

OCTOBER 3-4 2008 SKEPTICS SOCIETY CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY DR. MICHAEL SHERMER
AND DR. PHILIP CLAYTON

BECKMAN AUDITORIUM, CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY (CALTECH), PASADENA, CA

TODAY, THERE IS ARGUABLY NO HOTTER TOPIC IN CULTURE THAN SCIENCE AND RELIGION, and so much of the debate turns on the “Big Questions” that involve “origins”: the origin of the universe, the origin of the “fine-tuned” laws of nature, the origin of time and time’s arrow, the origin of life and complex life, and the origin of brains, minds, and consciousness. From theologians and philosophers to creationists and intelligent design theorists, the central core of almost all of their arguments centers on filling these “origin” gaps with God. But now science is making significant headway into providing natural explanations for these ultimate questions, which leaves us with the biggest question of all: “Does science make belief in God obsolete?”

we have assembled some of the world’s greatest minds to discuss some of the world’s greatest questions.

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

The Templeton Foundation—who worked with Skeptics Society Executive Director Dr. Michael Shermer for their Big Question essay series—is cosponsoring the 2:00-3:30 afternoon dialogue.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

FRIDAY OCTOBER 3

BURGER CONTINENTAL RESTAURANT, 535 South Lake Ave., Pasadena, CA

6:00-10:00 PM: BUFFET Dinner, Drinks, & Social in a patio setting.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

Beckman Auditorium, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA

7:00-8:30 REGISTRATION, Continental breakfast, book table
Come early for first pick of our incredible \$5. book sale!

Morning sessions (8:30-12:45)

ORIGINS

8:30-8:45 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

By DR. MICHAEL SHERMER, *Skeptical* magazine, *Scientific American*

8:45-9:30 Dr. Leonard Susskind: *The Origin of the Universe*

9:30-10:15 Dr. PAUL DAVIES: “*The Origin of the “Fine-Tuned” Laws of Nature*”

10:15-11:00 Dr. SEAN CARROLL: *The Origin of Time and Time’s Arrow*

BREAK 11:00-11:15

11:15-12:00 DR. DONALD PROTHERO: *The Origin of Life & the Cambrian Explosion*

12:00-12:45 Dr. CHRISTOF KOCH: *The Origin of Brains, Minds, & Consciousness*

LUNCH 12:45-2:00 (Lunch is included in conference fee)

Saturday Afternoon sessions (2:00-6:00)

DOES SCIENCE MAKE BELIEF IN GOD OBSOLETE?

COSPONSORED BY THE TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

2:00-3:30 DIALOGUE MODERATED BY DR. PHILIP CLAYTON

DR. STUART KAUFFMAN • DR. KENNETH MILLER

DR. NANCEY MURPHY • DR. MICHAEL SHERMER

BREAK 3:30-4:00

DEBATE

4:00-5:30 GREAT GOD DEBATE: DOES SCIENCE SUPPORT BELIEF IN A DEITY?

Dr. Hugh Ross v. Dr. Victor Stenger

5:30-6:00 Audience Q & A WITH ALL SPEAKERS

DINNER BREAK 6:00-7:30

(Buffet Dinner is included in conference fee)

7:30-10:00 Evening entertainment:

Mr. DEITY



YES, THAT'S RIGHT, THE DEITY WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE.

Mr. Deity that is—the Internet You Tube and Crackle sensation. Mr. Deity video clips offer a humorous (and slightly irreverent) peek into the day-to-day operations of the universe and the Big Man in charge—a behind-the-scenes look at how Mr. Deity and his long-suffering assistant, Larry, grapple with the complications of their new Creation. “What kind of Evil will be allowed in this new universe?” “How do you go about recruiting a ‘Savior?’” “Why won’t these darned lights work?” And “How do you relate to your girlfriend when she’s the devil (literally)?” are just some of the thought-provoking questions raised by the show. Mr. Deity (Brian Keith Dalton), Larry (Jimbo Marshall), Jesus/Jesse (Sean Douglas), and Lucy/Lucifer (Amy Rohren) will entertain us with clips and behind-the-scenes stories, along with discussing the more serious theological and philosophical issues raised in individual episodes.

