

CSA News

The Creation Science Association for Mid-America

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men" Psalm 118:8

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Deism Again

What Do Hugh Ross, Michael Behe, Phillip Johnson and Their Supporters Have In Common?

by Tom Willis

My 1929 Webster's defines *Deism* as "The doctrine that God exists as a being wholly distinct from the physical universe of which man is a part, God's operation on the universe being purely mechanical".

Then, after listing prominent 17th and 18th century deists, Webster identifies their real characteristics:

These men held very diverse opinions, some inclining to rationalistic Christianity, some to materialistic infidelity; but they were agreed in that they sought to construct a natural religion by the light of reason alone, totally discrediting revelation. The Copernican theory of the universe, the physical doctrines of Descartes and Newton, and the philosophical teachings of Hobbes and Locke furnished their starting point. [emphasis added].

Now if we interpret Webster from a strict literalist perspective, particularly if we utilize only the primary definition in the first paragraph above, we could not really discuss *deism* in relation to the folks in our subtitle.

Nevertheless, the key definition of *deism* clearly applies to each of these men, and apparently to many of their supporters. The real common denominator is that a Deist always feels **his**

opinion is better than God's revelation. The results are always the same, Deists can, and do, believe almost anything. Thus Webster's observation "**these men held very diverse opinions.**" The folks in our subtitle definitely reject, ignore or rewrite His Word... and hold very diverse opinions:

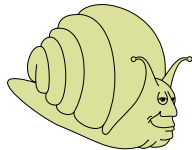
Hugh Ross says he is a Christian and says he believes in the Christian teaching regarding salvation through Jesus. Ross even insists that Christians must interpret the Bible literally, but he dogmatically insists that Genesis literally means millions of years and the Big Bang. I have read Hugh Ross's first book and received his newsletters for years. I frankly cannot make any sense out of **any** of his arguments. Especially those "proving" the Big Bang or millions of years. His arguments for the existence of God aren't any better. For example, Ross solemnly announced that an experiment which "detected" tiny irregularities in space was the long-awaited proof of the existence of God. Gee wiz, Romans 1:20 is finally true.

The only thing I ever read by Ross that really caused me to perk up my ears was his testimony that he had become convinced as a teenager of the truth of the Big Bang, and even began lecturing on it. He later "discovered" by a "careful reading of Genesis" that it "was consistent" with what he already believed. Of course, Genesis is totally inconsistent with what Hugh Ross teaches. He has repeatedly made clear his conviction that Genesis (and the rest of the Bible) must be interpreted in the *light* of science, which, to Ross, means primarily, anything that agrees with him, and the Big Bang. His current stand (it seems to be ever-changing) is basically *progressive creationist*, requiring reinterpretation of several clear Scriptural teachings. His only *Christian* testimony seems to be that he received his "*light*" from a materialist, philosophical, origins myth, and hammered out his own Bible to fit it. Most Christians must repent of the ego and silly notions they held as a teenager, and then grow in "Grace and knowledge of the Lord, Jesus Christ." I have spent years doing it. Obviously I haven't read every word Ross has written, but the only "testimony" I have read, stated that Ross decided to believe the Bible when he convinced himself he could twist it to say what he already believed was true. Ross seems to have never repented. His writings are loaded with assertions that Christianity needs to *repent of "fundamentalism"*... and follow him! To Ross, *fundamentalism* is any Bible interpretation that holds that the words make sense, even before Ross invents a new meaning for them.

Behe is an evolutionist who was "*raised a Catholic*" [whatever that means], and wrote *Darwin's Black Box*. Now, please don't miss the point I am making. While I have found Ross's science and theology to be arrogant nonsense, Behe's book seems well written, contains some useful information, and his arguments against evolution are well reasoned. For now, I'll make only two points about Behe. Later you learn why I'm making them:

1 The Roman, Cicero, said, 2000 years ago, paraphrasing: "a sundial necessarily requires a sundial maker. Anything as complex as the universe and its living systems obviously

Creation Safaris



- Over 700 people attended a CSA Safari in 1997.
- Many hundreds of others attended Meetings and seminars.
- 1998 Safaris will be similar to 1997.

Major Creation Safaris in 1998

- There will be 9 Major Safaris Starting March 21
- Dates will be announced in the Mar/Apr CSA News which you should receive by February 14

First Two Safaris in 1998

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- Ha Ha Tonka - April 24-26

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- There will be about 8 Astronomy Safaris in 1998

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(To be mailed about February 1)

requires a maker." The Englishman, William Paley, said a watch requires a watchmaker. Now, Behe says a mousetrap requires a mousetrap maker, a cell seems to require a cell maker, an eye an eye maker. But, like Darwin, he added a cute phrase "irreducible complexity." It is not a new concept. Even Darwin recognized it. Yet everybody jumps up and down, and says "Wow, that's brilliant!" Behe's book is merely a contemporary rehash of the argument from design, albeit an order of magnitude better than anything I have read by Hugh Ross.

