

Rational Conclusions

by James D. Agresti

Discovery Press, No address
2007, 327 pages, \$35.00

This book is a popular presentation to read. The front cover shows an illustration of a globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The text on the cover is "Rational Conclusions: A Popular Presentation of the Evidence for the Christian Faith." The author's name, James D. Agresti, is at the bottom.

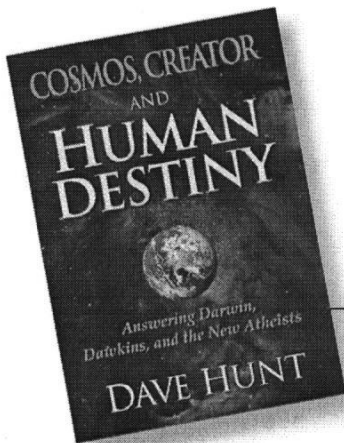
such a breadth of topics, we would expect to suspect a superficial coverage. Yet to my amazement Agresti has done an astonishing job of supporting his conclusions, citing 2,556 references. Link about documentation. The citations and searchable electronic index are not in the book but may be obtained at www.RationalConclusions.com. There are hundreds of pages of references and additional comments.

Author Agresti is a liberal university graduate and "a former atheist who became a Christian after reading the Bible over the course of a year and finding objective evidence for its veracity."

book cover. The cover of the book in his life when he "was looking for 'God and supernatural' because he thought the Bible was just a book of myths."

Agresti clearly approves highly of the evaluation and writes that the "total evidence is supported by evidence by researchers" (p. 27). He concludes that "detailed and well-substantiated evidence points to a Creator, while the evidence for the Big Bang is weak and has been shown to be false and false." (p. 27)

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Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny: Answering Darwin, Dawkins, and the New Atheists

by Dave Hunt

The Berean Call, Bend, OR,
2010, 606 pages, \$30.00.

Dave Hunt, like the late Henry Morris, has long exposed the flaws of evolutionary thinking and its ties to the New Age Movement. In this most recent work, Hunt takes on the "new atheists" and undermines the basis for their ar-

rogant rejection of the Bible in favor of materialism.

According to Hunt, part of the motivation for writing this book comes from the lack of attention by creationists to "what is really important. What makes a human being what he or she is, and what distinguishes mankind from every other living creature" (p. 17). In this relatively large volume, Hunt covers a lot

of ground without getting overly technical. The book is well documented, as the author draws from a variety of sources.

Hunt begins his rebuttal of materialism by revealing how foolish mankind is to boast of a space program when one considers the vastness of the universe: "Our 'space program' is like an ant climbing to the tip of a blade of grass. In a state of euphoria at its achievement ...

it calls down to the other ants standing in awed admiration below, 'I'm exploring the world!' The fact is, it hasn't even begun to explore the lawn" (p. 12).

Hunt explains how any real exploration of space will never be possible due to the incredible distances involved. He suggests that such an exercise in futility can be explained only by the fact that "the atheist is determined to prove that life on Earth is not a unique event but that it has originated time and again all over the cosmos by purely natural means" (p. 19). Attention is given to the SETI program (pp. 331–332) and the materialists' blatant inconsistency in presuming that they would easily recognize intelligent communication (information) transmitted from a distance, yet they stubbornly deny the necessity of a Sender to account for the information carried by the DNA molecule.

Throughout the work, Hunt refers often to the "law of biogenesis—that life comes from life—a universal principle that has stood the test of time" (Williams, 2008, p. 85). Hunt reminds the reader that any discussion of biological evolution is worthless since spontaneous generation violates this law of nature. This is sufficient to end the discussion as far as Hunt is concerned. However, it should be noted here that "A law of nature can, in principle, be refuted—a single contrary example would end its status as a natural law" (Gitt, 2009, p. 96). In no way justifying the atheists' blind faith in spontaneous generation, it is true that a scientific law can (in principle) turn out to be false since such laws are not provable but merely based upon observation (Gitt, 2001, pp. 22, 26–27). Laws of nature are merely descriptive of what has been repeatedly observed.

How then can we be certain that spontaneous generation was not possible at sometime in the distant past or in a distant galaxy as Francis Crick contends? Certainly, we "cannot experimentally test the laws of nature in other parts of the universe so they are only assumed

to be true there also" (Hartnett, 2008). However, making predictions in science depends on laws being universal.

Penetrating their facade of being reasonable and rational scientists who are above religion, Hunt accurately identifies the new atheists' sacred belief system as *scientism* (Anderson, 2007). Materialism or uniformitarianism "is not science but 'scientism,' the worship of science in the place of God" (p. 117).

