



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

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

APRIL 2007

What's Happening?

[Hugh Ross in Japan](#)

Hugh Ross will be traveling to Japan May 19-27 to conduct a series of lectures, including one at Tokyo University. This is being done in conjunction with the RTB apologists in Japan. If you would like to support this tremendous outreach effort, financially or otherwise, contact japan@reasons.org.

[Upcoming Meetings](#)

The Seattle Chapter plans to meet in late May or early June. The focus of the meeting will be Ken Sample's upcoming book, *A World of Difference*. The meeting will include a presentation on the content of the book—the question of whether all religions are true. Please plan to attend. More information will be forthcoming.

[We Do Presentations](#)

The Seattle chapter does presentations on a wide range of topics ranging from the scientific evidences for God, to the age of the earth debate. If your church or group is looking for speakers, contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

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Spirituality, Cosmic Origins and God Revealed

JON W. GREENE

[Note: This article will appear in two parts, this month and next.]

Twenty-first century America contains a plethora of diverse religions and worldviews, including secular humanism, New Age spirituality, Eastern mysticism, atheism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, and others. Conflicting truth-claims abound. Through television, the New Age philosophy of Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra invades our homes. Walk into a book store and you are confronted with the works of Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris promoting atheism. Dan Brown's hugely popular novel, *The DaVinci Code*, introduced elements of Gnosticism into our collective psyche and convinced untold millions of genuine untruths about historic Christianity. On top of that, televangelists daily promote the "health and wealth gospel" and other errant theology. In spite of claims and counter-claims, there continues to be broad interest in spirituality. Some estimate that nine out of ten American adults believe in God or "something out there."



It is said that an unexamined life is not worth living. The purpose of this paper is threefold: 1) Encourage truth-seekers to thoughtfully examine their own worldviews; 2) Call attention to striking new findings from cosmology that impact the foundational beliefs of various worldviews; and 3) Examine historic Christianity in light of what contemporary theological research has revealed about the capstone of Christianity—the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL BELIEFS IN TODAY'S POSTMODERN WORLD

The subject of worldviews is something you may not have considered much, and yet your worldview dictates your view of life. So what is a worldview? "A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world."¹ A worldview attempts to explain the great questions of life—questions relating to life, death, morality, knowledge, purpose, and

reality. Here we will examine various worldviews.

I. Three Predominant Worldviews

Theism²

In Judeo-Christian theology, theism is the belief in one eternal, self-existing, personal, transcendent God.³ Within theism, creation and Creator are distinct entities. God is regarded as a Personal Being—a “He,” not an “It”—with qualities of intelligence, consciousness, rationality, self-awareness, morality, will and volition. These qualities are mirrored in mankind, God’s creation.

God is both *transcendent* (above and separate from creation) and *immanent* (always involved in His creation). Creation is distinct from God, yet always dependent on Him. God’s transcendence and immanence are affirmed when Paul speaks of “one God and Father of us all, who is above all [transcendent] and through all and in all [immanence]” (Ephesians 4:6). Within theism, the universe is an “open system” of cause and effect. The transcendent God (cause) created the universe and ultimately everything within it (effect). Theism posits that God created the universe ex nihilo—from or out of nothing, from no previously existing matter or energy.

In theism, knowledge of God comes through revelation. Within Christianity, God reveals Himself through general revelation (the created world) and special revelation (His written word, the Bible, and the person of Jesus Christ). Christianity has subjective emotional dimensions, but is rooted in objective historical evidence that is open to evaluation. Francis Schaeffer writes, “It is very important to realize, over against modern concepts of ‘spiritual experience,’ that biblically-based experience rests firmly on truth. It is not only an emotional experience, nor is it content-less.”⁴

Theists believe moral values are “hard-wired” into man by God, the absolute Moral Lawgiver. These timeless values are universal—all men of all time and all cultures, back to antiquity, have a sense some things are right and some things are wrong.⁵

Naturalism

This philosophy has many names—materialism, atheism, secular humanism, and philosophical naturalism. The universe is a “closed system” with nothing external to it. Naturalists reject the existence of a Spiritual Being over and above the physical universe. Cosmologist Carl Sagan sums it up as, “The cosmos is all there is or ever was or ever will be.” Darwinism falls under the umbrella of materialism and posits that life evolved from purely naturalistic processes⁶—that primitive life self-generated in an ancient “primordial soup” and ultimately evolved into all life: “We came into being by random biological chance, live a relatively short life, then become fertilizer.”⁷

