

Campfires In The Sahara Darkness

By Van Yandell

John 1: 5 “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” In a recent article the concept of the speed of darkness was addressed. As we know, darkness is motionless while light is constantly moving.

At the speed of light, 186,282 miles per second, we can only see about 300 years back in time when looking up at our visible night sky. Some astronomers believe the universe is 93 billion light years across because they can see 46 ? billion light years with their telescopes.

Of course we’re not in the center of the universe and the truth is we really don’t know where we are.

The problem is, those galaxies emitted the light seen by astronomers 46 ? billion years ago and they possibly are different now or moved to another point in the universe or do not exist at all.

Some astronomers believe the universe is expanding faster than the speed of light. If true, no one alive today or in what future that mankind has left on earth will ever know the actual size.

Psalm 90: 2 “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” With many Bible verses we can only speculate on some of the content but in this case it is very clear; God is eternal.

If God is everlasting/eternal as stated in Psalm 90: 2, Isaiah 40: 28 and 1 Timothy 1: 17, why would it be irrational to believe the universe is eternal and infinite?

We cannot see to the outer edges of the universe because it is not where it was 46 ? billion years ago so we’ll never know how big it is or if there is an end point.

Of course we humans operate in a time frame so we think we have to place everything in a time frame with a beginning point and an ending point. Nonsense! God is eternal; so there is no beginning or end with Him.

Genesis 1: 1 and John 1: 1 begin with the same words: “In the beginning.” We do not know when that was. God had no beginning because He is eternal and He will have no end.

Could “In the beginning” be referring to the entire universe? It’s reasonable to believe that; if you’re wrong it will not affect your eternal destination. What you believe about Christ Jesus is what matters.

Christians must always teach that eternal salvation is attained by a faith based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) in Christ Jesus crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (1 John 1: 9), resurrected (Matthew 28: 6) and ascended alive into Heaven (Acts 1: 9).

Perhaps “In the beginning” is referring to the earth and the earth’s atmosphere or the solar system (sun, moons and planets),

the galaxy or the visible night. Does it really matter? We should admit there are some things we do not know and only have opinions or speculations.

One common product in our universe is heat (burning hydrogen) and the light it emits. Without light we could not exist. It sustains our physical bodies, it produces food for our sustenance and it provides visibility.

A unit of light is a photon. Photons have no mass or electric charge, but they carry energy and momentum.

On earth we exist in three dimensions: length, height and width. In outer space there is a fourth dimension: time. Distance is measured in light years. Because of the vastness of space, humans cannot conceptualize in terms/measurements we normally use.

One light year is the distance light travels in one year which is about 5.83 trillion miles. The distance to our nearest solar neighbor, Proxima Centauri is 4.3 light years or a little over 25 trillion miles.

Light is a fascinating concept considering we are exposed to it about 2/3 of every day. We tend to not notice the physical, psychological, and other conceptual influences it has on our existence.

People living in extreme northern and southern latitudes are exposed to darkness about six months of every year. We are told many in those areas suffer emotional problems mostly because

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of the long periods of darkness.

Fish living under water in caves, in some places, have not only lost their eyesight, but actually have no eyes. After millions of years in that environment of perpetual darkness they apparently evolved.

We find it interesting to observe parts of the world that have an abundance of lighting and others that do not. One summer not long ago I had a night flight from Chicago to Nashville and another that same year from Detroit to Nashville. It was impossible to tell where one town/city ended and another began. The eastern U.S. is like one big light fixture.

On a flight to Rio de Janeiro, flying over the Amazon jungle, the only light I saw was lightning strikes. On flights from various European gateways, over the Sahara desert to Nairobi, the desert floor was totally black dark.

On one flight I saw small flickers of yellow light in the desert. Wondering what they were, it soon became obvious they were camp-

fires.

Nomads live in the desert in North Africa and in the Middle East much like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did 4000 years ago. Some of them herd animals while others are caravans.

Those little flickers of light could remind us of ourselves. Matthew 5: 14 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” Jesus was talking to His disciples telling them they have a responsibility to teach the truth and to guide others.

