that we and our descendants can live happily and prosperously without being abused by dogmatic religions.

Critical comments by Dr. David Batchelor at GSFC/NASA were very important for this article.

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**Humanism in Nigeria**

**Tai Solarin**

I would be flattering myself if I declared myself the only humanist in Nigeria. More honestly, I am the only known Nigerian who declares from rooftops that he is a humanist. I was sacked as the headmaster of a boys’ school for refusing to march the students to church on Sunday and to start the day with hymns and prayers from orthodox sources.

My wife, Sheila, and I then founded a high school in 1956, named the Mayflower School in memory of the ship that sailed from England to America via Amsterdam in 1620. Its passengers were seeking a haven from religious shackles. The Mayflower was a boys’ school for the first two years; the girls joined in the third year. It was fully residential. (All that’s needed by way of accommodations in a tropical land is a roof above, a concrete floor below, and walls richly perforated with windows.)

Tai Solarin is a social critic who writes for the Guardian and Punch magazine in Nigeria.

Popular opinion held that the school, being man-led, would fold. Rather, it has grown stronger with the years. It started with sixty-nine boys. There are now almost two thousand students, some eight hundred of them girls. The day begins with a two-minute silence during which students from religious homes—Christian and Muslim—silently say their greeting to the deities. The day’s announcements follow.

We ran the school for twenty years before I retired. Sheila remained on the staff for the next four years before she transferred to head another school.

Mayflower is still run as a secular school, the only one in Nigeria, teaching neither the Christian nor Muslim religion. If there are as many as two thousand high schools in the land, Mayflower numbers among the top three. It produced Nigeria’s first female engineer and more doctors and scientists than any other school—and some of the others are more than one hundred years old—in the country.

Humanism has been proved colossally tall. ---