Naturalism holds to no absolute ethics or moral values—they are merely a matter of personal taste, determined by either individuals or societies. Therefore, man determines standards of morality and what is good & evil, right & wrong, not God. Academia has been heavily influenced by major thought-leaders of secular humanism: John Dewey, Paul Kurtz, Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley, Richard Dawkins, Margaret Sanger, Ted Turner, Alfred Kinsey, Abraham Maslow, and Erich Fromm to name a few. Society as a whole is blanketed by organizations that advocate and sustain secular humanism—the American Civil Liberties Union, National Academy of Sciences, National Center for Science Education, National Association of Biology Teachers, National Organization of Women, Planned Parenthood, and the National

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In the **NEWS...**

[Haeckel's Embryos](#)

Many Darwinists claim Haeckel’s embryos were never used in modern textbooks. This Discovery Institute article disputes that fact. Go to: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=3935&program=CSC%20-%20Scientific%20Research%20and%20Scholarship%20-%20Science>

[Global Warming](#)

This article by Hugh Ross addresses the question: how concerned do we really need to be about global warning? According to Ross, suggesting we can stop global warning by cutting back on fossil fuel combustion is naive at best. Go to http://www.reasons.org/resources/in_the_news/20061218_global_warming.shtml.

[Science and Religion](#)

This Breakpoint article by Regis Nicoll examines the issue of whether science and religion are adversaries or allies. As Nicoll points out, it was the Christian view of Scripture that led to the birth of modern science. Go to: <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=6385>.

[Public Education and Intelligent Design](#)

This article by Francis J. Beckwith examines the question of whether ID would pass constitutional muster if permitted or required as part of public school curriculum. Interesting read! Available on the Discovery Institute site. Go to: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2131&program=CSC%20-%20Scientific%20Research%20and%20Scholarship%20-%20Law%20and%20Policy>

[Coming to a School Near You](#)

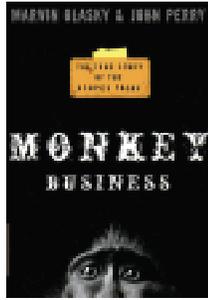
This Breakpoint commentary by Chuck Colson discusses how gay activists are attempting to use public schools to spread pro-gay propaganda, while silencing opposition. Go to: <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=6411>.

Book Reviews

Monkey Business: The True Story of the Scopes Trial

Marvin Olasky & John Perry
Broadman & Holman, 2005

Reviewer: Mike Brown



I have known for some time that the Scopes trial was nothing like what was portrayed in *Inherit the Wind*. However, this book was still an eye opener. There were so many important events and political agendas that led up to the trial, affected the trial, and more importantly, dramatically affected our society afterwards; that make this book a must-read.

The first half of the book covers the actual trial, with well placed chapters interspersed that give important background information. In the middle of the book are sixteen pages of pictures relating to the trial. The second half addresses the effects of the trial and where we are today.

From the inside jacket cover:

“The 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial was a turning point in the history of American culture, education, and religion, but the true facts of the case have never been fairly and fully reported until now. *Monkey Business* returns to the evolution vs. creation scene and finds a startling array of details not properly connected before due in part to the self-interests of revisionist historians.

“It is surprising to learn that: John Scopes never taught evolution but was an athletic coach and math teacher; the evolution theory had already been in school textbooks since 1909: pivotal lawmaker John Butler was not opposed to evolution but also wanted creationism taught because it matched local taxpayer beliefs; and evolution icon Charles Darwin did not condemn creationism.

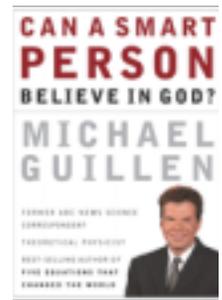
“Seasoned authors Marvin Olasky and John Perry smoothly untangle these mixed signals to determine the true story of the Scopes Monkey Trial. A page-turning account of faith and law and the dawn of mass media sensationalism.”

The book is 243 pages long plus four appendices that total an additional eighty-two pages.

Can a Smart Person Believe in God?

Michael Guillen
Nelson, 2004

Reviewer: Mike Brown



Michael Guillen is a theoretical physicist and former science correspondent for ABC News. He taught physics at Harvard for eight years, during which time he won awards for his distinguished teaching.

This book is fairly small (only 5 by 7 inches) and only 165 pages long. However, it is not small in content. It's an excellent little book to give someone you know who tends to focus on either extreme of the intellectual or the spiritual. He builds an excellent case for the importance of both.

