



“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1)

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

AUGUST 2003

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Dr. Ross Returns

Hugh Ross will visit the area in September. September 11th he will speak at Christ Memorial Church in Poulsbo. September 12th, he will speak at Sequim Presbyterian Church. Both events begin at 7:00 PM. For more information or directions, see our chapter webpage at www.reason.org/seattle or email us at seattle@reasons.org.

Team Building

We're looking for people who want to help spread the word that science and Bible agree. Regardless of your age, background or skills, we invite you to join us. We will be meeting throughout the fall to plan events and discuss how we can best serve the Puget Sound area. If this interests you, contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

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Intuitions of Hope

PAT LEWIS

The Universe has a destiny. It must come inevitably to an end. So say astronomers and cosmologists—the same scientists who during the last century discovered its beginning which we call the Big Bang.

Depending on the Universe's mass density and other factors, that end will come either by collapse in a “Big Crunch” or by unceasing expansion and cooling, a “Big Chill.” Recent studies suggest the end will come by expansion and eventual decay into low-grade radiation. However it comes, though, the end is certain.

“Hope has its basis in trust in the love of God.”

What is the Christian's response to this pronouncement of doom? Carbon-based life has advanced in complexity for over three billion years and we have seen gratifying human progress within history, yet all this amounts to no more than a stay of execution of a sentence of utter futility. Cosmologist Steven Weinberg says the more he understands the Universe, the more it seems to him to be pointless. Other scientists express similar despair because lasting fulfillment is just not possible. When science sees so bleak a future, where can humanity look for hope?

Dr. John Polkinghorne has written on this subject in his book *The God of Hope and the End of the World*. It is in Christian teaching we may look for hope. What is ultimate is not physical processes but the will and purpose of the Creator. God's final intentions will no more be frustrated by cosmic death on a timescale of billions of years than they are by human death on a timescale of tens of years.

The hope offered us by theology must be distinguished from mere optimism or wishful thinking. For the Christian, hope has its basis in trust in the love of God (Rom. 5:3-5). We face the certainty of death, yet find within ourselves aspirations that point beyond that curtailment, refusing to grant the last word to human finitude. This life is too hurtful and incomplete to be the whole story. What are we to make

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of those whose lives are tragically cut short, or grievously oppressed and distorted by their circumstances? They too must have their share in the kingdom of God. In fact all of us will be likewise unfulfilled even if we have good fortune and die at a pious old age. We shall all die with unfinished business and incompleteness in our lives. There must be more to hope for.

Polkinghorne borrows an illustration from Peter Berger. A child is frightened by a bad dream. His mother soothes him, saying, "It's all right." But is the mother being honest, or is she telling a loving lie? Can it truly be all right when life is certain to bring disappointment, sickness, evil and inescapable death? Perhaps "it's all right" is a signal of transcendence, an intuition of a realm not bounded by the horizon of mortality. In the end all shall be well.

Impersonal science cannot deny the uniqueness of personhood. We are self-conscious, God-conscious beings in a way that our animal cousins are not. Our hope depends not only in belief in a faithful Creator but also in belief in the value of each human being. Nothing of good will ever be lost in the Lord. Completion can be attained only if we have a continuing and developing personal relationship with God post mortem. We all need his sanctifying and redeeming touch beyond this world.

Consider our comprehension of Jesus' life if we had been told nothing of his resurrection. We would be left wondering: Was He defeated? Was He deluded? Or what exactly was He? The prospective end of the universe offers an analogy. Are the deep order of the world, and the fruitfulness of its history, hints of its being a creation, or were they just happy accidents in a meaningless process? Are human intuitions of hope windows into a divine reality or merely comforting illusions? If the universe really is God's creation, this ambiguity will have to be resolved.

