

Preparing to Give an Answer: Part 2

Pointers to God

Room For Doubt Seminar – Lowell, IN Church of Christ

Richard A. Knopp, M.A., M.Div., Ph.D.
Prof. of Philosophy & Christian Apologetics
Program Director, Room For Doubt (www.roomfordoubt.com)
Program Director, WorldViewEyes (www.worldvieweyes.org)

Email: rknopp@lincolinchristian.edu
Lincoln Christian University

Introduction

- A. “Proofs” vs. “pointers”
- B. Compare the competitors

I. The Origin of the Universe

- A. The possibilities
 1. It’s eternal.
 2. It’s self-generating: it caused itself.
 3. It’s just one of a possible *infinite* number of universes (multi-verse).

E.g. **Stephen Hawking**: “Bodies such as stars or black holes cannot just appear out of nothing. But a whole universe can. . . . Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing.... Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist.” (*The Grand Design*, 180).

E.g. **Alex Rosenberg**: “Why is there a universe at all? No reason at all. Why is there a multiverse in which universes pop into existence for no reason at all? No reason at all! It’s just another quantum event. What science and scientism tell those who hanker for more is ‘Get over it!’” (*The Atheist’s Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions* (pp. 38-39).

4. Generated by something or someone *outside* of space and time.
- B. Big Bang cosmology: The universe **BEGAN** (cf. Gen 1:1).
 1. Big Bang initially opposed.
 2. 1920s: Edwin Hubble’s discoveries.
 3. 1965: Background radiation discovered.
 4. Big Bang eventually accepted (1965-ff)

- “What we found is evidence for the birth of the universe.... It’s like looking at God” (George Smoot, leader of the Cosmic Background Explorer project).
- “For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries” (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, p. 116).

- C. A cosmological argument for God (see William Lane Craig and www.reasonablefaith.org).
 1. Whatever begins to exist must have a cause.
 2. The universe began to exist.
 3. Therefore, the universe had a cause.

II. The Origin of Life.

A. What does life require?

1. The right materials (20 different amino acids).
2. The right sequencing of materials (placed in the correct and usable order).
3. Information to instruct the right sequencing of materials (DNA).

B. DNA and the information for life.

1. DNA uses a 4 letter “alphabet” that are arranged in 3 billion pairs for humans.
2. 20 different amino acids are “instructed” to form each protein in an organism. (40-27,000 amino acids for necessary for just ONE protein).
3. Even “simple” organisms have many proteins (e.g. E. coli has 4,300 proteins).
4. Each human cell has DNA (which, if stretched out, would be approximately 6 feet long). By consequence, a human’s DNA (with 100 trillion cells) would reach _____ BILLION miles.
5. DNA capacity:
 - a. One gram of DNA can store 700 terabytes of data (equal to 14,000 50-gigabyte Blu-ray discs or 233 3TB hard drives). See <http://www.extremetech.com/extreme/134672-harvard-cracks-dna-storage-crams-700-terabytes-of-data-into-a-single-gram>.
 - b. “DNA could store all of the world’s data in one room” (by Robert Service, *Science Magazine* (Mar. 2, 2017): <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/dna-could-store-all-worlds-data-one-room>).

DNA “could, in principle, store every bit of datum ever recorded by humans in a container about the size and weight of a couple of pickup trucks.”

C. Candid comments from atheists and agnostics

1. **Fred Hoyle** (agnostic/atheist):
 - a. The pure chance of life starting on earth is about 1 in 10 to the 40,000th power.
 - b. The number of atoms in the visible universe? 10 to the 80th power.
 - c. “Panspermia”: Life was “seeded” on earth from elsewhere.

Fred Hoyle: “Life could not have originated here on the Earth. Nor does it look as though biological evolution can be explained from within an earthbound theory of life. Genes from outside the Earth are needed to drive the evolutionary process. This much can be consolidated by strictly scientific means, by experiment, observation and calculation” (*The Intelligent Universe*, 242).

2. **George Whitesides**, Professor of Chemistry, Harvard.

“Most chemists believe, as do I, that life emerged spontaneously from mixtures of molecules in the prebiotic Earth. How? I have no idea. . . . On the basis of all the chemistry that I know, it seems to me astonishingly improbable” (*Chemical & Engineering News* 85 [2007]: 12-17).

3. **Francis Crick**, co-discoverer of the DNA molecule in 1953.

“An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense . . . [the origin of life] is ‘almost a miracle.’ ...

Every time I write a paper on the origin of life, I swear I will never write another one, because there is too much speculation running after too few facts” (*Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature*, 88, 153).

III. The “Fine-Tuning” of the Universe for Life.

- A. The universe began _____.
- B. Each one of dozens of physical constants must be *precisely set*.
1. e.g. Expansion rate of universe “must be fine-tuned to an accuracy of one part in 10^{55} ” (Hugh Ross, in J. P. Moreland’s *The Creation Hypothesis*, p. 163).
 2. e.g. Ratio of the number of electrons to the number of protons:
 - a. Must be accurate to 1 in 10^{37} power.
 - b. Hugh Ross illustration of piling dimes to the moon (see *The Creator and the Cosmos*, p. 109).
- C. Impact on scientists & philosophers

Fred Hoyle (agnostic/atheist): “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect as monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.”

Stephen Hawking: “The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [e.g. ratio of proton to electron mass] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life” (*A Brief History of Time*, p. 125).

Arno Penzias (Nobel in physics): “Astronomy leads us to a unique event, a universe which was created out of nothing, one with the very delicate balance needed to provide exactly the conditions required to permit life, and one which has an underlying (one might say ‘supernatural’) plan” (quoted in Margenau and Varghese, eds., *Cosmos, Bios, and Theos*, p. 83).

Antony Flew (at age of 81 converted from atheism to theism. He had “to go where the evidence leads”): “I think the most impressive arguments for God’s existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries.... I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe’s intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God” (*There is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, p. 88).

IV. Biblical connections (Isa 45:18; Ps 19:1-2; Rom 1:20)

Isa 45:18 “For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited)” (NASV).

Psalms 19:1-2 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

Romans 1:20 Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen.