



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

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

NOVEMBER 2008

What's Happening?

[Hugh Ross Visit](#)

Hugh Ross will return to the Seattle area in January. One of the events will be at the UW with Campus Crusade as a response to Darwin Day. If you would like to support this effort financially, it would be greatly appreciated. Please send donations to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683 and put "UW Event" in the "for" line.

[New Books](#)

Dr. Ross' latest book, *Why the Universe is the Way it is*, is now available from the RTB webstore at www.reasons.org. Also check out Fuz Rana's latest book, *The Cell's Design: How Chemistry Reveals the Creator's Artistry*. Both are excellent apologetic tools for reaching out to unbelievers.

[We Do Presentations](#)

The Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics. If your church or group is looking for speakers, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. We are also happy to help you with resources to support your personal studies and/or ministry efforts.

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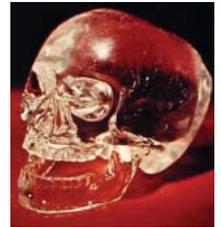
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Crystal Skulls and the Quest for Hidden Knowledge

GREG MOORE

In the recent Steven Spielberg film, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, famed archeologist and adventurer Indiana Jones tries to unravel the secret behind strange artifacts known as crystal skulls. Unbeknownst to many people, crystal skulls are not a Hollywood creation. Rather, the movie is inspired by actual skulls carved in quartz crystal that New Age enthusiasts claim are ancient relics with mysterious powers.

Crystal skulls first came on the scene in the 1870s when the Paris Museum displayed a skull believed to be of ancient Mexican origin. By the turn of the century, the British Museum also had a skull on display and several skulls were in private collections.¹ Interest in crystal skulls waned over the ensuing years. Then, in the 1950s, they returned to the limelight when the Mitchell-Hedges skull surfaced—a clear quartz crystal skull named after British adventurer F.A. Mitchell-Hedges.



The skull was popularized by the publication of Mitchell-Hedges' autobiography, *Danger My Ally* (1954). In the book, he claimed the skull was at least 3,600 years old and had been used by Mayan priests to will death on people—dubbing it “the skull of doom” for its sinister powers.² The skull was an immediate sensation as the bizarre claims circulated in the press. When Mitchell-Hedges died in 1959, his daughter added to the intrigue, claiming the skull had been discovered in the 1920s while her father was searching for ruins of Atlantis in an ancient Mayan city in Belize.³

Mitchell-Hedges' daughter continued to promote the skull as the New Age Movement was gaining momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, and the legend of the skull became firmly established in New Age circles. Then, more skulls began to surface. Today, there are hundreds of crystal skulls in various collections. However, it is only a handful of skulls that New Agers consider extraordinary. This includes the Mitchell-Hedges skull and:

- “Ami,” a purple amethyst skull that surfaced in 1979 and is said to emit psychic energy and images of the ancient past.⁴

- “Mayan Skull,” a clear quartz skull that surfaced with “Ami” and supposedly gives people hours of meaningful visions.⁵
- “Max,” a clear quartz skull that surfaced in 1980 and is claimed to help people through healings and consciousness-raising.⁶
- “Synergy,” a clear quartz skull that surfaced in 1986 and allegedly carries the message of immortal life for all mankind.⁷
- “ET,” a smoky quartz skull that surfaced in the 1991 and is said to provide emotional security, ease depression and open the mind to new possibilities.⁸
- “Mahasamatman,” a clear quartz skull that surfaced in the mid-1990s and is claimed to channel information from interdimensional beings.⁹
- “ShaNara,” a white opaque quartz skull that surfaced in the mid-1990s and supposedly gives people visions, past life recalls and messages from the unseen.¹⁰

What sets these skulls apart is New Agers claim they are ancient artifacts that are thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of years old.¹¹ Some insist they came from an advanced culture that preceded the Mayans, such as Atlantis or Lemuria. Some contend they came from a sophisticated inner earth society that lives at the hollow center of the Earth. Still others believe they were brought to our planet by extraterrestrials eons ago.¹²

This goes hand-in-hand with the belief they are out-of-place artifacts (OOParts)—artifacts requiring technology not possessed by any known ancient civilization.¹³ New Agers say this is demonstrated by a Hewlett-Packard study of the Mitchell-Hedges skull that concluded it was impossible to reproduce even with the use of modern lasers and other high-tech cutting methods.¹⁴ Often it is claimed Hewlett-Packard has examined other skulls and found them to be equally enigmatic.