If you haven't seen Mr Deity go to http://crackle.com/c/Mr._Deity or just google “Mr. Deity.”

FRIDAY-SKEPTICS SOCIAL: PATIO PARTY & ALL U CAN EAT BUFFET

(Dinner is included in the conference fee.
No-host alcoholic beverages available.)



Our distinguished speakers...



DR. SEAN CARROLL

is a Senior Research Associate in Physics at the California Institute of Technology. His research ranges over a number of topics in theoretical physics, focusing on cosmology, field theory, particle physics, and gravitation. He is currently studying the nature of dark matter and dark energy, connections between cosmology, quantum gravity, and string theory, and whether the early universe underwent a period of inflationary expansion. He is the author of *Spacetime and Geometry: An Introduction to General Relativity*, recorded a set of introductory lectures on cosmology for the Teaching Company, and is a contributor to the blog Cosmic Variance.

DR. PHILIP CLAYTON

is Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Claremont Graduate University and Ingraham Professor at Claremont School of Theology. He is a philosopher and theologian specializing in the intersection of science and religion and is the author of *In Quest of Freedom: The Emergence of Spirit in the Natural World*, *Adventures in the Spirit*, *Beyond the Religion Wars*, and *This Sacred World: What the New Integration of Science and Religion Has to Say about Ecology, Politics, and Human Spirituality*. A pantheist, he defends a form of process theology that is hypothetical, dialogical and pluralistic.



DR. PAUL DAVIES

is a theoretical physicist, cosmologist, astrobiologist, author and broadcaster. He is a professor at Arizona State University where he is setting up a research institute to examine fundamental concepts in science. Davies previously held academic appointments in the UK, at the Universities of Cambridge, London and Newcastle upon Tyne. His research has ranged from the origin of the universe to the origin of life, and includes the properties of black holes, the nature of time and quantum field theory. Davies is known as a passionate science communicator. He gives numerous public lectures throughout the world and has written 27 books, including *The Mind of God*, *The Goldilocks Enigma*, *God and the New Physics*, and *Cosmic Jackpot*. He is the recipient of the 1995 Templeton Prize.



DR. STUART KAUFFMAN

is the founding director of the Institute for Biocomplexity and Informatics and a professor of biological sciences, physics, and astronomy at the University of Calgary. He is Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, a MacArthur Fellow, and an external professor at the Santa Fe Institute. His books include *The Origins of Order* and *At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity*. His latest book is *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion*.



DR. CHRISTOF KOCH

obtained his Ph.D. in (bio)-physics with a minor in Philosophy. After four years at MIT, he joined the California Institute of Technology, where he is the Lois and Victor Troendle Professor of Cognitive and Behavioral Biology. His laboratory focuses on experimental and computational research pertaining to neuronal correlates of selective visual attention and consciousness in the mammalian brain, a topic he worked on for nearly two decades with Francis Crick. He is the author of the highly acclaimed book, *The Quest for Consciousness: A Neurobiological Approach*.



DR. KENNETH MILLER

is Professor of Biology at Brown University. He is a cell biologist, and chairs the Education Committee of the American Society for Cell Biology. He serves as an advisor on life sciences to the PBS television news program NewsHour, and is the author of the bestselling book *Finding Darwin's God*, as well as the controversial biology textbook that triggered the Dover creationism trial, at which he testified as an expert witness. His new book, based on his experiences at the trial, is *Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul*.



DR. NANCEY MURPHY

is Professor of Christian Philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary. Her first book, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, won prizes from both the American Academy of Religion and the Templeton Foundation. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. Her most recent books are: *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It? Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will*; *Physics and Cosmology: Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Natural Evil*; and *Evolution and Emergence: Systems, Organisms, Persons*.

DR. DONALD PROTHERO

is Professor of Geology at Occidental College and Lecturer in Geobiology at Caltech. He is the author, co-author, editor, or co-editor of 21 books and almost 200 scientific papers, including five leading geology textbooks and three trade books. He has served as an associate or technical editor for *Geology*, *Paleobiology*, and *Journal of Paleontology*. He is a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, the Paleontological Society, and the Linnaean Society of London. His latest book is *Evolution: What the Fossils Say and Why it Matters*.