- 2 Behe is also an evolutionist who believes the evidence is conclusively against evolution: at the molecular level, in the eye, cell membrane, blood clotting, DNA, immune system, photosynthesis, origin of life and possibly in other areas as well. Behe seems to be saying he is an evolutionist who believes the evidence is against evolution. He is not even the first to say this. Many evolutionists have said the evidence is against evolution.

Phillip Johnson is a real stickler for good definitions and sound reasoning when arguing against evolutionists. He also said he is a Christian while avoiding a **definition of what he meant!** However, his books contain statements that fence his definition of *Christian*. In his first book, Darwin on Trial, he said,

"I believe a God exists who could create out of nothing if He wanted to do so, but who might have chosen to work through a natural evolutionary process instead. I am not a defender of creation science... I am not concerned in this book with addressing any conflicts between the Biblical accounts and the scientific evidence."

Note that "conflict" would be between the Bible and "evidence." This is not even where conflict exists, it is between the Bible and self-annointed interpreters of evidence. Johnson gives a brusque definition of *creation science*: "I assume that the creation scientists are biased by their precommitment to Biblical fundamentalism." (pg 14) Later he explains,

"I am not interested in any claims that are based upon a literal reading of the Bible, nor do I understand the concept of creation as narrowly as Duane Gish does [Gish is a scientist who believes the Bible means what it says about origins]. If an omnipotent Creator exists He might have created things instantaneously in a single week or through gradual evolution over billions of years... The essential point of creation has nothing to do with timing or the mechanism the Creator chose to employ, but with the element of design or purpose... a 'creationist' is simply a person who believes that the world (and especially mankind) was *designed* and *exists* for a purpose." (pg 113)

Then he says we can use his definition to see whether "mainstream science [is] opposed to the possibility that the natural world was designed by a Creator for a purpose. If so, on what basis?" Chapter Eleven concludes: "As many more people outside the Biblical fundamentalist camp learn how deeply committed Darwinists are to opposing theism of any sort, and how little support Darwinism finds in the scientific evidence, the Darwinists may wish they had never left their sanctuary."

Now his definition of "*a creationist*" is obviously acceptable. And sensible folks would find much to agree with in his books, even some things in the above quotes. However, while he admits that he also is biased, he never admits, or falsely states, what his bias is, and he clearly shows his ignorance by much of

his writing. While Johnson never gives a crisp definition of *Christian, creation scientist, or fundamentalist* he freely uses these terms. He seems to believe a *Christian* is someone who believes in a God, and who says he is a Christian. He also believes that *creation scientists*, whom he lumps with what he calls *Biblical fundamentalists*, are people who interpret the Bible too literally, thus they hold views that aren't even important enough to merit discussion. To Johnson, what is really important is *defeating naturalism in science*.

In his latest book, Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds, Johnson says he belongs to a "mainline denomination" and that they are too concerned with social issues rather than sin and salvation. He expressed admiration for Billy Graham for preaching the Gospel message.

A recent interview and article in World Magazine began a long article extolling Johnson with: "We can be thankful for the work of researchers at creation science institutes... and the new work of Michael Behe... But grabbing the most attention these days is Phillip E. Johnson." Why? "Because he has been a frequent debater and college lecturer on the inadequacies of evolutionary faith." Please note, debaters from The Institute for Creation Research have debated over 200 times on major college campuses, before several million people. An article in a national science journal admitted **evolutionists had lost all but one of the debates** (a draw). Henry Morris and Duane Gish (and a few other *Creation Scientists*) generated so much fear among evolutionists that they established a national committee to attempt to thwart them. After twelve years the committee decided **creationists can not be beaten in a debate**, and made it a doctrine to avoid debates with *creationists*. I have personally heard Ph.D.'s assert this from the podium. In fourteen years, in spite of many attempts, I have been involved in only three real "debates." In one, I had to round up the evolutionist.

World also claims Johnson "covets and is winning" the support of Southern Baptist seminaries (Nov 23, 1997, pg 13).

Now for the point of this article. One of the final prayers of Jesus was, regarding his disciples: *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* -John 17:16-17. In this as well as countless other ways Jesus certified that God's word is the primary source of truth, and is, in fact, truth! The Bible makes clear that "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,*" (Romans 10:17) and that "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" -2Tim 3:16

Any mature Christian knows: persuading the whole world to reject Darwinism will not restore sanity to it. Replacing Darwinist Pharisees with "God-believing Pharisees" was tried during the Middle Ages, and hardly brought sanity. More to the point, the Bible also teaches that: "*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*" -Romans 14:1.

In my reading, Hugh Ross has yet to say much theologically, or scientifically, sound. Ross claims he believes God's word, but he merely rewrites it. He doesn't even defend science. He merely asserts that what **he** believes **is** science! He may well be a Christian. I am neither qualified nor entitled to judge that.

Phillip Johnson, while claiming to be a Christian, and that the Creator's purpose has some importance, doesn't reject the Bible, he merely ignores it, calling those who **do** believe it

names... like *fundamentalist*. Johnson wants to tell God and all Christians what should and should not be important, and he certainly excludes the notion of serious and/or literal, interpretation of the Bible, or even that the Bible would be a reasonable place to learn about the purposes of God.