Throughout the book he uses the analogy of stereo-scopic vision (a person who sees with both intellectual and spiritual vision) versus the intellectual cyclops (high IQ/low SQ) or the spiritual cyclops (high SQ/low IQ) who only see with one eye. In this sense, he defines IQ (intelligence quotient) as not how intelligent we are, but the extent to which we use our intelligence or education in our life decisions. He defines SQ (spiritual quotient) is defined as the extent to which we allow spirituality to play a role in our life decisions.

Following are a couple of my favorite quotes from the book:

“My IQ is arrogant; my SQ is humble. My IQ teaches me that life has rhyme and reason; my SQ teaches me it has purpose and meaning. My IQ teaches me that seeing is believing; my SQ teaches me that believing is seeing. Huge differences. Yet, rather than creating contention in my life, the two together give it its awesome Grand Canyon-like depth.”

And,

“In short, contrary to what the Intellectual and Spiritual Cyclopes would have us believe, a healthy and credible science will always need faith, and a healthy and credible religion will always need reason.”

This is a great book for understanding more about ourselves and those we want to witness to.

Education Association.⁸

Pantheism

Pantheism originated within Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism), and is integral to New Age and mysticism. Pantheists believe in monism—"God is one, indefinite-impersonal ultimate reality. That is, God is the cosmos. God is all that exists; nothing exists that is not God."⁹

Pantheism holds to creation *ex deo*—"out of God." For the pantheist, there is no creation, *per se*—everything is an emanation from "God." This is not the God of theism, but rather a "Cosmic Consciousness" or "Universal Consciousness." "God" and the world are of the same substance; the world is one in nature with the Cosmic Consciousness. Since mankind is of the same substance, pantheists believe that we, too, are God.¹⁰ A New Age mystic states, "But all things are not ultimately made of subatomic particles; all things, including subatomic particles, are ultimately made of god."¹¹ He imagines a "Great Chain of Being" as a continuum, where matter, life, mind, soul, and spirit all "unite in Godhead."¹²

While materialists believe reality is strictly physical, pantheists reject the existence of physical matter and believe only a spiritual dimension exists. Any perception of physical reality is merely illusion (which they term "*maya*"); ultimate reality is spiritual. This Universal Reality is ultimately impersonal and unknowable and is more like an energy or force. There is ultimately one essence—"All is God, and God is all."¹³ It is worth noting that the word "pantheism" is somewhat of a semantic trick, because by using the root word theism, a personal connotation is implied, even though by definition pantheism is non-personal. Francis Schaeffer notes, ". . . it is not really pantheism, with its semantic illusion of personality, but *paneverythingism*."¹⁴ Other terms such as Cosmic Consciousness or Universal Mind also connote personhood, and yet pantheists emphatically reject the concept of a personal God.

In pantheism, no ultimate distinction exists between good and evil, since ultimate reality is pure impersonal unity. Siddhartha, founder of Buddhism wrote, ". . . everything that exists is good—death as well as life, sin as well as holiness, wisdom as well as folly."¹⁵ Ultimately, "when one is one with the One, consciousness completely disappears and one merely is infinite-impersonal Being."¹⁶ One's individual consciousness and personhood are lost, like a drop of water mingling with the ocean.

Pantheism has its detractors. Scholars suggest pantheism is self-refuting and internally inconsistent in several areas. Here are a few examples:¹⁷

- Real world—If the external world does not exist, why try to explain it in the first place? If the world is illusory, how did it ever come into people's thinking that it is real?
- Individuality—Pantheism claims personal individuality is an illu-

sion caused by the mind. But if the mind is part of the illusion, an illusionary mind cannot be the basis for explaining anything.

- Problem of evil—Pantheists generally agree that Ultimate Reality is neither good nor evil, and good and evil are illusory and not real. But if evil is only an illusion, then ultimately there is no such thing as good or evil thoughts or actions. Therefore, it makes no difference if we praise or curse, counsel or rape, or love or murder someone. Cruelty and non-cruelty are ultimately the same. If there is no final moral difference between these actions, then absolute moral responsibilities do not exist.
- God and creation—Pantheists believe Ultimate Reality ("God") and the physical world are the same substance or essence. To say Ultimate Reality is infinite and yet shares its being with the finite world raises questions of how the finite can be infinite. (See "God, Science, and the Origins of the Cosmos," below.) Since the world is finite, that makes God both infinite and finite, because the Ultimate Reality is said to share part of its being with creatures, which entails an Infinite Being becoming less than infinite. But how can the Infinite be finite and the Unchanging changed?

