



Austin Tx Reasons To Believe Chapter Newsletter

Nov. 9, 2011

Austin@reasons.org



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The End of Christianity

By Bob Davis

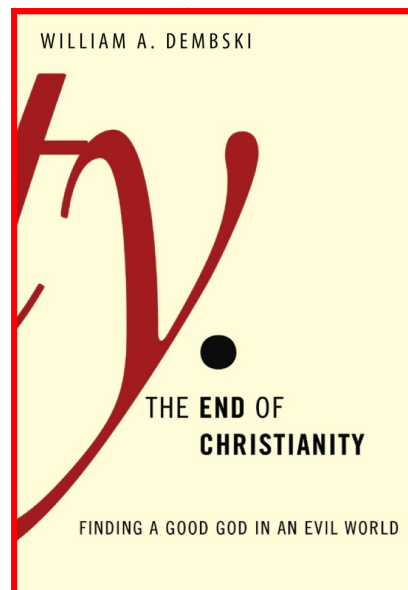
A book cover on the sales rack caught my attention. Entitled *The End of Christianity*, I assumed it was the latest assault from one of the “new atheist” types. I was shocked to see it was authored by none other than William Dembski, a professor at the conservative Southern Baptist Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

(Indeed, there is a similarly titled book by an atheist. Dembski, however, is using “end” to mean the “end result,” not the disappearance or cessation of our belief system.)

It’s strange title notwithstanding, Dembski’s book is thought-provoking, insightful and, I would say, a must-read for those involved in the practice of defending the Christian faith. It is of particular interest to those of us in the Reasons to Believe ministry because it represents a novel way of resolving the old earth/young earth divide among evangelicals and because of its apologetic value as a theodicy (i.e., a response to the “problem of evil”).

Regarding the first issue, Dembski says that those of us who are old earth creationists (OEC) are right on the science (the Earth is

billions of years old; not 6000). But in his chapter entitled *The Problem of Old-Earth Creationism*, he focuses on how we (and he mentions Hugh Ross by name) treat the problem of death and suffering before the Fall. He says OEC treat natural evil (as opposed to evil caused by human sin) as “simply a tool for furthering God’s end rather than a consequence of human sin. Old earth creationism thus opens God to the charge of inflicting pain simply to advance a divine agenda.”



So how does Dembski preserve the notion that natural evil is the result of human sin, but also pre-dates human beings? He brings in the concept of “backward causation.” He asserts that an omnipotent and all-knowing God can act to anticipate events that have yet to occur.

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RTB Monthly Meeting

Date: Saturday morning
Nov. 12, 2011

Place: Hill Country Bible Church near the UT Campus. 405 W. 22nd Street. Corner of San Antonio and W. 22nd

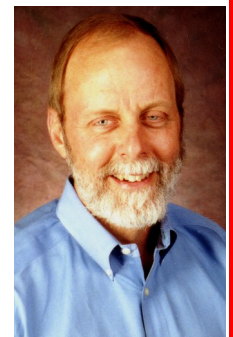
Agenda:
9:30 Fellowship and coffee

10:00 Announcements

10:20 Presentation:
Fine Tuning by Dr. Dennis Wilson, RTB Austin

With more than 30 years of science and engineering experience,—in both academia and business—Dr. Wilson will present his perspectives on the incredibly improbable circumstances that make life possible on Earth .

Come join us in the celebrating God’s marvels as we discover science-based reasons to believe.



Dennis Wilson

I find Dembski's argument to be a plausible way of dealing with the defense of a loving God in the face of natural evil, but not necessarily the only way.

As to "backward causation," I have no problem with this concept in part because this is my way of resolving the free will-versus -election controversy: God knew from eternity past who would choose to accept His offer of salvation through Christ and, therefore elected them on this basis. (Romans 8:29 says as much by placing God's foreknowledge as the basis of a process that gives rise to predestination, justification, and glorification.)



William Dembski
a Renaissance man with a
Reformation mindset.

Dembski's book is as wide ranging in its apologetic and philosophic tours as is the man himself. Dembski is a first rate scientist, mathematician, and author of several books. He is one

of the founders and chief contributors to the Intelligent Design movement.

With the exception of his criticism of OEC, his focus on dual revelation (God's revelation of Himself through nature and through scripture) puts him squarely in accord with a cornerstone of the RTB ministry. His careful critique of "appearance of age," and other YEC positions reflect RTB positions (although he does not hold to a day age form of OEC).

Dembski's presentation of how information theory transcends materialism, and his ease of moving to and fro through theology, philosophy, etymology, epistemology, math, biology, and the physical sciences is worth the read (and re-read) itself. Not content with logic and science, Dembski wraps up his book with worshipful praise on the goodness of our God.

He is indeed a renaissance man with a reformation mindset.

RTB Austin is a Chapter operating under Reasons to Believe national organization (www.reasons.org). Local officers are:

President—
John Weber

Vice President—
Bob Davis

SecTreasurer—**Steve Stock**

Promotion/Outreach—
Scott McBroom

Promotion/Outreach—
John Murphy

Promotion/Outreach—
Dr. Dennis Wilson

Our website is found at <http://www.reasons.org/get-involved/chapters-and-networks/austin>