TASC.

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TASC's mission is to rebuild and strengthen the foundation of the Christian faith by increasing awareness of the scientific evidence supporting the literal Biblical account of creation and refuting evolution.

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A Few Modern Creationists

By Dan Reynolds

was recently asked to speak on creation in my Sunday school class. TASC had been helping organize the recent Origins Truth Conference at the time, so I decided it might be encouraging to share something about the lives and work of two of the invited speakers for the conference: John Sanford and Russ Humphreys. I then added three more scientists: Matti Leisola, James Tour, and our very own Gerald Van Dyke to the talk. Each of these scientists has a unique story and has given glory to God through their life and research. Here, I share the essence of that presentation.

Matti Leisola (biotechnology)



We'll begin with Matti Leisola. Dr. Leisola earned his DSc in biotechnology from Helsinki University in 1979. He is a recognized enzyme chemistry expert. He has spent much of his career optimizing enzymes for synthetic applications in industry, among other things. Dr. Leisola started his career as an atheist. He mocked

those who doubted evolution. He is now a fully convinced creationist. Dr. Leisola came to see that scientific truth rests upon results of experiments, not authority. He realized evolutionists have *stories*, not *evidence*.

Dr. Leisola has 140 peer-reviewed papers, seven patents, 20 articles in book or conference proceedings and has been cited over 5000 times in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. His recent book *Heretic: One Scientist's Journey from Darwin to Design* tells his personal and professional story

and is a good review of the principles and discoveries of the intelligent design (ID) movement.¹

Leisola recalls a time when he laughed at those who would suggest God had a role in creation. At that time he believed that such "god-of-the-gaps" notions were from ignorant and lazy people who could not or would not do the science to find the true natural causes. However, he eventually became aware of the many "just so" evolutionary stories that were not really scientific explanations supported by experimental evidence but mere naturalistic speculative place-holders for our ignorance. He came to realize that the assumption that everything in nature must have a materialistic explanation might be wrong. He decided to follow the evidence wherever it led without artificially eliminating live options from the outset. Hence, design as an explanation was back on the table. He also came to realize that the opinions of the majority or scientific "authorities" do not determine scientific truth, the results of scientific investigations do.

Dennis Prince in his book *I Was Wrong* writes:

Dr. Leisola is a passionate Christian, but he wasn't always. He [Leisola] explains: "I believed the standard story [of evolution] till I was about 22 years old. I used it (as I then thought) as a powerful weapon to argue against the Christian God. Without realizing it, I was a typical product of the western naturalistic educational system and I certainly wanted to remain autonomous, and actually hated the idea of God interfering with my life." But he changed, thanks to his girlfriend Marja, now his wife: "She became a Christian and I was suddenly faced with the reality of her changed life and new values. This led me to study the evidence for Christianity. The search led me to Christ. Then I wanted to understand how good a weapon Darwin-

¹ For a review of his book, see "Review of Heretic: One Scientist's Journey from Darwin to Design" by Dan Reynolds. *TASC Newsletter*, October 2018. https://www.tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/oct2018_0.pdf

ism was against Christianity, and it did not take much effort to realize that it stood on a shaky foundation. I first realized it when studying biochemistry and the weak efforts to explain the origin of life based on some rudimentary experiments. So it all started with a change in my belief system. Everyone has a belief system and people use their belief system to interpret the facts; it's not really about the facts."²

Concerning Christianity and science Leisola says:

Christianity is the foundation of modern science and explains why we can do science; a rational God created a rational man in his own image so that he is able to understand the creation with his mind. Indeed, the Creator Jesus Christ is called the Logos (Word - John 1:1-2), and makes sense of the orderly universe and complexity of life. Those believing in a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life are the ones with blind faith.²

Concerning ID, Leisola writes:

ID theory does not criticize the natural sciences. It uses evidences and methods from the natural sciences to critique modern evolutionary theory and scientific materialism, and to argue that intelligent design is the best explanation for certain patterns in nature. It does so based not on what is unknown but on our uniform experience in the present of what does and doesn't cause things like information and irreducibly complex machines. Thus it is based on what we know about the cause-and-effect structure of the world.³

Leisola says that evolutionists tend to respond to ID by (1) focusing on religion and avoiding scientific arguments, (2) creating a straw man of ID then dismissing it, and (3) invoking authority (science says so). Anyone can see this strategy is doomed to fail because it does not actually engage the arguments ID theorists are making. Could it be evolutionists don't have good arguments to counter ID? Leisola refers to many of the confident pronouncements of evolutionists as "bluffing."