II. New Age and Postmodern Thought

New Age is a spiritual philosophy that incorporates elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Gnosticism, the occult, and paganism. It is variously termed Eastern Mysticism, Higher Consciousness Movement, Neo-Paganism, or the Human Potential Movement. It borrows heavily from pantheism and naturalism and denies the existence of a transcendent personal God. The unifying concept of New Age is that reality—viewed as a vast, undifferentiated, impersonal continuum of spirit and matter—consists ultimately of one essence (monism), which is called God, God Consciousness, Universal Consciousness, Higher Self, Enlightenment, Prana, or even "Christ Consciousness."¹⁸

New Age believers conceive that spiritual progress is achieved by realizing they are God. "New Age thinking holds that humans are evolving toward the recognition of their godhood or union with 'God.' This unified global spirituality will lead to a unified humanity (a kind of spiritual utopia) and harmony with nature."¹⁹ For believers in New Age, true spirituality is realizing literal unity with a universal Divine Essence—they are God! Shirley MacLaine expresses it like this: "[The] tragedy of the human race was that we had forgotten that we were each Divine . . . You are everything. Everything you want to know is inside you. You are the universe."²⁰

Realizing the "new consciousness" is a westernized version of Eastern mysticism, with emphasis on experiencing ultimate reality. James Sire writes, "Like Eastern pantheistic monism, the new consciousness centers on a mystical experience in which time, space, and morality are transcended."²¹ While monotheistic religions find truth through revela-

tion from God, New Agers search for truth within and strive to find “god within” through experiential “dissociation”—the loss of conscious awareness of the real world and all rational thought.²² Through altered states of consciousness (which may variously be induced by meditation, chanting, yoga, drugs, etc.), New Agers and mystics strive to discover their own divinity. Within the New Age paradigm, self is the prime reality, self is the consciousness-center of the human being, and self is the center of the universe.²³ Reason and truth are viewed as impediments to true spiritual experience.

Those who subscribe to New Age belief might heed the words of Ravi Zacharius, who grew up in India, engulfed in pantheism: “Union with the impersonal absolute defies language, reason, and existential realities. It does not satisfy the longing for communion. However much one may respect the intent of such teaching, we deceive ourselves if we believe that it is philosophically coherent. It is not.”²⁴ Popular authors and spokespersons for the New Age movement include Marilyn Ferguson, Ken Wilber, Shirley MacLaine, Dr. Andrew Weil, Aldous Huxley, Deepak Chopra, Oprah Winfrey, Marianne Williamson (*A Course in Miracles*) and innumerable others.

Gnosticism

New Age draws heavily on Gnosticism, which venerates secret spiritual knowledge and views the physical realm as evil and the spiritual realm as good. Teachings of Gnosticism crept into popular religious thought through a variety of sources, including Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code*, Elaine Pagels’ *The Gnostic Gospels*, and even through elements of the Jesus Seminar. The Gnostic “gospels” were written in the 2nd through 4th centuries, hundreds of years removed from the actual lives of Jesus Christ and eye-witness disciples.²⁵ They have been characterized as “metaphysics written in distant lands hundreds of years later by someone else.”²⁶ For instance, the “Gospel” of Thomas, a Gnostic writing that is ubiquitous among Christian skeptics, was not written by Thomas the apostle. Norman Geisler notes, “The Gnostic writings were not written by the apostles, but by men in the second century (and later) pretending to use apostolic authority to advance their own teachings. Today we call this fraud and forgery.”²⁷ In fact, no credible scholar believes any of the “Gnostic gospels” were written by their namesakes. *The DaVinci Code* is a revisionist novel, which attempts to rewrite Christian history, while Pagels’ *The Gnostic Gospels* “introduced millions of readers to a Jesus who saves not through the cross, but through self-realization.”²⁸

Postmodernism and Truth

Postmodernism, ubiquitous in today’s youth culture, is particularly identified with New Age and mysticism in the west. Popularized by Friedrich Nietzsche in the late 19th century, the major tenets of postmodernism include:

- Religious pluralism—all spiritual beliefs are equally valid, and all

religions ultimately lead to God. (see “Pluralism,” below)

- Nothing is certain, and nothing we think we know can be checked against any reality.
- Truth is subjective, defined by what we ourselves or society decides it to be. There is no absolute truth.²⁹ “My truth is my truth, and your truth is your truth.” Morality is whatever you decide it to be.³⁰ Truth is a matter of personal preference. The very act of believing something makes it “true.”