As to their purpose, New Agers point to Mayan legends that speak of a connection between crystal skulls and the end of the Mayan calendar in 2012. According to these legends, the Mayans scattered numerous crystal skulls around the world (13 to 52 depending on the source) that are repositories of information that will be discovered and reunited in 2012. When this occurs, the skulls will forestall a catastrophe predicted by the ending of the Mayan calendar and usher in a new era of human awakening and enlightenment.¹⁵

So what can be said about these claims?

First, there is no evidence any of these skulls come from legitimate archeological sites.¹⁶ Like other scientists, archeologists describe their work in peer-reviewed papers. However, there is nothing that documents how and where these skulls were found. In addition, there is no basis to the claim that the Mitchell-Hedges skull was discovered in Belize. Researchers have established Mitchell-Hedges purchased from a private collector in the 1940s.¹⁷

Second, the technology for manufacturing crystal skulls—the modern lapidary wheel—has been available since the nineteenth century.¹⁸ In fact, it is known that German artisans crafted crystal skulls as early as 1870s.¹⁹ Furthermore, researchers have examined several of the skulls with an electron microscope and found cut and

In the NEWS...

[Hadron Collider](#)

Some have claimed the Large Hadron Collider is a doomsday machine that will trigger a black hole that will engulf the Earth. Jeff Zweerink, RTB's astrophysicist, discusses this at http://www.reasons.org/resources/in_the_news/not_a_doomsday_machice.shtml.

[Bird Evolution](#)

Evolutionists claim birds evolved from theropod dinosaurs, often pointing to so-called transitional fossils. This *sciencedaily* article discusses this issue with leading scientists refuting this claim. Go to <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/10/051010085411.htm>.

[Evidence of a Designer's Purpose](#)

This article by David Klinghoffer and linked to on the Discovery Institute's site, contends the choice between creation and evolution is a false dilemma. In fact, he claims, there are graduations between those extremes. Go to <http://www.discovery.org/a/8051>.

[Teaching the Controversy](#)

This *Breadpoint* article discusses the need to educate students how to think, not what to think. It argues that teaching the controversy about origins, the strengths and weaknesses of Darwin's theory, is the best way to create at atmosphere of academic freedom. ourselves. Go to <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=10479>.

[A "Very Good" World](#)

This two-part article on the RTB website examines what God meant when he declared the creation “very good.” It features an excellent exegesis of the relevant passages of Genesis 1. Go to <http://www.reasons.org/trnrtb/2008/11/24/what-does-a-very-good-world-look-like-part-1-of-2/>

polish marks. This proves they were crafted with nineteenth century rotary cutting tools.²⁰

Third, it is true Hewlett-Packard examined the Mitchell-Hedges skull. However, the researchers only evaluated whether the skull was made from a single block of quartz crystal. No investigation was made as to how the skull was crafted, nor did the researchers offer an official opinion on that issue.²¹ There is no evidence Hewlett-Packard has examined any other skulls.

Finally, the Mayan legends tying crystal skulls to the completion of the Mayan calendar are historically unfounded. Researchers believe this mythology can be traced back to the fanciful tales that were initially spread by Mitchell-Hedges. Over the years, these tales were embellished by New Age enthusiasts with the Mayan calendar connection becoming part of the crystal skull legend by the late 1970s.²²

Researchers believe the first generation of crystal skulls—skulls that surfaced around the turn of the century including the Mitchell-Hedges skull—originated in gemstone center of Idar-Oberstein, Germany. All of these skulls have a direct, or indirect, connection to a French antiquities dealer who purchased as many as thirteen freshly carved skulls there in the 1870s.²³ As for the skulls that have surfaced since the late 1970s, there is no reason to believe they are ancient. The best explanation is they come from modern workshops that manufacture a multitude of objects for the New Age trinket market.