Polkinghorne suggests four propositions: (1) If the universe is a creation, it must make sense everlastingly and so ultimately it must be redeemed from transience and decay. (2) If human beings are creatures loved by their Creator, they must have a destiny beyond their deaths. (3) Individuals must share in the life to come as their true selves, redeemed and resurrected, and the life to come must be free from the suffering and mortality of the old creation. (4) The only ground for such a hope lies in the steadfast love and faithfulness of God that is testified to by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christians have promises for a glorious future that cast a different light on the depressing fate predicted for our earthly home. Paul says, "The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope. Because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19,20). Who knows what wonders the Creator has in store? Let us meditate on these things and draw near to our Lord in full assurance of faith!

Pat Lewis is retired. Previously, she worked as research technologist at the University of Washington. She is an amateur astronomer and an active member of the chapter.

WHO CONVENTION

STAN SHIPLEY

In June, the chapter sponsored a booth at the Washington Homeschool Organization (WHO) convention. It was held at the Western WA Fair Grounds in Puyallup. This two-day event is the largest gathering of this type in the state, drawing over 2,000 homeschoolers.

Over 120 exhibitors participated, offering a wide range of homeschool curricula packages and educational products. The convention is non-sectarian, although many of the vendors were Christian. As expected, most of the science materials offered by Christian exhibitors was young-Earth.

Our goal in participating was to inform people about RTB and make them aware there is a Biblically-faithful alternative to young-Earth science. We also hoped to talk to unbelievers about science and the Bible issues. In our booth, we handed-out informational materials about RTB and sold a variety of educational books and videos (both RTB and non-RTB).

Many people visited the booth. Some were aware of RTB and were thrilled to see us at the convention. Many had never heard of RTB and wanted to learn more about the ministry. A few had negative comments about RTB, mostly other exhibitors who were promoting the young-Earth view.

Overall, it was a very positive experience. Reaching out to the homeschool community is one of our chapter priorities and the event gave us great exposure. We plan to attend again next year. During the convention, one parent walked past our booth and said in a loud voice, "Believe in what?" Maybe that parent will stop by next year so we can answer that question.

Stan Shipley is a retired Boeing engineer. He is a trained apologist and an active member of the chapter.

The Need for Unity

GREG MOORE

Christians disagree. This is not surprising given the breadth and depth of Christian doctrine. Nor is it something new. Throughout church history Christians have debated a wide range of issues. In fact, this is one of the things that sets Christianity apart from the other world religions. While other religions require “group think,” Christianity allows for differences of opinion.

Of course, not everything is open to debate. Some beliefs are so central to the Christian faith a person must accept them to be a Christian. These are the *essential doctrines* the Bible explicitly states are necessary for salvation—the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, salvation by grace, and the Gospel. Although there are other things Christians should believe to be faithful to Scripture, these are the doctrines that define orthodox Christianity.

There is a time for division in the body of Christ. When an individual or group denies the *essential doctrines* we should divide ourselves from them because they are outside the camp of Christ. We should also break fellowship with those who are in open rebellion to God and His word, such as denominations that openly accept homosexuality. In fact, the Bible tells us divisions in the church are healthy thing: “For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.” (1 Cor. 11:19)

The problem is some Christians take this too far. It is perfectly acceptable to have differences of opinion on non-essential matters like worship style, views of the rapture, predestination or freewill, and the length of the creation days. Whether you believe one view or another, it is not a salvation issue. Yet, far too many Christians use these non-essential differences as grounds for pointing an accusatory finger at other Christians. Why? Perhaps it’s a pride issue—they are more interested in being “right” than being gracious to their Christian brothers or sisters.

With this in mind, I am disturbed by the constant, personal attacks on Dr. Ross and the RTB ministry by some members of the young-Earth community. In a recent article titled, “The Enemy Within,” a prominent young-Earth leader accuses Dr. Ross of “deadly compromise teachings” and “distorting the truth in order to draw away disciples.” He goes on to say Dr. Ross represents “the enemy from within,” an enemy “more dangerous and destructive” than any from outside the church. In my opinion, such charges border on slander.