Postmodernism rests on two key notions: 1) the cosmos is all there is—no God of any kind exists, and 2) autonomy of human reason.³¹ Postmodernists embrace “tolerance,” “openness,” and “inclusion” and believe that “all religions lead to God,” except any religion perceived to be dogmatic, exclusionary, or proclaiming absolute truth.³² In postmodern culture, “the person to be feared is the one who believes that we can actually discover ultimate truth Openness without the restraint of reason, and tolerance without moral appraisal are the new postmodern mandates.”³³ Thus, in today’s postmodern culture, Christianity may be rejected merely because it claims to be true. While postmodernists reject Christianity for claims of exclusivity, they fail to recognize that other religions make similar dogmatic truth claims. For instance, Hinduism’s Bhagavad-Gita states, “But those who scorn my teaching, and do not follow it, are lost” and “The ignorant, the faithless, the doubter goes to his destruction”³⁴—hardly sentiments of tolerance and inclusiveness.

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” The postmodernist asks, “What about those who have never heard of Christianity?” From the first chapter of the Bible to the last, it is made clear that salvation is available to all peoples of the world—every nation, every tribe, every people speaking every tongue.³⁵ God has made Himself known to all peoples through the creation. C.S. Lewis explains, “But the truth is God has not told us what His arrangements about other people are. We do know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved through Him.”³⁷ God’s plans are bigger than our assumptions and speculations.

Religious Pluralism

Religious pluralism has several basic tenets:

- All spiritual beliefs are equally valid.
- There is a “core universal truth” in all religions.
- All religions ultimately lead to God.

Pluralists believe that everyone’s spiritual beliefs are equally true. They believe that all truth is relative, and there is no absolute truth (since all are equally valid). Some believe at the heart of all religions, a common, irreducible kernel of truth exists. Pluralism ties in with the “tolerance”

that is practiced today.

Americans place great value on the principle of tolerance, especially the tolerance of religious expression. Philosopher/theologian Kenneth Samples writes, “Unfortunately, some people take the notion of equal toleration of religious expression to mean that all religions are equally true, thus equally valid paths to God . . . The acceptance of social pluralism (tolerance of diverse religious expression) does not logically imply the truth of metaphysical pluralism (that all religious truth-claims are equally valid and simultaneously true).”³⁸ While many religions share common ethics or moral beliefs, world religions are fundamentally different at their cores—some affirm one God, others many gods; some affirm “God is all, and all is God,” while others affirm a personal transcendent God. Atheism affirms all is material and there is no spiritual, while eastern religions say that all is spiritual and the material world is illusory. Eastern religions claim an eternal universe with no beginning, while western religions claim that God created the universe in finite space-time.

Over the past five decades, university academics have popularized the “perennial philosophy,” a term first used by Gottfried Leibniz to designate the “common, eternal philosophy” that underlies all religions (particularly the mystical streams within them).³⁹ This was later given wide audience by Aldous Huxley in his 1945 book *The Perennial Philosophy*, which suggested that the writings of all world religions (Hindism’s Bhagavad-Gita, Islam’s Qur’an, Judaism’s Torah, Christianity’s Bible) could be reduced to a “highest common factor”—the Perennial Philosophy. In Huxley’s view, however, God (which he calls the “Divine Ground”) is decidedly pantheistic and definitely not representative of all religions:

- The material world is a “manifestation of the Divine Ground, within which all partial realities have their being.”
- Humans can come to a “unitive knowledge” (become one with) the Divine Ground.
- Krishna (Hinduism), Goutama (Buddhism), and Jesus (Christianity) are all represented as incarnations of the Divine Ground.⁴⁰
- Humans are eternal, having “devolved from a single Source” and, after a period of spiritual development and enlightenment, eventually returning to “that One.”⁴¹

While each religion may express similar ethics or morals, the various religions cannot really be distilled to one commonality. Houston Smith, noted authority on world religions, concludes that all religions are not basically the same, “For as soon as [the notion of sameness] moves beyond vague generalities—every religion has some version of the Golden Rule—it flounders on the fact that the religions differ in what they consider essential and nonnegotiable.”⁴² By this definition, pluralism is false. Here is a question for religious pluralists: Pluralism claims that all religions are true. But if all religions are true, then

Christianity is false. But then if Christianity is false, then how can all religions be true?

Linking issues of faith and worldviews with science may seem untoward to some, and yet over the past few decades, science has yielded several discoveries that profoundly impact various worldviews. Some of those discoveries will be covered in the following section.

GOD, SCIENCE, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COSMOS

Ever since man first beheld a dark star-lit sky, mankind has felt a sense of awe and wonder. What a miraculous sight! Over eons of time, man has wondered about the heavens. How did all the stars get there? Have they been there forever? Over the past century, scientific discoveries have provided evidence about the beginning and cause of the universe. These findings have tremendous implications for each worldview. Indeed, in light of recent discoveries, the veracity of certain worldviews has become clouded.

