

Hugh Ross

General Teachings/Activities

- Hugh Ross (born 1945) is president and founder of Reasons to Believe, Inc., a Progressive Creationist ministry located in Pasadena, California. Yet, Reasons To Believe claims to be “an organization dedicated to showing how the latest scientific discoveries point to the God of the Bible, the Creator. Reasons To Believe was founded in 1986 ... with the desire to reach the secular scientific community with the truth of the Gospel. Today Reasons To Believe has 20 full time staff and 60 volunteers dedicated to sharing the joy of Christ through the latest scientific discoveries” (Reasons to Believe Internet web site—7/16/96). Ross has a Ph.D. in Astronomy from the University of Toronto, and is the former Minister of Evangelism at the Sierra Madre Congregational Church. Ross has authored three books, two of which have become very controversial, *The Fingerprint of God* (1989) and *Creation and Time* (1994).
- Dr. Ross is a professing Christian currently in full-time, non-denominational ministry dealing with apologetics, especially Bible and science issues. Ross is perhaps the most visible spokesman for Progressive Creationism, a belief which opposes both atheistic evolutionism and historic Christianity’s understanding of Biblical creationism. At best, then, Ross is atheistic evolutionist. He has become increasingly well-known as he has appeared on many “Christian” radio and television programs and spoken before numerous audiences (see list at end of this report). Ross packages his beliefs in a way that appears biblically conservative and evangelical; thus, Ross prominently displays endorsements of his books from many respected evangelicals (so-called) (see list at end of this report).
- Few people (even pastors) have the time or background necessary to deal effectively with Progressive Creationism’s/Ross’s claims. Many have felt intimidated and confused by the scientific claims of its supporters and their insistence that the Bible supports their view. But Ross’s views contrast sharply with those of fundamentalist, evangelical Christians who accept a literal, six-day Creation and a young Earth. Moreover, in some cases, Ross’s stand on foundational Biblical issues is heretical at best and neo-orthodox at worst (see numbers 2, 4, and 11 below). The following documented listing of Ross’s teachings has been compiled from the work of a variety of Bible-science organizations:

1. Origin of the Universe (the Big Bang). Dr. Ross teaches that the universe is 17 billion years old, plus or minus 3 billion years. He maintains that the universe began with a God-engineered “Big Bang,” and that the stars and planets evolved into their present form and positions during these billions of years—eventually resulting in the formation of Earth approximately 5 billion years ago. Ross claims that the Big Bang Theory has been “undeniably” proven, and he has taught the theory so strongly that if it were abandoned by the majority of scientists, as one day may be the case, it will be a major embarrassment to his ministry. [See: *Creation and Time*, pp. 91-118, 129; *The Fingerprint of God*, first edition (1989), pp. 158-159; Hugh Ross, “Why Big Bang Opponents Never Say Die,” *Facts & Faith* newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter 1990-91).]

[NOTE: God’s Word provides lists of generations between Adam and Jesus Christ. Even if there were a few gaps in the lists, it would be absurd to accept insertions of tens of thousands (or even millions) of years in the genealogy. Actually, the great majority of scientific age estimation methods indicate a young earth. Dr. Ross’s bias is apparent in his willingness to accept only those scientific methods that agree with his belief in billions of

Titus 1:9 — “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

years. In the final analysis, none of man's scientific age estimation methods can be considered foolproof, young or old. We would prefer to stick with the testimony of the only eyewitness, God.]

2. Origin of the Stars and Planets (order of creation). In contrast to Scripture, Dr. Ross teaches that the sun, moon, and stars were created even before the first "day" (i.e., "in the beginning"), rather than on the fourth day as stated in Genesis. He says that most of the stars existed long before Earth's creation; i.e., that approximately 10-15 billion years of stellar evolution occurred prior to the Creation Week. (*Note: Thus, he claims that not all of the heavens and earth were created in six days as the Bible plainly states in Exo. 20:11.*) Dr. Ross claims that Genesis 1 describes Creation from the point of view of one standing on the earth, and that the sun, moon, and stars did not become *visible* until the fourth day. He believes the stars were not created instantaneously, but they evolved by the physical laws of nature put into place by God: "This entire process of stellar evolution is by natural process alone. We do not have to invoke Divine intervention at any stage in the history of the life-cycle of the stars that we observe." According to Dr. Ross, many stars had long ceased to exist by the time of Adam's creation: "The planets and life-essential elements are the *burned-up remains*—i.e., ashes—of [the Big Bang's] hydrogen gas." [See: *The Fingerprint of God*, first edition (1989), pp. 158-159, 165-169; *Creation and Time*, pp. 52, 131, 148-151; Hugh Ross, "Why Big Bang Opponents Never Say Die," *Facts & Faith* newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter 1990-91); Hugh Ross, "Species Development: Natural Process or Divine Action" audiotape, (Reasons to Believe, 1990).]
3. Creation Week (not days, but billions of years). Dr. Ross teaches that the Creation of the heavens and Earth took place about 4.6 billion years ago during six long, partially-overlapping periods, not 24 hour type days. [See: *The Fingerprint of God*, first edition (1989), pp. 146-155.] "Based on scientific dating records, each of God's creation days is several hundred million years long." [Hugh Ross, *Genesis 1: A Scientific Perspective*, Revised Edition (Sierra Madre, California: Wiseman Productions, 1983), p 11.] Dr. Ross teaches that we are currently in the 7th Day—a day that began after God made Adam and Eve, and which will not end until the beginning of the New Heavens and New Earth. [See: *Creation and Time*, pp. 59, 91-118.]
4. Origin of Death (not a result of sin). Dr. Ross strongly teaches that the existence of physical death in our world is **not** due to Adam's sin. He claims that death was created by God as a basic part of earthly existence since the beginning of life, and that physical death and animal predation existed for billions of years throughout the world *prior to* Adam's sin. (*Note: Would not this belief cause the doctrines of sin and salvation to fall? If death and bloodshed preceded Adam's rebellion against God, then what are "the wages of sin" and how did the entrance of sin change things? And if death preceded sin, then death is not the penalty for sin, and Christ's death on the cross accomplished nothing! Thus, any scheme that places death prior to man's sin is a False Gospel!*) [See: *The Fingerprint of God*, first edition (1989), pp. 153-155, 159-160; "Reasons to Believe," 90-second radio spots No. 47 & 48 (February 1991); Hugh Ross: "Focus on the Family" radio program, April 18, 1991.]
5. No Original Paradise. Dr. Ross does not believe the Garden of Eden was free of death, pain, suffering, or degeneration—a world created in perfection. According to Dr. Ross, there was no original paradise, except in the sense that Adam walked with God, experienced less pain than we do, and experienced no sin initially. He believes that death and degeneration existed in the beginning and have continued for billions of years. He also teaches that neither the fall to sin nor the Flood resulted in significant physical changes in Nature. Dr. Ross claims that our

planet has always been subject to catastrophes and violent predation. He says that long before Adam, there were supernovas and collisions with meteorites that wiped out millions of animals and caused “mass extinction.” There were floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, harmful mutations, and diseases of all sorts. In other words, God used “random, wasteful, inefficiencies” to create the world into which Adam was placed. [*Creation and Time*, pp. 55, 65-69, 88; Hugh Ross, “Species Development: Natural Process or Divine Action” audiotape, tape 2, side 1 (Reasons to Believe, 1990).]

[NOTE: According to the Bible, death (both physical and spiritual) entered the world through man’s sin (Gen. 2:17; 3:19, Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:20-23). The Bible indicates that our world is very different from the one which God created and pronounced as “very good.” The Bible clearly says animals were not created carnivorous; God originally commanded them to eat plants—see Gen. 1:29-30, etc. Because of sin, God cursed the ground and physical creation (Gen. 3:17). Scripture says the whole creation has been affected by man’s sin, causing it to groan as it awaits freedom from bondage to decay (Rom. 8:20-22). The global Flood judgment changed earth even more (Gen. 8:21). One day God will restore paradise. Once again the lion will lie down with the lamb.]

6. Origin of Species: Progressive Creations (amoeba to man). Dr. Ross defines Progressive Creationism as “the hypothesis that God has increased the complexity of life on earth by successive creations of new life forms over billions of years while miraculously changing the earth to accommodate the new life.” [Quote is from “Dinosaurs and Hominids” audiotape, Reasons to Believe (1990).] In fact, Dr. Ross accepts a history of life very similar to that outlined by Evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould. Gould’s Punctuated Equilibrium theory describes slow progress by natural means, interspersed with mass extinctions and sudden, rapid advances. For Dr. Ross, the advances are the result of a multitude of Divine miracles. He seems to accept far more miraculous creations (“hundreds of millions of species of life”) than most Progressive Creationists when he claims to “deny any significant biological evolution over time scales long or short.” Elsewhere, Dr. Ross seems to have a different attitude when he says that “many of the changes that take place within the biological arena [are] ... by natural process ... natural selection, mutational advance ...” He teaches that for billions of years before Adam, major disasters befell the animals, including supernovas, asteroid impacts, etc. As a result, animals frequently became extinct, never to be seen by man. God stepped in many times to create replacements or improved models—sometimes completely abandoning entire groups of animals, changing the previous course of life on earth. Eventually, God created Adam and Eve from the dust, but after the majority of the earth’s history had already taken place. The order of creation was from amoeba to man. Thus, for Progressive Creationists, creation was an extremely long process interspersed with numerous miraculous events which produced new forms of animals and plants. [See: Hugh Ross, “Open Line” radio program (Moody, April 1994); *Creation and Time*, p. 83; “Species Development,” audiotape; “Dinosaurs and Hominids,” audiotape (Reasons to Believe, 1990).]
7. Hominids (man-like creatures). Dr. Ross: “Bipedal, tool-using, large-brained hominids roamed the earth at least as long ago as one million years ... New evidence indicates that the hominid species may have gone extinct before, or as a result of, the appearance of man. ... Starting about 2 to 4 million years ago, God began creating man-like mammals.” Although some of these creatures looked completely human (e.g., Cro-Magnon, Neanderthal), “used tools, ... buried their dead, and painted on cave walls,” they were actually animals and “had no spirits.” He has stated that the major difference between men and hominids is that humans were “the first spirit creatures.” [See: *The Fingerprint of God*, first edition (1989), pp. 159-160; “Genesis One, Dinosaurs, and Cavemen,” (Reasons to Believe, 1989); *Creation and Time*, p. 88, etc.

