

A seminar on dialogue between Science and Religion by EdUHK

Date: 3 November 2023

Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Organiser: Department of Science and Environmental Studies (SES)

Co-organiser: EdUHK Christian Faith and Development Centre (CFDC) and Reasons to Believe (RTB)

Summary of the Talk:

“Why I Believe God Exists” (Dr Fazale (Fuz) Rana)

Dr Rana at first discussed the case for a Creator by mentioning the Cerutti Mastodon Site, a paleontological site located and excavated in San Diego County from 1992. The Mastodon remains successfully age-dated in 2017 to 130,000 ya, appear to be deliberately processed by a hominin. The arrangement and markings on bone and cobble shows artificiality (not due to scavenging by wild animals and no natural process explanation) and appear to be a Case for Neanderthals in America. These markings which were experimentally reproduced in the lab show ‘Design Patterns’. This leads to the doubt of whether biochemical systems do display artificiality or arised through chemical evolution.

Dr Rana then explained several examples of hallmark features of human designs in biochemical systems such as ingenuity, irreducible complexity, fine-tuning and optimization. The most detailed description was the molecular machines of $F_1\text{-}F_0$ ATP Synthase. Some sceptics also admitted that this nano protein motor is wonderous and science was close to wrapping up the mystery of life’s origin. The notion of Metabolism-first or Membrane-first which requires series of remarkable coincidences was discussed.

Can life be created in the Lab? Most of the scientists are not comfortable with the idea of divine intervention, yet have to admit that in translating the chemistry and physics in lab simulations to the conditions of early Earth, carefully controlled manipulations are necessary. As the RNA World invented the DNA/Protein World, nature would be struggling to make RNA from a dilute soup under plausible prebiotic conditions. Many of the experiments designed to explain one or other steps in the origin of life require careful researchers’ inventions, quite resemble the intents and purposes of “the hand of God”. Dr Rana left the audiences to think about and Case of a Creator after all.

“An Atheist Scientist Ponders the Cosmos” (Dr Hugh Ross)

Dr Ross addressed the question of “why 2 trillion useless galaxies?” at the beginning. Universe’s mass determines what elements you get. The elements heavier than hydrogen and helium are formed through various nuclear fusion and fission processes in stars. Why is the Universe so old? Only at around 14 billion years after the cosmic creation event can humans observe all the cosmic history and directly witness the event.

Dr Ross also discussed the Solar Flare Activity, the Uranium/Thorium Abundance and the Cosmic Inventory. The dark matter permeates in the cosmos and if the “dark stuff” was altered by just one part in 10^{122} , no life would be possible. Fine tuning exceeds the best human design success (gravity wave telescopes) by 10^{97} times.

Our Earth is not in a central or especially favoured position in the Universe. A habitable planet can only be within a narrow zone away from a star, where liquid water can exist. If the Law of Decay is designed by the Creator, decay rate should not be too high so as to discourage productive work and the rate should not be so low as to let sin go unstrained. Sin leads to more pain, more work and more wasted time. To undo the damage caused by sin, God designed the universe, the Earth and Earth's life for the redemption of billions of humans and eradication of evil. Lastly Dr Ross introduced the Updated and Expanded version of DVD Movie: "*Journey to Creation*", which introduces audiences on an amazing journey, out in space and back in time, through the solar system, past stars, galaxies, and quasars all the way back to the moment when light first sprang from the darkness.

CFDC's review:

1. Audiences are welcomed to find more about Faith and Science from REASON TO BELIEVE (<https://reasons.org/>)
2. Details of product description of the DVD documentary, *Journey Toward Creation*, can be found from <https://www.amazon.com/Journey-Toward-Creation-Hugh-Ross/dp/1886653364>.