Leisola's main points in *Heretic* are:

- 1. Evolution is a materialistic philosophy, not science, and is unsupported by the evidence.
- Abiogenesis is impossible by the known laws of chemistry.

² Prince D (2013) *I Was Wrong*, Creation House, Lake Mary, FL, 21

³ Leisola M, Witt J (2018) *Heretic: One Scientist's Journey from Darwin to Design*, Discovery Institute Press, Seattle, WA, 141

- 3. The fossil record and molecular evidence do not support evolution.
- 4. Orphan genes, genes unique to specific organisms, are not predicted by evolution.
- 5. Antibiotic resistance can be explained by mutations that result in adaptation but not innovation. Hence antibiotic resistance has nothing to say about macroevolution.
- 6. Protein evolution is not supported by the evidence.
- Icons of Evolution: many of the textbook evidences for macroevolution merely demonstrate microevolution (variation within kinds) at best; they have nothing to say about molecules to man evolution.
- 8. Making inferences to the best explanation, without eliminating legitimate potential causes *a priori* (e.g. intelligence), is the best way to seek explanations in the historical sciences.
- 9. Inferences to intelligent causes are based *on observations*, not just metaphysical bias.

I highly recommend *Heretic* to anyone interested in ID.

James Tour (organic chemistry)4



James Tour is the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Materials Science and NanoEngineering at Rice University. Dr. Tour is a messianic Jew. His research focuses on the synthesis of molecular nanomachines for

pharmaceutical applications among other things. Dr. Tour is a leading origin-of-life researcher with over 650 research publications and over 120 patents. He was inducted into the National Academy of Inventors in 2015, listed in "The 50 most Influential Scientists in the World Today" by Thomson Reuters in 2014, and named "Scientist of the Year" by *R&D Magazine*. Dr. Tour was ranked one of the top ten chemists in the world over the past decade by Thomson Reuters in 2009. That year, he was also made a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Tour earned his PhD in organic chemistry in 1986 under E. Negishi at Purdue. He was a postdoctoral fellow in 1986–87 with Barry Trost. Dr. Tour is one of the best organic chemists on earth, period.

⁴ James Tour website https://www.jmtour.com Accessed 2018 Nov 25

Dr. Tour's testimony can been seen in a video available on the web.⁵ Raised a Jew, he became convicted of sin while in college when he was confronted with the New Testament and its teachings. At the time, he was addicted to pornography. He knew he had sin and needed salvation. He came to realize that Jesus was the Messiah promised in Isaiah 53. He let Jesus take his sins away. He tells how his very Jewish mother later also became a Christian. There is another video on the web which shows his daily routine before, during, and after work, his family life, and his love for students.⁶ He is a very disciplined yet caring individual.

Dr. Tour has a lecture on the web about the origin of life.⁷ It is devastating to abiogenesis. During the lecture, Dr. Tour says:

We have no idea how the molecules that compose living systems could have been devised such that they would work in concert to fulfill biology's functions.... Those that say, "Oh this is well worked out," they know nothing—nothing—about chemical synthesis nothing.... From a synthetic chemical perspective, neither I nor any of my colleagues can fathom a prebiotic molecular route to construction of a complex system. We cannot even figure out the prebiotic routes to the basic building blocks of life: carbohydrates, nucleic acids, lipids, and proteins. Chemists are collectively bewildered. Hence I say that no chemist understands prebiotic synthesis of the requisite building blocks, let alone assembly into a complex system. That's how clueless we are. I have asked all of my colleagues -National Academy members, Nobel Prize winners-I sit with them in offices. Nobody understands this. So if your professors say it's all worked out, if your teachers say it's all worked out, they don't know what they're talking about.

Take that in. One of the leading chemists in the world lets us in on a secret: we have no idea how abiogenesis could have happened by the known laws of chemistry!

Concerning the scriptures Dr. Tour writes:

The Bible is the inspired word of God. Faithful Jewish scholars have preserved the Old Testament through

⁵ Jewish scientist (James Tour) makes the greatest Jewish discovery!! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= QNGLZvtRoiU&feature=youtu.be> Accessed 2018 Nov 25 ⁶ Dr James Tour, World renowned Chemist Testimony https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=784icypLgTM> Accessed 2018 Nov 25

the ages and it is an accurate account of God's dealing with mankind, and more specifically, with the Jewish people. The New Testament, particularly the record in the four Gospels, is based upon eye-witnessed historical accounts that are accurate beyond compare to any historical documents of their time. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and God himself, as declared in the New Testament. Jesus Christ came to earth as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah to fulfill that which had been written about him in the Old Testament.

The next time you hear someone claim that no real scientist believes the scriptures or doubts evolution, tell them about James Tour.

