



REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

NOVEMBER 2009

What's Happening?

Radio Interviews

- Mon., Nov. 23, 1:00 PM PST, Fuz Rana on Sound Rezn, "What Darwin Didn't Know (Part 1)." Listen live at soundreason.com.
- Tues., Nov. 24, 1:00 PM PST, Hugh Ross on Sound Rezn, "What Darwin Didn't Know (Part 2)." Listen live at soundreason.com.
- Thurs., Dec. 3, 12:15 PM PST, Hugh Ross on Straight Talk, "2012 Prophecies." Listen live at www.1300kyno.com.

Great Gift Ideas

RTB has an array of books, booklets, DVDs and audio products. This is a great way to reach out to unbelieving family members and friends. Go to: www.reasons.org/catalog/.

We Do Presentations

The Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics. If your church or group is looking for speakers or discussion leaders, contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

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Darwinism on Trial

HUGH ROSS

Perhaps the most frequent exchange between debating evolutionists and creationists begins with the evolutionists' assertion that "biological evolution is a proven fact," to which creationists reply, "evolution is only a theory." The creationists' rejoinder angers scientists more than most people seem to understand. It implies that scientific theories are no more than hypotheses.

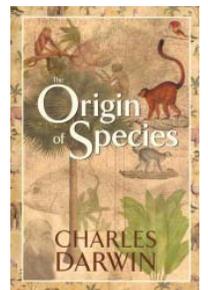
In science, a theory is much more than an unsubstantiated guess. A theory represents an explanation that has been thoroughly tested through experiments and observations and thus confirmed as a viable explanation for a set of phenomena.

Biological evolution is a theory in the full scientific sense of the term. Overwhelming physical evidence shows that life has become progressively more diverse and more complex over the past 3.8 billion years and that all life shares common DNA templates, metabolic reaction paths and basic morphological structures. When scientists refer to evolution as fact, this is the body of evidence to which they refer. If one were to remove the reference to 3.8 billion years, virtually every participant in the creation/evolution debates would agree. Leaving the time reference in excludes only young-earth creationists.

What has not reached the status of theory is an explanation for how life progressed from simple to complex, how life became more diverse, and why Earth's life forms display such remarkable relatedness. However, an experiment run for more than twenty years now by Michigan State University researchers has begun to shed significant light on these questions. This new light carries enormous implications for the creation/evolution debate.

The remarkable relatedness of all life on Earth, long trumpeted as powerful physical evidence for naturalistic evolution, now threatens to undermine the model. The problem for the Darwinian perspective is this: life forms that are only distantly related, if at all, nevertheless show amazing similarities in their morphological structures. This is not what Darwinists expect.

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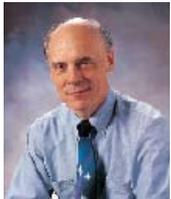


Hugh Ross Visit

JON GREENE

In October, Dr. Hugh Ross spoke six times in our area and drew large, enthusiastic crowds. Sunday morning, Oct. 18, he spoke at Fox Island Alliance Church on “Can God and Science Be Reconciled?” What started as a small event for the high school youth of FIAC, ended with an attendance of 275, including many adults and youth from two or three local churches.

Sunday evening Hugh spoke at Harbor Covenant Church in Gig Harbor on “Why the Universe Is the Way It Is.” This event was co-sponsored by three churches: Harbor Covenant, Fox Island Alliance and Discovery Baptist Church. The church was filled to capacity with more than 350 people. Special credit is due to Don Olson, RTB Seattle Chapter, who worked diligently to organize and publicize this event.



After an early afternoon meeting on Monday, Oct. 19, with members of the Discovery Institute in Seattle, Hugh headed north to Burlington to speak at His Place Community Church. The audience at HPCC numbered approximately 375. His talk, “Can God and Science Be Reconciled?” was enthusiastically received and the Q&A period lasted well over an hour.

Tuesday, Oct. 20, Hugh had lunch with a pastor from a local mega-church, then headed to Federal Way to speak that evening at Christ’s Church on “Can God and Science Be Reconciled?” The talk was augmented with additional science to satisfy the church’s goal of reaching-out to local scientists and engineers. The senior pastor was pleasantly surprised with a near-capacity audience of 475 to 500. Special thanks to John Packard and John Hansen, Seattle RTB, who helped organize this event.