Before allowing Johnson to tell us what is important, *The Church* should find out what is important to Johnson. Is Jesus real? Was he crucified? How about "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the father except by me." If I believe that, am I too *literal* for Johnson? Is Abraham real or symbolic? Jesus and Peter referred to *The Flood* and many other writings of Moses as literal truths. Were they *fundamentalists*? Are these ideas worth mentioning in public discourse with *Darwinists*? If I take these Biblical concepts seriously, am I too *literal*... a *fundamentalist*? Am I merely a *creation scientist*, whose views are biased and unworthy of mention in *serious works* (like Johnson's?) about origins?

Michael Behe has apparently made no profession of Christ. His book, while better reasoned than those by Ross, was hardly a major contribution to Christian thought. Behe's views of origins seem to make him an evolutionist who believes evolution cannot be true.

What do these three men have in common that their supporters are either consciously or unconsciously endorsing?

Anyone who interprets the Bible as loosely as Ross, marginalizes it as much as Johnson, or ignores it as completely as Behe, yet talks about *Creation*, is a *Deist*, not a Christian. His *God*, is one of his own making, not the **God** of the Bible. He may *profess* Christianity, but he is *practicing* Deism.

Why is it important to say these things?

Please don't tell me, as a letter from James Dobson (an avid Hugh Ross supporter) did to one of our members, that I am being *divisive*. It is important to say these things because these men are being extolled by *Christian leaders* and *press* as **new leaders of the anti-evolution movement**. Yet, these men have made quite marginal contributions, and they, and their supporters, engage in overt divisiveness! **They** are the ones claiming to be *Christian*, while ignoring or rewriting the Bible and attacking the persons and views of those who believe and defend the Bible. **They** routinely call Christians names ("*Extreme Biblical Literalist*," "*fundamentalist*"), hoping to marginalize their beliefs. **Their** *Christian* supporters are lifting them up for praise while ignoring, even suppressing, their obviously anti-Christian stances as well attacking or trivializing the work of dedicated Christian men and women.

I am not attacking these men, nor their books, nor am I suggesting their views be suppressed. I welcome academics, with enough courage, to join our cause. Who knows, they may grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am simply suggesting Christians and the *Christian Press* should keep them in perspective. Quite simply, that **their views should be marginalized until they demonstrate they have grown in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ**. Even then, they should not be elevated to *teacher* until their understanding of the issues they seek to teach is mature.

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CSA Monthly Meeting Location: Westbrooke Church 9898 West 95th, Overland Park, KS

Two blocks East of 69 Highway (or Switzer) on North side of 95th

Refreshments: 6:15PM - Meeting: 7:00PM Nursery Available: \$2.50 per child (Reservations required for nursery)

CSA Meeting Tuesday, Jan 6, 1998

The Basic Institute in Creation Science

THE YOUNG AGE OF THE EARTH

Video by: Dr. Robert Gentry, Host: Mark Matthews

The single most widely accepted myth among the "educated class" is the notion of millions of years! Like all myths there is some persuasive evidence for this one, but evidence clearly falsifying the notion is ignored or suppressed. We don't normally show videos, but some of us felt Gentry's merits more exposure. Topics: Sedimentary rocks, Grand Canyon, evidence for instantaneous creation of the earth, excellent evidence for rapid and recent formation of coal and oil, evidence for recent dinosaurs and solid evidence that "Natural Laws" cannot account for Earth History.

The Advanced Institute in Creation Science

**Preventing Out-of-Wedlock Teenage Pregnancy
Current Practice vs Experimental Research**

A Video from the International Conference on Creation
by: Paul D. Ackerman, Ph.D.

Current experts, based on Freudian Theoretical Psychology, seek to curtail, even more, parental control over sex-education, birth control and abortion, and to eliminate all messages stressing abstinence and moral absolutes. Under their guidance, today's rate of teen pregnancy has risen to 1:10 every year. Surprisingly (at least for some), experimental research (as opposed to "theoretical") supports traditional, rather than "modern," views of morality, modesty, and appropriate teenage activities. (T94042)

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CSA Meeting Tuesday, Feb 3, 1998

The Basic Institute in Creation Science

**European Biological Thought in the
1800's**

Why was Darwin Accepted?

by: Mark Matthews

Was real science in Europe truly converted to *Evolvo Science*? Was Darwin accepted because he truly solved problems in biology? Or was he accepted because he developed a "science" that society was eager to accept?

The Advanced Institute in Creation Science

**Progress Toward a
Young Earth Relativistic Cosmology**

A Video from the International Conference on Creation
by: D. Russell Humphreys, Ph.D.

For those who simply must believe in a Big Bang and Relativity Theory, Humphreys has developed a pretty good case that a true interpretation of these doctrines leads to a 6-day creation and about 6,000 year history of the Earth, while, via relativistic time dilation, the universe was expending billions of years. (T94044)

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The Creation Science Association
for Mid-America
Phone: (816) 618-3610 FAX: (816) 658-3253
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