One of the highlights of this book is that it contains numerous statements by prominent evolutionists, many of which are so ludicrous they do not even merit a lengthy refutation. For example, Hunt quotes from Dawkins's *Selfish Gene* (1976), evincing the atheist's reliance upon natural selection at the molecular level. To such nonsense Hunt simply responds, "no 'selection' can occur until there is a living replicator" (p. 107).

Hunt spends considerable time dealing with the evidence of a nonphysical dimension unexplainable by naturalism (Smith, 2002; Thomson and Harrub, 2004). If there is an immaterial reality, evolution would be incapable of imposing itself on it, while the big bang certainly could not explain its origin (Gitt, 1993, pp. 48–50). Hunt explains that "language and knowledge, like the mind that conceives and uses them, are nonphysical" (p. 273). "[If materialism is true] there is nothing to discuss about life, education, science, politics, hopes for a better world, or anything else because the best arguments on either side would merely be the result of chance motions of atoms in opposing brains" (pp. 162–163).

In discussing the mind in contrast to the brain, Hunt often quotes renowned neurophysiologist John Eccles for support. Jerry Bergman likewise noted Eccles's conclusion that "materialism does not, and cannot, explain either the existence or the operation of the mind" (2010a, p. 84).

Though this book is written primarily in response to the new atheists, Hunt

includes some much-deserved criticism for Francis Collins and others who hold to any of the various unbiblical compromise positions: "Collins cannot deny that evolution contradicts the Bible and Christianity at its most basic level. Clearly, Jesus considered Adam and Eve to have been historic persons and vouched for the validity of the Genesis account of their creation. *If evolution is a fact, then Jesus could not contradict it and yet be the son of God, able to pay the penalty for the sins of the world*" (p. 327, emphasis added).

In the conclusion, Hunt again exposes the fundamental flaw of compromise, pronouncing what may be considered to be the bottom line: "This is no light matter. If the Genesis account of creation isn't reliable, then how can we trust any other part of the Bible? If the Bible is wrong about the origin of man, how can we trust what it says about man's destiny? If the Bible is wrong about how sin entered into the world, then how can we trust its solution for sin? Moreover, Christ must therefore not be God and capable of saving us but a mere man who foolishly took the story of Adam and Eve literally because He lacked the insights of modern science" (pp. 517–518).

Some minor book criticisms follow. There is some confusion and inconsistency in the way the terms "species" and "kind" are used. One example: "The only way to create a new species is by an infusion of new information" (p. 174). This species/kind confusion is probably at least in part due to the fact that "the definition of a biological species can be controversial" (Lightner, 2009, p. 6). However, new genetic information is required for upward, microbe-to-man evolution but not for speciation. In fact, creationists have often pointed out that rapid speciation would have been likely in the immediate post-Flood world (Woodmorappe, 1996). Elsewhere in the book it appears that Hunt does in fact understand that it is the Biblical kind (baramin) that is immutable, not

the man-made designation species: "The abundant variety of dogs is not evidence of evolution from one *kind*, as defined in Genesis 1, to another *kind*. Clearly '*kind*' is still a division that cannot be crossed" (p. 137). But later he defines speciation as "a change in some characteristics while remaining within the same species" (p. 306). Since Hunt quotes more than once from Jonathan Sarfati's *Refuting Compromise* (2004), it is a little disappointing that he did not refer to Sarfati's work for clarity here (pp. 225–240).

During the mind/brain discussion, Hunt uses the illustration that the brain is like a computer operated by the mind (p. 44). While this is helpful to a point, Christian researchers and outspoken critics of psychotherapy Martin and Deidre Bobgan discourage the use of the "brain is like a computer" metaphor since "the current research demonstrates that computer memory and biological memory are significantly different" (Bobgan and Bobgan, 1999, p. 54). They believe that "the brain does not operate as a computer any more than it operates like any other piece of technology." According to Bergman, "even today it is still considered largely a black box" (2010b, p. 180).

At one point, Hunt appears to confuse the Curse with the second law of thermodynamics when he states, "The human race ... is doomed by the second law" (p. 334). Although some earlier

creationist literature taught that entropy began at the Fall, there is good reason to reject this view (Sarfati, 2004, pp. 213–214). At times Henry Morris tied the second law to the Fall and God's Curse on creation (1976; 2002), but it is noteworthy that his son has more accurately distinguished entropy from the effects of the Fall (Morris III, 2009).

Overall, *Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny* covers enough ground to challenge the average skeptic while addressing related philosophical and social issues (the existence of evil and the bad fruit of evolutionary philosophy in history). The author provides some fine insights to the debate and offers a few clever illustrations. He includes a clear presentation of the gospel built on a Biblical/historical foundation. With the exception of some minor criticisms, Hunt's book is proof that it does not take a Ph.D. to reveal that it is the atheists who suffer from "blindness," not the Watchmaker.

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