While I appreciate the young-Earth zeal for defending the Bible, I disagree with these tactics. On what basis do they claim their view is the only acceptable view of the days of Genesis? It can’t be on the basis of

See THE NEED FOR UNITY, page 6

APOLOGETICS TOOL KIT

Webcast

Join Hugh Ross each Tuesday for the *Creation Update* webcast: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (PT) at www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation_update.

Newsletter

Subscribe to RTB’s free newsletter, *Connections*. Phone 626-335-1480 or sign up electronically at www.reasons.org/forms/maillist.html?main.

Free Training

RTB’s *Science and Bible Apologetics Training Course* is available free through the chapter. Contact us at seattle@reasons.org for more information.

Websites

Here are other old-Earth websites to check out:

- www.accuracyingenesis.com
- www.answers.org/newlook/NEWLOOK.HTM#top
- www.arn.org
- www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/Wiens.html
- www.bibleandscience.com
- www.christianity.co.nz/science.htm
- www.cowbbq.org/index.htm
- www.evidence.info
- www.evidenceofgod.com
- www.genesisfoundation.org/ie4.html
- www.geocities.com/athens/thebes/7755/index.html
- www.geocities.com/darrickdean/relsci.html
- www.geocities.com/vr_junkie/thebibleandscience.htm
- www.gps.caltech.edu/~tisco/yeclaimsbeta.html
- www.ibri.org
- www.kiva.net/~kls/index.html
- www.leaderu.com
- www.lordibelieve.com
- <http://members.ozemail.com/au/~sjdando/CE.htm>
- www.newcreationism.org
- www.origins.org/index.html
- www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rossuk/creation.htm
- www.str.org
- www.swordandspirit.com

This is not an endorsement of these sites but, to our knowledge, they are Christian and worth checking out.

“Who is the Designer?” RTB’s June Conference

JEANNIE GLENN

Six or seven years ago, at the suggestion of my dad, I watched an interview of Dr. Robert Schuller talking with Dr. Hugh Ross about his ministry, Reasons To Believe. I was immediately intrigued by the concept Dr. Ross presented that God, as Creator of the universe and author of the Bible, conveys a consistent message about Himself through nature and His Word in order for us to know Him more fully. Following the interview, I bought and read two of Dr. Ross’ books, *The Creator and the Cosmos* and *Creation and Time*.

Only recently did the seed that was planted in my mind take root and begin to grow. After hearing Dr. Ross speak on two separate occasions in this area, I had a strong desire to learn about the wonder and majesty of God. This spring I enrolled in RTB’s apologetics training course which provides a comprehensive background on a variety of topics (differential equations, thankfully, not included!) to prepare future apologists to questions raised by skeptics. The course also serves up healthy portions of wonder and majesty, as you’re walked through mind-boggling astronomical facts and concepts. Shortly after beginning the course, I signed up to attend the “Who is the Designer?” conference in June.

The panel of scholars at the conference was impressive:

- Guillermo Gonzales (astrophysicist) and Jay Richards (philosopher) talked about what a “privileged” planet Earth is: Earth is in exactly the right place and time, not only for habitability, but also for viewing and analyzing the universe.
- Dr. Walter Bradley (chemist) described a few of the highly fine-tuned requirements for a cell’s acquiring and passing along information and how this presents a big problem for evolution.
- Dr. Ronald Nash’s (philosopher) presentations on “The Origin of the Human Mind” and “The God of Christianity” were very insightful.
- Dr. David Rogstad (physicist) described the obstacles “ET” would have to overcome to be the originator of life on earth—provided there could even be an “ET” in light of how unique the Earth is.
- Krista Bontrager (moderator of *Creation Update*) described testable scientific statements made by other religions and how, unlike those made in the Bible, they do not stand up to scientific testing.
- Kenneth Samples (philosopher) shared eloquent and thoughtful comments on “The Nature of Human Beings” (what made in the image of God means) and “The Challenge of Religious Pluralism” (why all religions cannot lead to God).
- Dr. Fuz Rana (biochemist) talked about biological convergence and how “repeated evolution” (the same designs used over and over) indicates design and a single Designer.
- Dr. Hugh Ross gave several talks highlighting the fact that the Christian faith is a *rational* faith, not a blind faith.