You may be that flicker of light in the desert for someone. Never un-

derestimate your ability and God given power (Acts 1: 8a) to help someone have a better life. Jesus told Ananias of Saul/Paul (Acts 9: 15) “He is my chosen vessel to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.”

Are you a “chosen vessel?” The power you influence to the Gospel of our Jesus will be just as important to God as any won by the Apostle Paul.

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and missionary from Freedomia, Kentucky. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Sealed Bids for a new UC Fairground Bleacher Foundation Rebid will be received by the Union County Fiscal Court until 8:30 a.m. Central Standard Time on Tuesday, September 9, 2025. They will be publicly read in Union County Fiscal Court, 2nd floor of the Union County Courthouse, 100 West Main Street, Morganfield, KY on September 9, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

The Contract Documents, including technical specifications and drawings, may be examined at the following locations:

Union County Judges Office
100 West Main Street
Morganfield, KY 42437

Copies of the Contract Documents may be obtained at the office of Union County Judges Office, 100 West Main Street, Morganfield, Kentucky 42437. Copies may be obtained via email by emailing jill.hunley@unioncountyky.gov.

The project manager for this project is Sean Sheffer, P.E. Any questions or concerns should be directed towards Mr. Sheffer who can be reached by email at sean.sheffer@unioncountyky.gov.

The Union County Fiscal Court shall reserve the right to waive informalities and to reject any or all bids. 9/3c

Union County Planning Commission Audit Report

For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Greg L. Yates, CPA
Patrick T. Whalen, CPA
James R. Hite, CPA



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Director
Union County Planning Commission

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities of the Union County Planning Commission, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Union County Planning Commission's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities of the Union County Planning Commission, as of June 30, 2024, and the respective changes in financial position, and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Union County Planning Commission and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Union County Planning Commission's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgement made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Union County Planning Commission's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Union County Planning Commission's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the budgetary comparison schedules, schedules of net pension and OPEB liabilities and contributions on pages 8 and 19 through 22, be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Management has omitted management's discussion and analysis that accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require to be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such missing information, although

not part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. Our opinion on the basic financial statements is not affected by the missing information.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated July 1, 2024, on our consideration of the Union County Planning Commission's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Union County Planning Commission's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Union County Planning Commission's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Clayton, Byrd & Meeks, LLP

Clayton, Byrd & Meeks, LLP
Paducah, Kentucky
June 26, 2025

Union County Planning Commission Statement of Activities and Government Fund Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances Year Ended June 30, 2024

| | Operating Fund | Adjustments | Statement of Net Position |
|---|----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Revenues | | | |
| Intergovernmental | \$ 263,388 | \$ - | \$ 263,388 |
| Other income | 2,195 | - | 2,195 |
| Earnings on investments | 365 | - | 365 |
| Total Revenues | 265,948 | - | 265,948 |
| Expenditures | | | |
| Advertising | 625 | - | 625 |
| Auto expense | 791 | - | 791 |
| Board of adjustment reimbursement | 600 | - | 600 |
| Commission reimbursement | 1,230 | - | 1,230 |
| Computer supplies | 3,535 | - | 3,535 |
| Depreciation expense | - | 441 | 441 |
| Insurance-health | 45,919 | - | 45,919 |
| Maintenance | 4,536 | - | 4,536 |
| Office expense | 588 | - | 588 |
| Payroll taxes | 9,972 | - | 9,972 |
| Postage | 283 | - | 283 |
| Professional fees | 9,063 | - | 9,063 |
| Public liability insurance | 6,251 | - | 6,251 |
| Publications and dues | 785 | - | 785 |
| Retirement & other post retirement benefits | 30,434 | (93,899) | (63,465) |
| Salaries | 130,171 | 197 | 130,368 |
| Telephone | 3,751 | - | 3,751 |
| Workers' compensation insurance | 370 | - | 370 |
| Unemployment insurance | 948 | - | 948 |
| Total Expenditures | 249,852 | (93,261) | 156,591 |
| Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures | 16,096 | (16,096) | - |
| Change in Net Position | - | 109,357 | 109,357 |
| Fund Balances/Net Position - Beginning of Year | 36,903 | (329,113) | (292,210) |