On Wednesday, Oct. 21, at noon, Hugh spoke at Highline Community College in Des Moines to a standing-room-only crowd exceeding 200 students on “Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God.” After the presentation, Hugh took questions for more than an hour. We then moved to a conference room where Hugh spend an additional hour with students associated with Campus Crusade for Christ, answering a wide range of questions on science, Bible, and theology.

After a brief rest, Hugh was on his way through rush-hour traffic to speak at Mars Hill Church Downtown Seattle in Belltown. Hugh spoke on “Why the Universe Is the Way It Is” to an overflow, standing-room-only crowd of young adults, mostly in their 20s and 30s. After the 400 seat worship center was filled, another 50 chairs and stools were lined up in the fellowship area. Again, the Q&A lasted well over an hour.

Now that the dust has settled, I’m struck by the amazing impact these events can have in strengthening the faith of believers and opening unbelievers hearts and minds to Christ. We plan to have Hugh back next year to do a major event at the University of Washington—a major undertaking both logistically and financially. If you would like to help with this effort, please contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

Many thanks to numerous individuals from the RTB Seattle Chapter who volunteered their time to help with these events: Cindy (Abraham) Avans, Dave Ouellette, Don Olson, Gary Jensen, Greg Moore, Jeannie Glenn, John Battle, John Hansen, John Packard, Mike Brown, Stan Lennard and Stan Shipley.

In the NEWS...

[New RTB Podcasts](#)

There are several new podcasts available from RTB. Examples include Hugh Ross addressing global warming and the shroud of Turin, and Fuz Rana addressing the much heralded fossil “Ida.” To access these podcasts go to: <http://www.reasons.org/resources/radio-broadcasts-and-podcasts>.

[Life’s Evident Design](#)

This Discovery Institute article by Stephen C. Meyer discusses Richard Dawkins unwillingness to debate him on the theory of intelligent design, saying intelligent design must be evaluated on the basis of evidence, not it’s possible theistic implications. Go to <http://www.discovery.org/a/13011>.

[Ideas Have Consequences](#)

This Breakpoint article examines the postmodern worldview where everything is contingent. The author then evaluates that concept in light of four tests to see if they can withstand scrutiny. Go to <http://www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/articles/13289-ideas-have-consequences>.

[C.S Lewis Warned Us](#)

This tothesource article discusses C.S. Lewis’ warning in *The Abolition of Man* about the ominous tendency to use technology to change human nature and how researchers are beginning to take us down that dangerous path. Go to http://www.tothesource.org/10_21_2009/10_21_2009.

[The Evolution of God](#)

RTB apologist Rich Deem reviews Robert Wright’s book, *The Evolution of God*, which claims the concept of God evolved. According to Deem, this book is a prime example of the poor scholarship many atheists use to defend their worldview. Go to: http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/evolution_of_god.html.

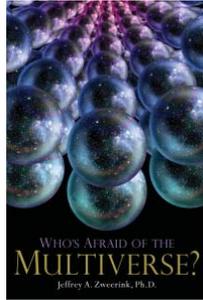
Book Reviews

Who's Afraid of the Multiverse?

Jeff Zweerink, Ph.D.
Reasons To Believe, 2008

Reviewer: Mike Brown

For those who want to be better informed about multiverse theories, but don't wish to dedicate months of research to the subject, this 53-page booklet by RTB astrophysicist Jeff Zweerink is a great resource. The purpose of the booklet is summarized on the back cover:



“Multiverse theory continues to gain popularity among the secular scientific community as an alternative explanation for the origin of the universe—one that does not require a Creator. But is the multiverse an enemy to the Christian faith—or, rather, a useful ally?...This booklet demystifies the multiverse so that believers can address skeptics' concerns with gentleness and respect—and without fear.”

Jeff addresses the four basic multiverse models along with scientific, philosophical and biblical responses. Do multiverses eliminate a need for an Intelligent Designer as some proponents claim? Not according to Jeff:

“... as research into multiverse scenarios advances, it appears that they may simply move the design 'up one level.' In other words, instead of just one universe requiring fine-tuning to support life, it appears that any multiverse-generating mechanism also requires a high degree of fine-tuning to reproduce the observable universe in which we live.”