See RTB CONFERENCE, page 7

THE RED PLANET

This month Mars is getting progressively closer to Earth—an encounter that will culminate in the closest approach between the two planets in recorded history. Some astronomers believe Mars has not been this close in 60,000 years and won’t be again until the year 2287.



On August 27th, Mars will make its closest approach to Earth, coming to within about 34.65 million miles. Next to the moon, it will be the brightest object in the night sky. Backyard astronomers with good-sized telescopes should be able to make out some of the planet’s features, such as the polar ice cap, dark surface features and perhaps even ice storms.

To learn more about this “close encounter,” listen to 2-part interview with Dr. Ross on WRMB, a Christian radio station in Florida. Go to the RTB website at www.reasons.org and look in the “Ministry Update” box on the right. Scroll down to “Listen to interview with Dr. Ross: Close Encounter with Mars.”

On August 26-27, the Hubble Space Telescope will make observations of Mars. As soon as the images are digitally processed, they will be released to the public. Downloadable high-resolution files will be available at <http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/2003/22> beginning the 27th.

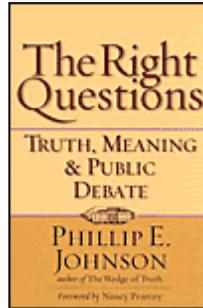
Mars is easy to spot because of its orange color. At the end of August, it will rise in the east at nightfall and reach its highest point in the sky at about 12:30 AM. That’s pretty convenient when it comes to seeing something that no human has seen in recorded history. This is a great opportunity to have a “star party” with your friends to show them how “the heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1).

Book Reviews

The Right Questions

Phillip E. Johnson
Intervarsity Press, 2002

Reviewer: Seth Cooper



Phillip Johnson first brought the philosophical aspect of the origins controversy to light in the 1990s with his book *Darwin on Trial*. One reason the book engendered such a hostile reaction from secular scientists is that it revealed how their views of life's origins are impacted more by their philosophical biases than the physical evidence. In his latest book, *The Right Questions*, Johnson continues his exposé of neo-Darwinism's continued dominance in academia through presuppositions and *a priori* commitments to naturalistic explanations of life's origin.

Given the immensely important scientific, social and cultural implications of neo-Darwinian evolution, Johnson believes we are entitled to have good reasons for believing it and should be allowed to question it. The problem is the naturalistic philosophy not only limits debate but the questions we can ask. Johnson explains his goal is not to persuade people evolution is not true, but to help them ask the right questions.

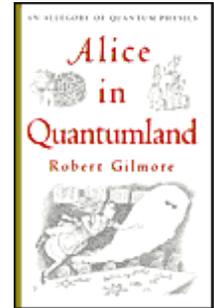
Is science the only source of knowledge or can theology also provide knowledge? Are the notions that testing and observation tell us the way things are based on prior first principles and philosophical commitments? If they are, why should we accept one set of principals and over another? According to Johnson, naturalism has a monopoly to lose and will fight to keep it, but the public has everything to gain from a civil and open debate of these and other questions.

The Right Questions is something of a departure from Johnson's previous books, in that it is a personal work. Some time ago, Johnson suffered a debilitating stroke. He describes his journey "through the shadow of the valley of death," as an experience that brought home to him the importance of life's ultimate purpose and meaning. It is an excellent resource for anyone who wants to challenge, or break free of, the naturalistic philosophy by learning to ask the right questions.