The Finite Universe

Early Greeks viewed the universe as eternal—that it had always been. Ancient writers of Eastern religions also believed in an eternal cosmos, but one that progressed through a series of births and rebirths. Further, eastern religions and New Age posit that God and the universe are in reality one single entity (monism).⁴³

Western cultures through the nineteenth century also took as obvious fact that the universe was eternal. In the first half of the twentieth century, it was a major shock when Big Bang cosmology discovered the universe had a finite beginning.⁴⁴ As recently as 1959, when leading scientists were surveyed regarding their concept of the universe, two-thirds said there was no beginning. Astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle actively promoted the “Steady State” theory of an eternal cosmos, denying a Creator God. Even though Big Bang cosmology demonstrated finitude, there was still a philosophical desire to maintain the eternal-universe paradigm, because to acknowledge a beginning implicitly acknowledged a Beginner. British cosmologist Sir Arthur Eddington clearly stated scientists’ distain for a beginning: “Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of Nature is repugnant . . . I should like to find a genuine loophole.”⁴⁵

The Beginning of a Finely-Tuned Universe

The findings of modern cosmology have profound theological implications because they suggest purposeful causation and design. The first hint of a transcendent First Cause was discovered in 1916, when Albert Einstein’s theory of General Relativity proved a finite beginning. In the late 1920s, Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe was expanding, giving further credence to a cosmic beginning. In 1970, British physicists Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose published the first of many space-time theorems emerging from general relativity, establishing that all matter, energy, space, and time had their simultaneous beginnings

at the absolute beginning of the universe. Astronomer Hugh Ross states, “Effects follow their causes. So the beginning of cosmic time implies that an Agent (cause) outside the universe’s space-time dimensions is responsible for bringing into existence the space, time, matter, and energy (effects) astronomers observe.”⁴⁶ The reliability of Einstein’s general relativity in describing the dynamics of the universe has been confirmed to 0.0000000001 percent precision. “The thoroughness of the testing and precision of results leave no reasonable basis for doubting that a causal Agent outside of space and time brought the universe of space, time, matter, and energy into existence.”⁴⁷

Ironically, the dramatic scientific breakthroughs by Einstein, Hubble, Hawking, Penrose and others were stated with utmost simplicity nearly 3,500 years ago in the first verse of the Bible: “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). The veracity of this verse from the Judeo-Christian Bible rings with more clarity now than at any anytime in history. Twentieth century scientists proved the physical universe—all matter and energy, plus the space and time dimensions—simultaneously came into being from nothing. That is to say, prior to the big bang creation event, nothing existed other than the Causal Agent.

The simplicity of Genesis 1:1 is even more profound when you understand that the word for “create” (*bara* in the original Hebrew) expresses ex nihilo creation of the universe—“creation out of nothing.”⁴⁸ Also, the Hebrew phrase “the heavens and the earth” (*hashamayim ve ha’ erets*) means the totality of the universe, which comports well with Big Bang cosmology. Consider the words of two prominent scientists:

- “Astronomy leads us to a unique event, a universe which was created out of nothing.”⁴⁹ (Arno Penzias, Nobel Prize, physics)
- “This unthinkable void converts itself into a plenum of existence . . . It would seem that even the void is subject to law, a logic that exists prior to time and space.”⁵⁰ (Heinz Pagels, physics)

Respected theologian William Lane Craig echoes the scientists’ statements, “This cosmological singularity, from which the universe sprang, marked the beginning, not only of all matter and energy in the universe, but of physical space and time themselves. The Big Bang model thus dramatically and unexpectedly supported the biblical doctrine of creatio ex nihilo [creation out of nothing].”⁵¹

What Caused the Universe?

There are few options for the causation and existence of the universe:

- The cosmos has existed eternally. This explanation fails to recognize the overwhelming evidence for the Big Bang beginning. It also fails the Second Law of Thermodynamics and the Law of Entropy, which asserts everything deteriorates from order to disorder. Had the universe existed eternally, it would have already deteriorated and run-down an infinitely long time ago.
- The cosmos came into existence from no cause. Nothing

caused it. The universe created itself. For the all matter and energy within the cosmos to have just popped into existence from nothing and without cause is ludicrous. It fails the Law of Cause and Effect, which affirms everything that comes into being had a cause. Nothing causes its own existence.