Gerald Van Dyke (plant pathology/botany)



Gerald Van Dyke is Professor Emeritus in Botany from North Carolina State University. He taught biology courses at NC State for 38 years. Once an evolutionist, he has long been a fully convinced creationist. Dr. Van Dyke is one of the cofounders of TASC and has served as its Chairman several times. Dr. Van Dyke has spoken about crea-

tion in churches and other venues for over 40 years. Dr. Van Dyke has published 50 articles and abstracts in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, including a book chapter. For over 30 years he has been an active member of TASC. For 25 years he served as faculty adviser to Campus Crusade for Christ at NC State. Dr. Van Dyke won every teaching award NC State had to offer. The school's alumni recognized him as the Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor of Botany. He helped found North Carolinians for Home Education, whose "offices" during the early years were actually located at his home. Dr. Van Dyke received a BS in Botany from Eastern Illinois University in 1963. He received his MS and PhD in plant pathology from University of Illinois in 1966 and 1968, respectively. Dr. Van Dyke has five daughters and 20 grandchildren. He is an active wood carver. Dr. Van Dyke is also known for his great sense of humor, often expressed during his talks.

Dr. Van Dyke took his position on creation where it was not a popular position to take, in the biology department

⁷ Pittman S (2016 Apr 13) The origin of life: An inside atory - 2016 Lectures (with James Tour) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zQXgJ-dXM4&t=111s Accessed 2018 Nov 25

of a state university.⁸ Dr. Van Dyke faced resistance from other faculty members who tried to stop him from being promoted or tenured. But all such resistance failed. God was faithful and preserved him as he was a faithful witness for Christ and creation.

Dr. Van Dyke was a theistic evolutionist early in his career. He even taught evolution in his introductory biology classes without ever questioning it. Then, in the early 1970s, Dr. Van Dyke attended a Bible study organized by Campus Crusade where he discovered he was not really a Christian. Dr. Van Dyke admitted he was a sinner and accepted Jesus as Lord. Dr. Van Dyke soon started studying his Bible with a believing heart and creation science material from the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). Dr. Van Dyke soon realized there were inconsistencies between what the Bible and science taught about origins. Dr. Van Dyke would soon meet Dr. Don Hamann, a professor at NC State, who had a radio program teaching about biblical creation. Drs. Van Dyke and Hamaan met and soon formed a local creation organization which today is known as TASC. Dr. Van Dyke has been a strong advocate for creation ever since.

Concerning evolution, Dr. Van Dyke writes:

It is interesting to me now to think about how irrelevant evolution is to anything of importance as far as new discoveries or understanding of the real world are concerned. In fact, we know that if one makes the correct assumptions about the created world, it is much easier to understand why things work the way they do; and, furthermore, it fits logically with causeand-effect principles. There is no need to fabricate the ideas that plants, animals, or fungi changed from different forms into various other forms. All the forms are right there in plain sight, so they should be studied for their uniqueness and exclude ridiculous notions about their so-called ancestral forms. This folly adds nothing to our understanding of them but only distracts us from getting on with relevant science.⁹

Dr. Van Dyke has discussed the implications for much of his research at NC State in an article entitled *Designed Interactions between Fungi, Plants, and Animals,* available on

⁸ Van Dyke G (2015) My Christian journey and years at North Carolina State University as a young earth creationist. *TASC Newsletter* < https://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/dec2015_0.pdf> Accessed 2018 Nov 25. You can also hear Gerald give his testimony on iTunes; go to <https://itunes.apple.com/cy/podcast/amazing-creation/id968878058?mt=2> and select "Interview with Dr. Gerald Van Dyke."

the TASC website.⁹ He shows how various symbiotic relationships challenge evolutionary explanations but fit well with intelligent design. Thanks, Dr. Van Dyke, for many years of faithful service.

Russell Humphreys (physics)



Russell Humphreys is perhaps one of the most respected creation scientists of all time. He is best known for his pioneering work on the starlight-time problem. He has created cosmologies, based on scripture coupled with gravity time

dilation from relativity theory, that show how light from stars billions of light years away could have reached the earth 6000 years ago on Day 4 of creation week. His work has inspired others to create similar cosmologies. He is also well known for his work on the RATE (Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth) project. RATE work provided experimental evidence consistent with episodes of accelerated nuclear decay in the past. Specifically, he predicted the diffusion rates of helium gas through zircon crystals (dated at 1.5 billion years old by U/Pb dating) as a function of temperature, assuming the zircons were 6000 and 1.5 billion years old. The measured diffusion rates were just as he predicted for an earth 6000 years old. Only accelerated nuclear decay explains how the two dating methods could give such different results.