8. Origin of Man. Dr. Ross teaches that man was created by God from the dust of the Earth, but not on the last of six 24-hour type days, as the Bible teaches. Humans were created somewhere between 6,000 and 60,000 years ago—after the majority of Earth’s supposed history had already taken place, and after billions of years of animal life and death. [Note: *The Bible says that “from the beginning of the creation (not 17 billion years after the beginning) God made them male and female.” (Mark 10:6)] Dr. Ross: “If the time since the creation of the universe were scaled down to a single year, the whole of human history would be less than one minute.” [See: *The Fingerprint of God*, first edition (1989), pp. 159-160, 178-179; *Creation and Time*, pp. 140-141; Hugh Ross, “Open Line” radio program with Chris Fabry (Moody, April and May, 1994).]*
9. Pre-Flood World. According to Dr. Ross, the pre-Flood world was basically identical to the post-Flood world—same geology and paleontology, no significant environmental changes. He claims that rain began during the second Creation Day when the modern atmosphere was created billions of years before the creation of Adam. (Note: *The Bible specifically says there was no rain until at least the sixth day, which for Dr. Ross would be billions of years after plants and animals had first been created.*) Incredibly, Dr. Ross has also claimed that before the Flood “... probably at *least* 19 out of 20 people were dying a death of murder ... That’s what was keeping the people from living a long period of time.” (Note: *To the contrary, the Bible indicates pre-Flood lifespans were generally very long. The average for the patriarchs was 912 years. In addition, such violent conditions would cause people to scatter all over the world—a problem for Dr. Ross because he teaches the Flood was local, not global.*) [Hugh Ross, “The Flood” audiotape (Reasons to Believe, 1990).]
10. Noah’s Flood (regional, not global). Dr. Ross teaches that the Flood of Noah’s day did not cover the entire planet nor all Earth’s mountains of the day. Rather, Noah and animals floated on a shallow, temporary inland sea (22 feet deep), somehow covering the Mesopotamian region; thus, it was a regional flood which destroyed all mankind (except Noah and his family). He believes that the Flood did not destroy animals outside of man’s sphere of influence; death was basically limited to those “livestock, poultry, game animals,” and any other birds and mammals that had contact with man. [See: *Facts & Faith*, Reasons to Believe’s quarterly newsletter, multiple part article on the Flood, 1989-91, especially parts 7 and 8 (Fall and Winter 1990); Hugh Ross, “Noah’s Floating Zoo,” *Facts & Faith* newsletter Vol. 4 (Fall 1990), pp. 4-5; *Creation and Time*, p. 73; Hugh Ross, “The Flood,” audiotape (Reasons to Believe, 1990).]
[NOTE: Dr. Ross claims that earth’s entire human population was limited to this Mesopotamian region. Yet, the Bible clearly states that every land animal and bird on the face of the earth was wiped out (Genesis 6:7; 7:21-23). Dr. Ross teaches that most of the animals of the world were not affected, only those animals in Mesopotamia. Of course, few, if any, of these animals were unique to the region. According to Dr. Ross, all of today’s land animals and birds are *not* descended from the creatures on the Ark. In other words, God required Noah to consume 120 years of his life building a huge boat to save representative animals which really didn’t need to be saved. Most, if not all, of these animals were alive and well in other parts of the world. In Dr. Ross’s scenario, dry land is just over the horizon all along. Despite the lack of necessity, God keeps Noah trapped in this boat full of animals under these strange circumstances for over a year.]
11. “Dual Revelation” Theology. Dr. Ross frequently says that Nature is “the sixty-seventh book” of the Bible; he tends to treat Nature as equal in authority to the written revelation of God (the Bible), and that neither is “inferior or superior” to the other. Dr. Ross believes that Nature provides an accurate understanding of God and His plan for history. They are simply “different, just like the content of Ezra is distinct from that of Romans” (*Creation and Time*, p. 57).