- A non-personal entity (perhaps a “cosmic force” or “energy field”) caused the universe. Order and design result from intelligent cause, not random processes. The universal constants and properties of the universe, written in the language of complex equations, are fine-tuned to a razor’s edge. To believe this extreme fine-tuning was brought about by non-intelligent mindlessness is like claiming all of the textbooks of astrophysics, quantum mechanics, and higher mathematics had no intelligent authorship. Fine-tuning argues strongly against random, non-directed causation. Impersonal, non-intelligent causation cannot account for the design, order, and complexity found in the natural world.
- A Personal Self-Existent Being (an Intelligent Designer) purposefully and intentionally created the universe with all of its magnificently fine-tuned complexity. The only reasonable explanation for the world in which we live is that a transcendent Personal Being with infinite knowledge, intelligence, will, volition, and power, purposely brought this universe into existence, creating it from nothing.⁵² This is not the “god of Spinoza,” but rather a Creator with the ability to create matter and energy from nothing, create the laws of physics (defined by high-level mathematical equations), and fine-tune numerous properties of the universe.⁵³

Philosophical naturalists have proposed alternative explanations, attempting to escape from the theistic implications of the finely-tuned universe created from no pre-existing matter or energy. Cosmological models, such as “quantum fluctuation” and the “multi-verse theory” have been theorized, the latter appealing to theoretical multiple universes. These theories are based more on wishful thinking than science. There is no scientific proof for their validity—only metaphysical speculation.

The Anthropic Principle

The term “Big Bang” is really a misnomer, because it connotes a random, chaotic explosion. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, astrophysicists have determined that from the very beginning, the creation event was extraordinarily fine-tuned and “ingeniously orchestrated.”⁵⁴ In just the last half-century, scientists started noticing characteristics of the cosmos that could not be explained by natural means. In 1961, a Princeton physicist noted that physical life would be impossible if any of one of several constants of physics differed by even a slight amount. In 1974 British mathematician Brandon Carter first used the term “anthropic principle,” which implied the universe seemed to be uniquely designed for life and mankind (anthropos).⁵⁵ Design demands