Yet, despite all the evidence that crystal skulls are not ancient artifacts, New Agers continue to claim they are one of the most important discoveries in recorded history.²⁴ Devotees will travel hundreds or thousands of miles to spend time in the presence of a skull hoping to receive healing, enlightenment and spiritual awakening. As a Christian, the thought of a roomful of people paying homage to a crystal skull would be humorous if it weren't so misguided. That brings us to the real point of this article; namely, to try to understand how people can hold such outlandish beliefs.

THE OCCULT CONNECTION

Why are people drawn to crystal skulls? One factor is curiosity. Crystal skulls appeal to a human fascination with the unknown. But the main reason people are drawn to them is they believe they allow them to access spiritual or dimensional realms where they can obtain hidden knowledge—information they can use to improve their lives and transform the world into a place of love, peace and harmony. While this may seem innocuous, or even altruistic, it is merely occultism in a new, modern wrapper.

The word “occult” comes from the Latin *occultis*, which means “beyond the bounds of ordinary knowledge—the mysterious, the

concealed, or that which is hidden from view.”²⁵ To be involved in the occult is to attempt to go beyond the five senses to gain knowledge and understanding of these hidden things.²⁶ There are three categories of the occult world: divination (fortunetelling), spiritism (spirit contact) and magick (sorcery).²⁷ Crystal skulls are used both for divination and spiritism, to tap into supersensory powers to foresee the future and to channel messages from unseen “helpers.”

Occultism has thrived since the beginning of civilization and is connected to the worship of false gods. In fact, most of the modern techniques are a revival of ancient pagan practices. This is why the engaging in the occult is clearly and strongly condemned by the Bible (e.g., Deut 18:9-17; Lev 19:26; Isa 8:19, 47:12-15, 2 Kgs 17:17, Acts 7:41-44, Gal 5:20). Not only is the occult an affront to the authority and preeminence of God, but God does not want us to engage in it because it is harmful. At best, the practices can become addicting and lead us away from God. At worst, they can put us into contact with demonic forces that seek to deceive and destroy us.²⁸

The truth is that crystal skulls have no power—they are only vehicles through which demonic spirits may choose to work. That this is the case is evident in the messages they channel. Namely, that mankind can know the hidden mysteries of the universe, that we create our own truth and that we are part of a universal consciousness that is God.²⁹ These claims simply repeat the lies Satan used to deceive Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-5). Satan's first lie was they could know all things. His second lie was that they would not die from being disobedient to God's decrees. His third and the most dangerous lie was they could become like God. This is the reason Jesus said Satan is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Of course, few of those who are involved with the occult put much credence in the Bible. So, the fact Scripture labels these practices as wrong or harmful, has little bearing on their decisions. They engage in the occult because, according to their worldview, it is simply another avenue for spiritual enlightenment. Yet, that still does not explain why seemingly intelligent people are willing to abandon reason and believe preposterous things like the myths surrounding crystal skulls. What is it that makes some people susceptible to such beliefs?

MINDS HOSTILE TO GOD

Recently, Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion polled Americans on the belief in such things as Bigfoot, Atlantis, haunted houses and astrology. The researchers then used the data to produce an index of belief in the occult and the paranormal. What they found was 31 percent of people who never worship expressed a strong belief in these things, while only 8 percent of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did. Even among

Christians there were disparities. What they found was the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he/she is likely to believe such things.³⁰

For those who ridicule a belief in God and the Bible, this is surprising. After all, if traditional religious belief is merely an irrational “security blanket,” nonbelievers should be more intelligent, skeptical, enlightened and resistant to superstition. But, that’s not what the data demonstrates. Rather than being more resistant to superstition, nonbelievers are actually more likely to believe in the paranormal and pseudoscience.³¹ While this may seem counterintuitive to anti-religionists, it makes perfect sense from a biblical perspective.

The Bible tells us that people who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what nature desires and minds set on the flesh are hostile to God—they do not submit to God’s law, nor can they do so (Romans 8:5-7). In other words, people who do not submit their minds to the Law of God—God’s commandments that teach us everything we need to know about pleasing Him—live by the rules and standards of the flesh. The object of their conduct is not God, but something else, something that originates in their sinful nature.³² Without God’s influence in their lives, they follow cravings of the flesh that incite them to sin.