Alice in Quantumland

Robert Gilmore
Copernicus Books, 1995

Reviewer: Greg Moore



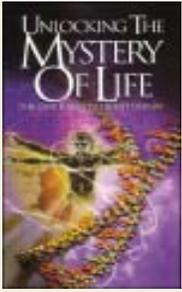
Most are familiar with Alice's adventures through the looking glass. In *Alice in Quantumland*, she embarks on another adventure. This time she shrinks down to the size of a nuclear particle and travels to Quantamland—an intellectual theme park where everything demonstrates a different aspect of quantum physics.

Many people are familiar with classical or Newtonian mechanics. It describes the movement of large objects and is used to predict the motion of planets, spacecraft and other things. However, few people have a good understanding of quantum mechanics which describes the nature of things at the atomic level. The problem is the way quantum theory describes the world is strange and difficult for the average person to comprehend.

Through the allegory of Alice's adventures, Gilmore helps explain the key concepts of quantum theory. Once in Quantumland, Alice experiences various quantum effects such as going backward in time and running into herself. She also meets a number of strange characters who help her understand the nature of the quantum world including the Uncertainty Principle, wave functions, the Pauli Principle and much more. For those who want a more thorough understanding of the concepts, Gilmore provides end-of-the-chapter notes which amplify the trickier points.

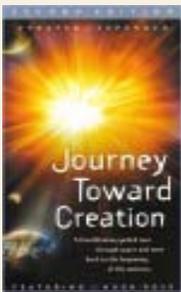
Some non-theists use quantum mechanics to propose fanciful theories that eliminate the need for a Creator. Few Christians are equipped to understand, let alone dispute, these claims. While *Alice in Quantumland* is not for everyone, it is an excellent resource for those who want to understand the basic concepts of quantum physics. I am no scientist, but I enjoyed it. The book is well written, fun to read and relatively easy to understand (if quantum physics can be truly understood).

HELPFUL TIDBITS



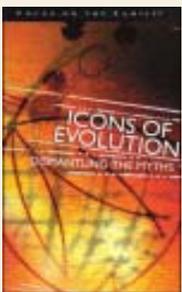
What if scientists discovered a “rotary motor” inside a human cell? See some of the surprises that awaited researchers when high-tech instruments gave them a close-up view of the cell’s intricate inner workings. This one-hour documentary powerfully illustrates the

Intelligent Design theory. Available from the RTB webstore in VHS or DVD.



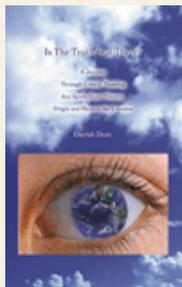
Is life in the universe common or rare? What are the odds of finding other Earth-like planets? Embark on an amazing journey, out in space and back in time, as Hugh Ross explores the astronomical evidence for a universe that has been meticulously fine-tuned for

the benefit of human life. Available from the RTB webstore in VHS or DVD.



Explore the conflict between ideology and science as high school biology teacher, Roger Dehart, challenges the “icons of evolution” which are marshaled as the best evidences for Darwinian evolution. *Icons of Evolution* takes viewers on a fascinating journey into the

hotbed of this controversy. Available from the RTB webstore in VHS or DVD.



We all have a worldview that affects our perception of what is true. In this new book, *Is the Truth Out There?*, RTB apologist Darrick Dean describes the tools Christians need to think critically. He also puts a number of science and the Bible issues to the test.

Available for \$16.95 from the iuniverse bookstore at www.iuniverse.com/bookstore.

THE NEED FOR UNITY, *Continued from page 3*

Scripture since many prominent, conservative Bible scholars see the day/age view as a perfectly acceptable interpretation of Genesis 1. More importantly, on what basis do they condemn those who disagree with their interpretation of Genesis? Clearly, this is a non-essential issue regardless of the gymnastics they go through to try to turn it into a salvation issue.