DR. HUGH ROSS

earned a Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Toronto and was a research fellow in radio astronomy at Caltech in the 1970s. In addition to publishing many technical scientific papers, he is the author of numerous popular science books that defend his faith: *The Fingerprint of God*, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, *Creation and Time*, *Beyond the Cosmos*, *The Genesis Question*, *The Origins of Life*, and *Creation as Science*. Ross is the founding director of Reasons to Believe, an international interdenominational science-faith think tank.



DR. MICHAEL SHERMER

is cofounder of the Skeptics Society, the Publisher of *Skeptical* magazine, a monthly columnist for *Scientific American*, the host of the Skeptics Society Distinguished Science Lecture Series at Caltech, and an adjunct professor at Claremont Graduate University. He is the author of many books including *Why People Believe Weird Things*, *How We Believe*, *The Science of Good and Evil*, *The Borderlands of Science*, *Science Friction*, and *Why Darwin Matters*. His latest book is *The Mind of the Market*.



DR. VICTOR STENGER

is emeritus professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Hawaii and adjunct professor of philosophy at the University of Colorado. His research career helped establish the properties of strange particles, quarks, gluons, and neutrinos, and helped pioneer the emerging fields of very high-energy gamma ray and neutrino astronomy. He is the author of a number of popular science books also well received by professional scientists, including *Has Science Found God?*, *The Comprehensible Cosmos*, *Timeless Reality*, *The Unconscious Quantum*, *Not by Design*, and the *New York Times* bestseller, *God: The Failed Hypothesis*. He has debated many of the top theologians of our time.

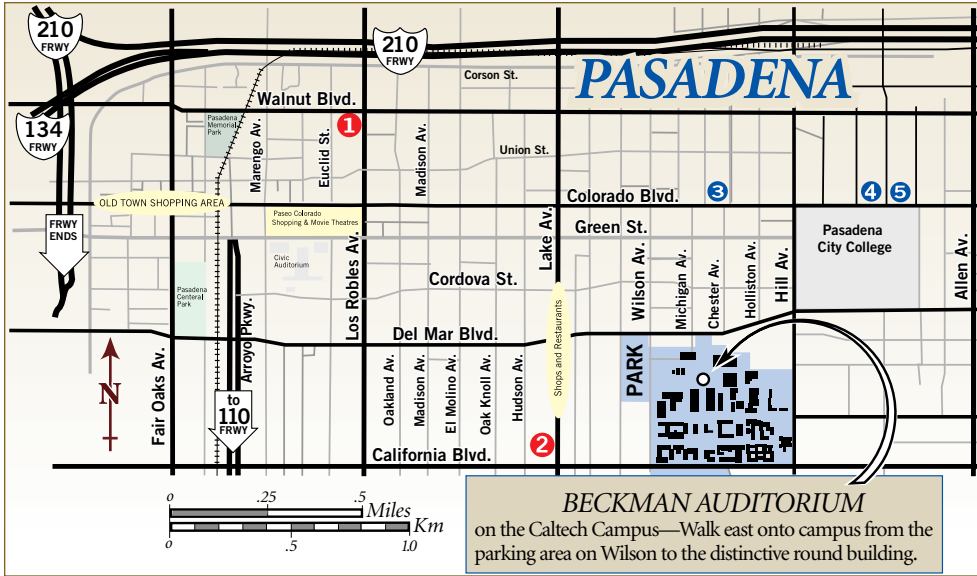


DR. LEONARD SUSSKIND

is the discoverer of string theory, is the Felix Bloch Professor in theoretical physics at Stanford University and the author of the controversial new book *The Black Hole War: My Battle with Stephen Hawking to Make the World Safe for Quantum Mechanics*. His contributions to physics include the discovery of string theory, the string theory of black hole entropy, the principle of "black hole complementarity," the holographic principle, the matrix description of M-theory, the introduction of holographic entropy bounds in cosmology, and the idea of an anthropic string theory "landscape." He has written numerous articles for the non-specialist including an award winning article on black holes in the *Scientific American*.



ONE PRICE INCLUDES all lectures & social events, plus these four all-you-can-eat meals: **FRIDAY** evening: patio buffet dinner. (Drinks extra.) **SATURDAY**: a large continental breakfast; lunch; and dinner.



