Contemporary Comments

"God as Artist" | March 17, 2012 | Order Info

**Text:** Isaiah 64:5-8; Psalms 51:10; Hebrews 8:1-5; 1 Chronicles 23:5; Romans 11:33-36; Acts 9:1-22.

Do you think that if you worked for National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), it would confirm your belief that God created the universe? It certainly seems to have done so for David Coppedge. He worked as a computer specialist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and was given the assignment to team lead for the Cassini mission that explored Saturn and its many moons. But he lost his team title in 2009, and was let go last year, after investing 15 years in the mission.1

Coppedge says he was discriminated against because he struck up conversations with coworkers about intelligent design, and handed out DVDs on the topic at work. "Intelligent design" is the theory that life is too complex to have developed through evolution, and that a higher power must have had a hand in creation. This week Coppedge took the JPL to Los Angeles Superior court, seeking attorney fees and costs, as well as damages for wrongful termination. But it's not just about the money. He's also requesting a statement from the judge that his rights were violated.

Coppedge's attorney, William Becker, contends that employers singled out his client because they felt his belief in intelligent design was based in religion. Coppedge had a reputation around JPL as an evangelical Christian, and interactions with co-workers led some to label him as a Christian conservative. But Becker defended him, stating, "He did not go around evangelizing or proselytizing. But if he found out that someone was a Christian he would say, 'Oh that's interesting, what denomination are you?"' Becker argued, "Employees shouldn't be threatened with termination and punished for sharing their opinion with willing co-workers just because the view being shared doesn't fit the prevailing view in the workplace. He's not apologizing for who he is. He's an evangelical Christian."2

Although the JLP dismissed Coppedge's accusations, and cited other reasons for his demotion and firing, the case is generating support for both sides. The National Center for Science Education rejects intelligent design, and is watching the trial with great interest. But a Christian civil rights group, The Alliance Defense Fund, and the Discovery group—both advocates of intelligent design—are supporting Coppedge.

As Christians, we concur with Coppedge—that what we view in space didn't happen by chance. There was an Artist who planned and spoke all of it into existence. We learned in this week's lesson that God truly is an artist. God was a potter, when man was formed from the dust of the ground—In God's own image! God was an architect, when guiding Moses in building a glorious earthly sanctuary. God was a musician, inspiring David to write the sacred psalms. And God was an author, speaking through humans to write the Bible.

But perhaps God's greatest role in the arts is God as sculptor of human lives. We may think it's amazing when we look into space, but what an even greater wonder it is that God can take a sinful man or woman, and remake them into a new creation!

~ nc

Additional resource: Cassini's Mission to Saturn [YouTube](http://www.creativeministry.org/article/1764/store/small-group-tools/contemporary-comments/...)

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1. MSNBC
2. Christian Post

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