Romans 14:1-12 exhorts us to accept Christians with different opinions and not to judge them because, “To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind....But you, why do you judge your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.” We need to move beyond the bickering and focus on the things that unite us—Jesus Christ. Instead of saying, “I am right and you are wrong,” we should be saying, “It is certainly possible that you are correct.”

Some RTB supporters have criticized Dr. Ross for not aggressively responding to these attacks. To his credit, it is not because he is unable to but he wants to avoid division in the church. The mission of RTB is to use new scientific discoveries to draw people’s attention to the truth-claims of Scripture and to Jesus Christ—not to convert young-Earth Christians to the old-Earth view. A good example of this was Dr. Ross’ refusal to debate a well-known young-Earth “scientist” before a peer group of mainstream scientists. Although he did not say this to the person, he refused the debate because he did not want to put the “scientist” in a situation that would cast a bad light on him.

None of us is perfect and some old-Earth proponents are guilty of these same things. We need to look into our own hearts and minds and compare them to Jesus and the Bible. Wherever they disagree, it is we who need to change. We need to recognize we have differences of opinion and that is okay. But, we need to lift each other up, be united in Christ and avoid division over the non-essentials.

In the meantime, if you support Dr. Ross and the work of RTB, this is a great time to help the ministry financially. These attacks are taking a financial toll on RTB. Your gift will enable them to speak out, write powerfully and—just as importantly right now—to let more people know who they are and what they stand for. Invest and you’ll see the results. You can send donations to: Reasons to Believe, PO Box 5978, Pasadena, CA 91117. Thanks for your support!

Greg Moore works for the City of Everett. He is a trained apologist and president of the local chapter.

I felt buoyed virtually the entire time I was there. From their respective areas of study and experience, the speakers presented various attributes of the Designer—whom they confidently identified as Jesus Christ—that can be discerned by simple observation. The extreme level of design found in the universe and the world around us argues strongly that the Designer *intends* for us to discover Him. And there is joy in the discovery: for us, as our understanding of the Creator grows deeper; and for God, who delights in our getting to know Him more. I left the conference feeling spiritually uplifted and “intellectually hugged.” The Creator of a trillion galaxies wants me to fall in love with Him completely!

Through fellowshipping at church, digging into Bible study, and being active in organizations and activities which enable us to give back to our communities and invest in people’s lives, we’re regularly given so many opportunities to learn to love and serve God with all of our heart, soul and strength. Through Reasons To Believe’s ministry, I see an incredible way to learn to love and serve God with all of my *mind*, as well.

If you’re interested in checking out the presentations at this year’s conference, you can get them two ways:

- You can watch the presentations via internet. To register, go to www.reasons.org and look in the “Ministry Update” box on the right. Scroll down and click on “Register to watch full video of the RTB 2003 Conference.” The cost is \$79 which includes a download of the conference notebook (in .pdf format).
- You can listen to the presentations on audio tapes. To get the tapes, go to www.reasons.org and look in the “Ministry Update” box on the right. Scroll down and click on “Now available: audio tapes of the 2003 conference.” You can purchase an album with all 20 tapes for \$49.95, or you can purchase individual tapes for \$4.95 each.

Jeannie Glenn manages residential remodel projects for a local contractor. She is active in the chapter and training to be an apologist.

REASONS TO BELIEVE SEATTLE-AREA CHAPTER



Who Are We?

The Seattle-Area Chapter of Reasons to Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons to Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in Reasons to Believe. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of people of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His written word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and believe new scientific discoveries are adding to the already compelling case for the God of the Bible.

Reasons to Believe is at the forefront of these issues. We provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to naturalism and young-Earth creationism. We look forward to introducing you to the national organization and connecting with you at the local level.

What Do We Do?

The Seattle-Area Chapter exists to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove the barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other resources that are scientifically sound and faithful to Scripture.
- Providing a local team of trained apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Administering a free apologetics training course to help Christians shed their fear of science and use science to spread the Gospel.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of Darwinian evolution.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to skeptics and unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.