Does the idea of other universes undermine the Bible? Again, Jeff says no because the Bible speaks of other realms that God has created and will create. For example, the Bible speaks of Angels living in a different realm and that a new heaven and earth that will replace this one. In addition, the Bible makes no claim that this is God's only creation.

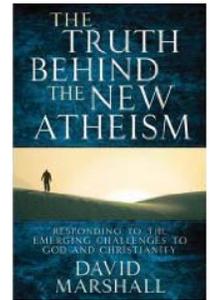
The problem of most multiverse theories is that they cannot be proven or disproven. As Jeff points out: “The idea that a model can be either falsified or validated by future data provides a central theme in the scientific enterprise. Thus, by allowing for every possible situation, the multiverse ultimately explains nothing and undermines the whole scientific enterprise.”

The booklet sells for \$5 and is available from the RTB webstore.

The Truth Behind the New Atheism

David Marshall
Harvest House Publishers, 2007

Reviewer: Jon Greene



This book responds to challenges to God and Christianity by the “New Atheists” -- Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Sam Harris. Marshall first addresses “God and science” issues, followed by common questions about the Bible and Jesus, and then ends with chapters on the historical blessings of Christianity, the dark history of atheism, and finally a chapter titled “Consilience.”

The book is well-organized, smartly written, and presents cogent answers to atheist arguments. Marshall notes that 50 of 52 of the greatest scientists living between A.D.1543 and 1680 were men of faith, in comparison to only 7% of National Academy of Science Fellows and 5% of today's biologists. Further, many great schools of thought were founded by virulent post-Christian thinkers: Marxism, Freudianism, Social Darwinism, existentialism, and post-modernism.

Marshall states “some churches today set young people up to lose their faith by teaching bad science,” citing as an example Sir Paul Nurse, 2001 Nobel Peace Prize laureate in physiology, who “abandoned religion in secondary school because his attempts to reconcile what he learned about life history to Genesis were squelched by his church.” He adds, “Sam Harris remarked that young earth creationists ask historians to believe the world was created centuries after the Sumerians learned to brew beer! Setting the gospel up for such jibes is not a helpful way to reach skeptics with the gospel or to understand and appreciate the work of God.”

In “Some Riddles on Evolution,” Marshall quotes notable scientists such as Hubert Yockey, Paul Davies, Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinge. He also references David Berlinski on the multitude of scientific problems related to life emerging from non-life, and the intractable difficulty of amino-acid homochirality, which makes “natural” formation of protein molecules a virtual impossibility.

DESIGN CONVERGENCE

Increasingly, biologists observe that species far from separate branches or eras in the “evolutionary tree” manifest identical anatomical and physiological features. Examples include the limb structures of bats and of flying lemurs, the brain structure for vocalization in hummingbirds, parrots, and songbirds, the brain structures for problem solving and tool use in chimpanzees and ravens, and the placental anatomy of modern wolves and extinct Tasmanian wolves.

Darwinists attempt to explain such similarities, or design convergence, as the result of nearly identical environmental, predatory, and competitive pressures on these unrelated species. As they see it, natural selection must have shaped these species in identical ways.

Researchers have identified at least two problems with this explanation. First, design convergence permeates the fossil record. Given that naturalistic evolution presumably happens in response to multiple unpredictable and often dissimilar events, design convergence resulting from natural processes should be extremely rare.

Second, sometimes design convergence appears on multiple levels in species from radically different habitats facing widely diverse survival stresses. Different habitats imply dissimilar pressures influencing natural selection. As an example, consider the chameleon, a reptile, and the sandlance, a fish. Both have eyes that move independently. When one eye is in motion, the other can remain motionless. Both use the cornea rather than the lens of the eye to focus on objects. Both have skin coverings for their eyes that make them less conspicuous to prey and predators. Both have the same kind of tongue and the same kind of tongue-launching mechanism for snagging prey. Yet, these creatures exist in radically distinct habitats and remain far apart on any workable evolutionary chart of common descent.

