

without being policed. No doubt an array of chemical messengers (known as 'pheromones') are at work to stimulate the appropriate behaviours, but it still remains well nigh miraculous that such a complex society can function without continuous supervision.

Some scientists have speculated that understanding the social organisation of such creatures as the leafcutter ant could have valuable lessons for organising complex human activities such as factory production systems. In fact, of course, the

ultimate supervisor of the ants is the Creator Who designed and made their complex, interconnected life systems, and all humans would undoubtedly benefit from imitating their unswerving adherence to His laws, as proclaimed in His Word:

"There are four things which are little
on the earth,
But they are exceedingly wise:
The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the
summer . . ." (Prov. 30:24,25 NKJV).

More on Mars and microbes*

Malcolm Edwards

IF NASA'S PLANS work out, a spacecraft named *Phoenix* will touch down on the northern pole cap of the planet Mars in May 2008. The two major objectives of this particular landing will be to study the water history of the planet and to search once again for evidence of microbial life. To assist in this research, the spacecraft will have a robotic arm that can excavate Martian soil to a depth of half a metre and extend outwards to as much as two metres. The timing of the landing will be late in the Martian spring, to allow maximum time for the exploration before the winter arrives and the spacecraft becomes encased in ice.

One suspects that it is always the lure of discovering life on the planet that provides the funding for these explorations; thus the possibilities, however faint, will always be exaggerated in reports. Two earlier rovers, *Spirit* and *Opportunity*, still active on the surface of the planet, have, after about three and a half years of searching, found nothing to confirm theories about life on Mars. Yet evolutionists in particular will eagerly await reports of the new initiative. If primitive life is found to exist or to have existed elsewhere than on Planet Earth, especially in the barren Martian landscape, they would claim that the theory of spontaneous generation of life is proven and Intelligent Creation refuted.

Finding existing life anywhere in space, however, does not and cannot prove how it originated, and most certainly does not prove it originated from any so-called prebiotic soup. In fact such theories are not directly related to evolution; it has been rightly said that Darwin's book *The Origin of Species* is actually not about the *origin* of life.

Microbiologists today know full well that what has been termed 'primitive life' is nothing of the kind when viewed through a high-powered microscope. At any level it is highly complex and remarkably organised.

In his book, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, microbiologist Dr Michael Denton comments on this subject:

"Considering the way the prebiotic soup is referred to in so many discussions of the origin of life as an already established reality, it comes as something of a shock to realize that there is absolutely no positive evidence for its existence".

Again:

"The most difficult aspect of the origin of life problem lies not in the origin of the soup but in the stages leading from the soup to the cell. Between the basic building blocks, amino acids, sugars and other simple organic compounds used in the construction of the cell, and the simplest known types of living systems there is an immense discontinuity".

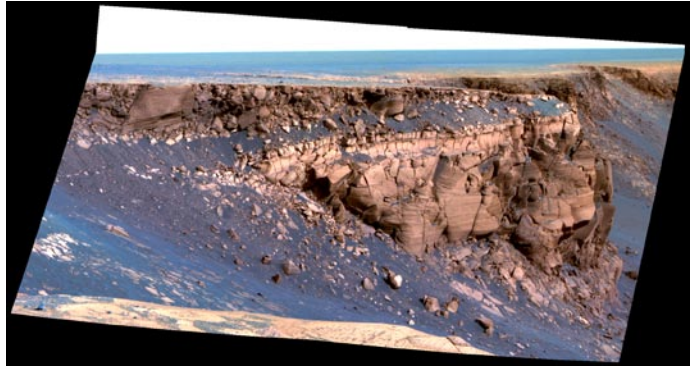
Denton quotes Professor Frances Crick, one of the first scientists to propose that life came from outer space, as saying in his book *Life Itself*:

"An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going".

* See "[Man's quest for life on Mars](#)", Malcolm Edwards, Apr. 2004, p. 125.

The problem facing evolutionists about life occurring by chance on any planet is not only the staggering odds against it happening at all, but the additional odds against its survival in a hostile environment. For example, the oxygen content of Earth's atmosphere is twenty-one per cent. According to Denton, any such complicated organic life appearing in our atmosphere would almost immediately be oxidised and degraded. The Mars atmosphere, however, contains only 0.2 per cent oxygen, which is why scientists hoped to find life there. But Denton points out that having little or no oxygen would mean no protective ozone layer in the upper atmosphere of Mars, in which case organic compounds would be open to lethal doses of ultraviolet radiation.

Thus evolutionary theory about how life began faces massive improbabilities, which become impossibilities as man delves deeper into microscopic life. But the most incredible of all is that such life would have to be so well ordered and complex as to arrive equipped with the ability to replicate itself and to go on doing so, driven by



Picture: NASA

The inhospitable rocky edge of a crater on Mars, photographed by NASA's Exploration Rover Opportunity in May this year.

some unknown inner evolutionary force towards ever greater complexity.

One creationist view expressed it this way: "If life is found on Mars, God has put it there, or else man himself has taken it there on his many space probes". Perhaps a simpler creationist view is that, since God is the Creator of all life as well as the universe itself, wherever life exists it is there because of His prerogative, for whatever reason He wishes, and we must be content to leave it at that.

Important changes

We are changing the magazine's subscription year so that it runs from **March to February** instead of from January to December. This will take effect from next year. Subscriptions for the present year will therefore run until **February 2008**, with renewed subscriptions commencing in **March 2008**. Existing subscribers will have their subscriptions extended by **two months free of charge** to cover January and February 2008. Why change? Most Christadelphian magazines come up for renewal at the end of the calendar year, and those who wish to subscribe to more than one magazine are faced with considerable expenditure. We hope that giving the *Testimony* a renewal date different from other magazines will make it more affordable.

Renewal forms and renewal information for ecclesias will thus be issued somewhat later than in previous years. As the turn of the year is the major holiday time for southern hemisphere ecclesias, we will send renewal information to these ecclesias earlier than for other countries. Also, there will no longer be a slightly cheaper rate for ecclesial parcels in the UK; all subscriptions will be charged at the same rate. Changes in distribution and postal arrangements mean that there are no longer the savings there once were for multiple copies.

Going to a new printer this year has enabled us to take advantage of up-to-date technology to improve the appearance of the magazine considerably, particularly for illustrations. We hope that readers will have noticed and appreciate this. Our costs have risen, but we feel that the magazine still offers excellent value for money. We need, however, to maintain, and if possible increase, our subscription numbers to enable us to keep future subscription price rises down to a minimum. To this end we will be sending sample copies of the magazine to all recording brethren together with subscription details. This will include an offer of free 3-month trial subscriptions and the offer of a free DVD of back issues to all new subscribers.

We hope that all readers will both continue to support the magazine and encourage others to take out a subscription.—*Tony Benson*.