14. Francis A. Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1972, revised and updated 2001), 8
15. Leffel
16. Sire, 123
17. Paul Copan, "Is Everything One? A Critique of New Age Pantheism," *Areopagus Journal*, Volume 6, Number 4, July-August 2006, 14-19. Norman L. Geisler, *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library on CD-ROM, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999)
18. Craig Branch, "Veritas: Engaging the New Age," *Areopagus Journal*, Vol 6, Number 4, July-Aug 2006, 1-5.
19. Copan, 14-19
20. Shirley MacLaine, *Out On A Limb*, (New York, NY: Bantam, 1983), 347, quoted in Paul Copan, "Is Everything One? A Critique of New Age Pantheism," *Areopagus Journal*, Vol 6, Number 4, July-August 2006, 14-19.
21. Sire, 144.
22. Jim Leffel & Dennis McCallum, "Postmodernism and You: Religion," www.xenos.org
23. Sire, 146. Self is "the soul; the integrated central essence of each person."
24. Ravi Zacharias quoted in Norman L. Geisler & Paul K. Hoffman, Editors, *Why I Am a Christian*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 297.
25. This contrasts with the New Testament writings, which were written within 20 to 60 years of Christ.
26. David Marshall, *Why the Jesus Seminar Can't Find Jesus and Grandma Marshall Could*, (Fall City, WA: Kuai Mu Press, 2005), 157.
27. Norman Geisler & Ron Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 156.
28. *Ibid.*, 142.
29. "Truth" has been radically re-defined by postmodernists. They consider that "truth" comes solely from one's personal perspective or belief. Different cultures have their own narrative "story" or "truth" that is true for them, but not true for others. Therefore, they reject objective, universal, or absolute truth. Keep in mind that the post-modern claim that "There is no absolute truth" is a truth-claim. Therefore, the "no absolute" truth-claim is internally inconsistent.
30. Michael Foucault, postmodern theorist, claims that the greatest good is an individual's freedom to maximize pleasure. Foucault "agonizes profoundly over the question of whether rape should be regulated by penal justice." Quoted in Sire, 183.
31. Sire, 189.
32. "Tolerance" has also been re-defined by postmodernists. For instance, "intolerance" traditionally means "rejecting or persecuting believers of other religions." The postmodern definition is "questioning the validity of any aspect of another's religion." (Reference: Jim Leffel & Dennis McCallum, "Post-modernism and You: Religion," www.xenos.org.)
33. Jim Leffel, "Understanding Today's Postmodern University," www.Xenos.org/essays/pomouniv.htm.
34. *Bhagavad-Gita*, translated by Swami Prahavananda and Christopher Isherwood with introduction by Aldous Huxley, (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books, 1995), 21, 29. New Testament quote from John 14:6 (ESV).
35. See Genesis 12:1-3, Romans 2:14-15, Revelation 7:9.
36. See Psalm 19:1-3, Romans 1:19-20.
37. C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996), 65.
38. Kenneth Samples, *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 162.
39. <http://www.ljhammond.com/phlit/2005-12.htm>.
40. Krishna, little more than a rhetorical personage, participated in a philosophical dialogue in the epic Hindu story, *Bagavad Gita*. Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha) apparently lived around 563-483? B.C. Almost no authentic historical information exists about his life, and the first records appear hundreds of years after his death. (Reference: David Marshall, 71, 196-197) In contrast, the person of Jesus Christ is well-documented and rooted in history.
41. Aldous Huxley, Introduction, *Bhagavad-Gita*, (NY, NY: Barnes & Noble Books, 1995), xi-xxi. "Mysticism and the Perennial Philosophy," www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursday/mys/prenphil.htm.
42. Houston Smith, quoted in Samples, 164.
43. For instance, Hinduism is based upon a clearly-defined system of cosmology. The Upanishads say that "Brahman [God] is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss . . . Brahman is Existence itself." Reference: *Bhagavad-Gita*, translated by Swami Prahavananda and Christopher Isherwood with introduction by Aldous Huxley, (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books, 1995), 117. Eastern monistic religions, mysticism, and New Age all stem from this cosmological model of pantheistic eternity.
44. Young-earth creationists (YEC), who posit a recent creation, reject Big Bang cosmology. In contrast, this author ascribes to old-earth creationism and would refer YEC advocates to the following: (1) Norman L. Geisler, "Big Bang Theory," *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), Baker Reference Library on CD-ROM; (2) Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 262-314; (3) William Lane Craig, "Why I Believe God Exists," in *Why I Am A Christian*, Norman L. Geisler & Paul K. Hoffman, Editors, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 62-80; (4) Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004); (5) C. John Collins, *Science & Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003) (6) "Old Earth Creationism: Setting the Record Straight," Jon W. Greene, www.reasons.org/chapters/seattle/newsletters/200608/200608.pdf (August 2006), and www.reasons.org/chapters/seattle/newsletters/200609/200609.pdf (September 2006); and (7) "Is There Really Scientific Evidence for a Young Earth?" Matthew S. Tiscareno, www.godandscience.org/youngearth/yeclaims.html.
45. Arthur S. Eddington, "The End of the World: From the Standpoint of Mathematical Physics," *Nature*, 127 (1931), p450, quoted in Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, Third Expanded Edition, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001), 77.
46. Hugh Ross, *Creation as Science*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 88-89.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., Editors, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 51.
49. Arno Penzias (Nobel Prize, Physics), cited in Hugh Ross, *The*

- Creator and the Cosmos*, Third Expanded Edition, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001), 121
50. Heinz Pagels (Theoretical Physics), cited in Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, 121.
 51. William Lane Craig, www.arn.org/docs/odesign/od172/cosmos172.htm.
 52. "Transcendent," meaning external to the space-time continuum of the universe.
 53. "God of Spinoza" is not God, but is more or less interchangeable with the laws of nature. Spinoza's "God" is the only "deity" recognized by the secular culture. The question remains, "Who wrote Spinoza's laws of nature?"
 54. Benjamin Wiker & Jonathan Witt, *A Meaningful World*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 153.
 55. Ross, *Creation as Science*, 96-98.
 56. Fred Hoyle quoted in Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, 147.
 57. Paul Davies quoted in C. John Collins, *Science & Faith, Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 251-252.
 58. Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, 53.
 59. Lawrence M. Krause, "The End of the Age Problem and the Case for a Cosmological Constant Revisited," *Astrophysical Journal* 501 (1998): 461-466, quoted in *Y-Origins*, Bill Bright & Larry Chapman, Editors, (Orlando, FL: Bright Media Foundation, 2005), 19.
 60. Ross, *Creation as Science*, 96-98.
 61. Walter Bradley quoted in Norman L. Geisler and Paul K. Hoffman, Editors, *Why I Am a Christian*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 169-170.
 62. *Ibid.*, 157.
 63. George Smoot quoted in *Y-Origins*, Bill Bright & Larry Chapman, Editors, (Orlando, FL: Bright Media Foundation, 2005), 10-11.



Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle 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 the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction that the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is 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 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 scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, 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.