A HEAD-ON CLASH

Paleontologist Simon Conway Morris in his book, *Life's Solution*, describes dozens of examples of design convergence at the organism level. Biochemist Fazale Rana offers dozens more examples at the molecular level in his book, *The Cell's Design*. However, if chance governs the evolutionary process at its most fundamental level, one would expect gradual evolutionary changes in various life forms to result in dramatically different outcomes.

This concept of historical contingency is the theme of a book by late paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life*:

“...No finale can be specified at the start, none would ever occur a second time in the same way, because any pathway proceeds through thousands of improbable stages. Alter any early event, ever so slightly, and without apparent importance at the time, and evolution cascades into a radically different channel.”

Gould's metaphor asserts that if one were to push the “rewind” button on life's history and let that “tape” run again, the story would be completely different. The very essence of the evolutionary process renders evolutionary outcomes as non-reproducible (or non-repeatable). Therefore, according to Gould, “repeatable” evolution is inconsistent with the mechanisms available to bring about biological change.

Conway Morris disagrees. He denies that evolution is fundamentally unpredictable and insists that if the “tape of life” were replayed from some point in the distant past, the outcome would be no different from the one we see. He argues that while the possible evolutionary routes are nearly infinite in number, some “hidden law of physics” or mechanism of nature guides the outcomes on extremely limited pathways, limited enough to explain all the examples of design convergence.

DECISIVE TEST

This debate prompted researchers to devise an elegant and decisive test, one that required decades to complete. A team of microbiologists at Michigan State University led by evolutionary biologist Richard Lenski observed more than 40,000 generations of 12 different populations of *E. coli* bacteria (commonly found in the lower intestines of warm-blooded animals). Each population was raised in a glucose-poor, citrate-rich environment, and each population experienced billions of mutations. In the end, only one population developed a capacity to feed on citrate, at the cost of efficient glucose feeding, and not until 31,500 generations had come and gone.

At regular intervals over the twenty-year period, the team placed samples from each population into a state of suspended animation. Thus, the researchers could take some of those “sleeping” samples from earlier generations of the population that did successfully adapt to citrate, revive them, and see whether or not they, too, developed the citrate-feeding capability. The team observed no such duplications for any sample, even going as far back as the 15,000th generation. Therefore, they concluded, “evolution of this phenotype was contingent on the particular history of that population.”

In other words, Gould was right. Replaying the tape of life, even under repeated and highly controlled conditions, will not produce identical evolutionary outcomes. Nature does, as Conway Morris says, presents us with dozens, if not hundreds, of examples of repeated design outcomes. But it appears he was wrong was in presuming that some natural law or process would explain those repeated outcomes.

The Michigan State team's experiments demonstrate that no such law or mechanism exists. The many examples of repeated structures among Earth's life forms, past and present, can be better explained as the work of a supernatural, super-intelligent Agent who, having achieved an optimal set of designs for life, repeatedly employed those

designs in the vast array of species he created.

The research team's landmark paper, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, did not conclude that God must be responsible for structural similarities in Earth's diverse creatures. It simply noted that Gould's historical contingency interpretation had proved correct and that Conway Morris' hypothesis about a natural law explaining repeated design outcomes is incorrect.

Many science commentators on the worldwide web heralded the team's results as a dramatic victory for evolution, based on the fact that at least one population of *E. coli* adapted from glucose feeding to citrate feeding. Some claimed this result "proved" the Darwinian model. In reality, this example of microevolution is no more impressive than gonorrhea's development of resistance to penicillin.

Note that the *E. coli* bacteria in the Michigan State experiment did not evolve the biochemical machinery to metabolize citrate. They already possessed that machinery. What they initially lacked were pore structures in their membranes that would permit the bacteria to draw in citrate from the outside environment. Microevolutionary changes in those pore structures under extreme environmental pressure allowed a portion of one of the twelve populations to transition from glucose feeding to citrate feeding. That's it. No dramatic change.

The significance of the Michigan State experiment as a test of evolution can hardly be overstated. It's a convincing demonstration that natural biological processes tend to produce different, non-repeated outcomes. Something beyond nature alone must be responsible for the hundreds of examples of repeated designs among Earth's widely diverse life forms.



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.