He proceeds to accept most of the interpretations of secular science while attempting to maintain the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. He has accused young-earth creationists of believing in “Single-Revelation Theology” and denying “physical reality.” He holds the unorthodox theological view that, “The plan of salvation as stated in the Bible can be seen through observation of the universe around us.” For example, he teaches that Job “*without* the aid of scriptures ... discerned all the elements of ‘the gospel,’ the good news of how man can find eternal life in God.” [See: *The Fingerprint of God*, second edition (1989), pp. 144-145, 163-164, 179-181; *Creation and Time*, pp. 11, 41, 55-57, 123; Hugh Ross, “Creation Days,” audiotope (Reasons to Believe, 1990); “Hugh Ross’s Apologetics Hot Line,” *Christianity Today* (March 11, 1991), p. 23.]

[NOTE: *It is important to understand that:* (1) Nature has no speech or voice (Psalm 19:3). Therefore, Nature is subject to Man’s misinterpretation, as the history of science has repeatedly demonstrated; (2) Man is particularly limited in his ability to know the ancient past with certainty. We have no time machines to travel back and examine actual events. Secular scientists who describe in great detail ancient animals and environments are guessing, making assumptions, and hypothesizing; (3) The world and the universe have changed since their creation. The Fall and the global Flood of Noah greatly marred the perfection of God’s creations. What we have now is different in many ways from what God originally created; (4) We humans are quite ungod-like in our abilities and understanding. We are sinful, finite creatures with an enormous inclination to believe in lies. Earth is under the dominion of the Father of Lies, Satan. Our understanding of this universe is very incomplete and fallible. Scientific opinions are often biased and change regularly, sometimes radically. Dr. Ross even goes so far as to make the strange claim that “in addition to the words of the Bible being ‘God-breathed ... useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness,’ *so also are the words of God spoken through the work of His hands*” (*Creation and Time*, p. 56). Dr. Ross elevates the message of creation beyond its natural limitations. On many matters, it is naive, pompous, and exceedingly dangerous to rate sinful man’s incomplete and changing understanding of this degenerating universe as equal in clarity with the written Word of God! Such views have led to dreadful errors. The Bible has demonstrated its beautiful accuracy again and again, in contrast to the “scientific” pronouncements of men which have frequently been wrong and often dominated by blinding bias.]

Partial List of Recent Appearances by Hugh Ross:

Trinity Broadcasting Network (15-part weekly series, "Reasons to Believe," featuring Dr. Ross (begun October 23, 1991 and continuing today broadcasting the contents of *Creation and Time*), plus various appearances on the "Praise the Lord" program with Paul and Jan Crouch (nationwide television in the U.S. plus 33 foreign countries); "Focus on the Family" radio programs with Dr. James Dobson, April 17-18, 1991, and September 1992 (Tape CS721); Wheaton College (March 19, 1992); (GLASS) Greater Los Angeles Sunday Schools Convention; "Today's Reasons to Believe," 90-second radio feature program series on some Christian radio stations in America; Lausanne Commission for World Evangelization meetings in Moscow and Kiev; various seminary lectures which according to Dr. Ross's publications include Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (now Trinity International University) and Fuller Theological Seminary; CBMC meetings; Moody Broadcasting Network's "Open Line" radio program (WMBI, March 18, 1992); Craig Hawkins "Talk from the Heart" radio program; Rich Buhler's "Table Talk" radio program; many churches, Christian conference centers, Christian schools, Christian radio and television stations (U.S. and Canadian), secular universities, etc.

Doubleday has recently offered Ross's *Creation and Time*, and his earlier book, *Creation and the Cosmos*, to members of its book-of-the-month club. In 1995, Ross also appeared in documentaries on CBS, CTV, and the Learning Channel. He is working with an Emmy-winning producer on a high quality video series that may be shown on PBS or the Discovery Channel. Also, in mid-1996, NavPress plans to release yet another Ross book.

Endorsers of Hugh Ross and/or His Books:

Bill Bright — Campus Crusade for Christ
R.C. Sproul — Ligonier Ministries
Norman Geisler — Southern Evangelical Seminary
David Hocking — Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa
Harold Lindsell — former editor of *Christianity Today*
Don Richardson — author of *Peace Child* and *Eternity in Their Heart*
Ralph D. Winter — US Center for World Mission
Earl Radmacher — former president of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary
Walter Kaiser — Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and editor of *Christianity Today*
Stan Oakes — Christian Leadership Ministries, Campus Crusade for Christ
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