Of course, not everyone who follows the cravings of the flesh is an avowed enemy of God. Indeed, many who have arrived at this state have not done so by conscious choice. Some are merely indifferent. They don’t hate God’s commandments; they just live according to their own moral code. Others believe the Bible but don’t take God’s commandments seriously. They don’t willfully sin; they just pick and choose what commandment they want to obey. However, if people can’t or won’t submit their minds to the Law of God, their minds are hostile to God, whether they think so or not.³³

The Bible refers to such people as “stiff-necked.” This comes from the Hebrew *qasheh* and refers to people who are like rebellious oxen—stubborn, intractable and non-responsive to the guiding of God.³⁴ In Acts 7:51, they are described as having uncircumcised hearts and ears, where circumcision symbolizes the regenerative work God does in the human heart to put off the sins of the flesh. What is the consequence of being “stiff-necked”? The Apostle Paul tells us their thinking becomes futile, their hearts become darkened and they exchange the truth of God for a lie and, at some point, God gives them over to their sinful ways (Romans 1:21-25).

Sadly, little do people who engage in the occult realize it is not a sign of enlightenment, but a symptom of a spiritual illness—a cancerous growth that blinds them to God’s truth. The more they engage in it, the more they distance themselves from God and the more futile their thinking becomes. This explains why they seem

willing to believe things that are irrational or even absurd. Yet, as repugnant as their beliefs may be to us, they still deserve our help. They may be walking the pathway to destruction, but they are not beyond reach of the Gospel.

So, how do we reach these people?

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

One of the cornerstones of the Reasons-To-Believe Ministry is Paul’s message in Romans 1:18-20 which states:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Basically, what Paul is saying is the universe makes people ponder the invisible things of God and is enough to convict them of the reality of God. Thus, we can use the revelation of God through the creation—natural revelation—to reach out to people who reject the Bible. This forms the foundation of science-based evangelism: begin with the creation and then work toward Jesus. By providing unbelievers accurate and intriguing information about the creation, we can help them ponder the invisible things of God. This can help soften their hearts to the possibility of God and allow them navigate to the next level, asking profound questions that open them to the message of the gospel.³⁵

Implicit in this approach is the understanding that knowledge and reason cannot cause faith apart from the supernatural work of God. The faith that results in salvation only comes from God’s special grace. However, knowledge and reason are normally part of a person’s coming to faith and serve to support faith in innumerable ways.³⁶ Thus, we can use knowledge and reason to help prepare unbelievers by presenting facts and reasons (apologetics) that cause them to stretch their mental and spiritual muscles. Ultimately, this can lead to the renewing of the mind that Paul speaks of in Romans 12:2—they no longer enslaved by the futile thinking of the world, but able to test and approve what God’s will is.

That being said, here are some general guidelines for dealing with people who are involved with the occult:³⁷

- Pray – It is absolutely necessary you begin by seeking God’s guidance and protection in witnessing to occultists because they may be involved with demonic forces.
- Conduct research – Spend time examining the activity they’re involved with so you can talk intelligently about it. The more

you understand their beliefs, the better you can identify the pitfalls.

- Know the Bible – Have a thorough understanding of what the Bible teaches about the occult. You also need to know the essential Christian doctrines in the Bible and be prepared to explain and defend them.
- Be Prepared – Since most occultists reject the authority of the Bible, you must be able to utilize other apologetic tools to cause them to critically examine the weaknesses in their worldview.
- Ask questions –The best way to get someone to examine their belief system is to ask respectful questions about it. Begin with broad questions and then ask more specific questions around the inconsistencies in their answers.
- Be respectful – Everyone is made in the image of God and deserves proper treatment. The best way to share God’s message of love is to demonstrate it in our actions by showing them respect.

If God is prompting you to reach out to unbelievers, Reasons-To-Believe has many apologetic tools to assist you. You can even take a training course to become an official RTB apologist. Personally, taking the course was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Not only did it equip me to deal with unbelievers, but it was the beginning of a journey that has brought me closer to God with an unshakable confidence in the Bible. It’s a journey I highly recommend, something St. Augustine of Hippo called “faith seeking understanding”–trying to use our cognitive faculties to their fullest extent in our devotion to God.³⁸

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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 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.