Driving Directions To Caltech: Off the 210 Freeway in Pasadena, exit Lake Ave and go south. Left on Del Mar, right on Michigan, which terminates at Caltech. Park in the faculty parking lot to the left, or in the student parking lots to the right. Beckman Auditorium is the large white round building at the south end of the faculty parking lot. Off the 110 Freeway, follow to the end and continue north on Arroyo Parkway, right on Del Mar, right on Michigan, follow parking instructions above.

To Westin Hotel: Off the 210 Freeway, exit Lake Ave and go south. Right on Walnut, left on Los Robles, hotel is on the SW corner (191 N. Los Robles Ave). Off the 110 Freeway, follow to the end and continue north on Arroyo Parkway, right on Colorado Blvd., left on Los Robles, hotel is two blocks north on the left side. From Burbank Airport, take the 5 South to the 134 East (Pasadena) to the 210 East, follow instructions above. From LAX, take the 105 freeway east, to the 110 North, follow instructions above.

(1) Host Hotel: THE WESTIN, 191 North Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101. Reservations: 866/837-4181, ask for Skeptics Society/Caltech rate: \$165.00 single/double occupancy per night. This is a fabulous rate for a AAA Four Diamond Hotel! We encourage everyone to stay here for the social aspects as well. Free transportation (first come first serve) will be provided by the Westin Shuttle to Caltech Saturday morning starting at 7:00 a.m., and again in the evening after the event until 11:00 p.m. The Westin is just a little over one mile from the Caltech campus, and within easy walking distance of Old Town Pasadena with dozens of fine restaurants, the Playhouse District with bookstores, theatres, and restaurants, and a short drive to Huntington Gardens, the Rose Bowl, and other Southern California attractions. All guest rooms are very plush and feature The Heavenly Bed, the Heavenly Bath, dual-line telephones with voice messaging, in-room data port, complimentary Starbucks coffee. The Westin provides a complimentary town car within a 15-minute radius (does not include airports).

(2) Burger Continental restaurant- Colorful Pasadena landmark. Informal covered patio dining. Extensive menu. 535 S. Lake Ave., Pasadena, CA

On a budget? Stay at: **(3)** Vagabond Inn 626/449-3170, 1203 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; **(4)** Westway Inn 626/304-9678, 1599 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. **(5)** Saga Motor Inn 626/795-0431, 1633 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. All are within walking distance of Caltech.

Airports & Transportation: Burbank Airport is just 20 minutes from Pasadena and is serviced by Alaska, Aloha, American, US Airways, United, and Southwest Airlines. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is 45 minutes to 1.5 hours (depending on traffic) from Pasadena, but it is serviced by all airlines and offers greater travel flexibility. **Shuttle Service** from both airports to the Westin: Least expensive: Prime Time Shuttle: 800/733-8267; SuperShuttle: 800/258-3826; Xpress shuttle: 800/427-7483. More expensive: Taxi Services: 800/750-4400; People's Taxi: 800/505-2227. Most expensive: Limousine: Fleetwood: 800/283-5893; ITS: 800/487-4255

THE BIG QUESTIONS—SKEPTIC SOCIETY CONFERENCE OCT. 3-4, 2008

Please mark number of people attending in boxes below:

- () Skeptics members @ \$175.....\$ _____
 - () non-members @ \$195\$ _____
 - () Students @ \$95 (balcony seating)\$ _____
(Student group rates available—626/794-3119)
 - () Membership/subscription @\$25.....\$ _____
CONFERENCE DISCOUNT SKEPTICS MEMBERSHIP RATE!
Join Skeptic Society now & receive Skeptic magazine for only \$25 and attend the convention at the member's rate. (U.S. residents only.)
 - () Check here if you think you will be attending the FRIDAY NIGHT event
- CHECK # _____ TOTAL \$ _____**

Please PRINT the FULL NAMES of all conference attendees below EXACTLY as you would like them to appear on badge Please pick up your conference badge at the door. Your badge will admit you to the conference.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone/email _____

EX. DATE _____ We accept: MASTERCARD VISA
Account No.

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Signature as name appears on credit card _____

You MAY FAX payment to 626/794-1301 or PHONE us at 626/794-3119, or MAIL us at Skeptics Society, P.O. Box 338, Altadena, CA 91001.