⁹ Van Dyke G (2011) Designed interactions between fungi, plants, and animals. *TASC Newsletter*, https://www.tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/jul11.pdf Accessed 2018 Nov 25. You can also hear Gerald discuss symbiosis on iTunes; go to https://itunes.apple.com/cy/podcast/amazing-creation/id968878058?mt=2 and select "Symbiosis."

¹⁰ See Humphreys R (1996) *Starlight and Time* (Master Books, Green Forest, AR; Humphreys R (2008) New time dilation helps creation cosmology. *I Creation* 22(3), 84–92

Books, Green Forest, AR; Humphreys R (2008) New time dilation helps creation cosmology, *J Creation* 22(3), 84–92. Related articles can be found at creation.com.

11 For example, see Hartnett JG (2003) A new cosmology:

solution to the starlight travel time problem. *J Creation* (formerly TJ) 17(2):98–102, https://creation.com/images/pdfs/tj/j17_2/j17_2_98-102.pdf> Accessed 2018 Nov 25

12 Humphreys DR (2003) New RATE data support a young world. *Impact* #366 https://www.icr.org/article/114/> Accessed 2018 Nov 25; go to https://www.icr.org/article/124> Accessed 2018 Nov 25; all the RATE articles are available there for free.

Dr. Humphreys also made quantitative predictions of planetary magnetic field strengths,¹³ based on scripture and physics, that were proved correct by measurements made by various space probes over several decades.^{14,15} Perhaps most importantly, Dr. Humphreys has shown time and again that a straightforward reading of scripture can provide a sound basis for building scientific theories; scripture is data that must be taken into account when formulating hypotheses and theories about the origin and state of the natural world.¹⁶

Dr. Humphreys entered the physics PhD program at Louisiana State University as an atheist. He became a Christian while in graduate school, in part due to the influence of his Christian wife. 17 By the time he graduated with his PhD in 1972, he was a fully convinced creationist. Dr. Humphreys has worked for General Electric, Sandia National Laboratory, and The Institute for Creation Research. He is on the Board of Directors of the Creation Research Society. Dr. Humphreys has won several awards and has long lists of publications in the secular and creation science literature. 18

¹³ Humphreys DR (1984) The creation of planetary magnetic fields, CRSQ 21(3), 140–149, https://creationresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/crsq-1984-volume-21-number-3.pdf Accessed 2018 Nov 25 ¹⁴ Humphreys DR (2008) The creation of cosmic magnetic fields. In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Creationism*, A. A. Snelling Ed., 213–230, https://www.icr.org/i/pdf/technical/The-Creation-of-Cosmic-Magnetic-Fields.pdf Accessed 2018 Nov 25

John Sanford¹⁹ (plant breeding/plant genetics)



John C. Sanford has been a professor at Cornell University since 1980, although he is mostly retired from there now. He is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Botany at Duke University. Dr. Sanford was the primary inven-

tor of the gene gun,²⁰ which allows introduction of new genes into cells. Much of the world's crops have been genetically engineered by use of this technology. Once an atheist, Dr. Sanford was saved in 1989.²¹ Since the mid-1980s, Dr. Sanford has explored theistic evolution (1985–late 1990s), Old Earth creation (late 1990s), and Young Earth creation (2000–present). He was not a fully convinced creationist until the year 2000.²²

Dr. Sanford received a BS in Horticulture from University of Minnesota in 1976, and MS and PhD in Plant Breeding/Plant Genetics from University of Wisconsin in1978 and 1980, respectively.

Dr. Sanford is the author of the book *Genetic Entropy* in which he explains why evolution by the Darwinian mechanism is impossible. He discusses how most mutations are very slightly deleterious, flying under the radar of natural selection, but nevertheless causing slow and steady cumulative deterioration of the genome.

Dr. Sanford was the lead editor of the intelligent design friendly book: *Biological Information: New Perspectives*. Dr. Sanford more recently has coauthored the book *Contested Bones*, which shows why the fossil and genetic evidence do not support the evolution of humans by descent with modification from a common ancestor with other pri-

Humphreys DR (2008) Mercury's magnetic field is young! *J Creation* 22(3) 8–9, https://creation.com/
 mercurys-magnetic-field-is-young> Accessed 2018 Nov 25
 Reynolds D (2008) Accurate predictions based on the young earth creation model, *TASC Newsletter* https://www.tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/
 newsletter_pdf/jan08.pdf> Accessed 2018 Nov 25

¹⁷ The Heavens Declare - Dr. Russ Humphreys Testimony, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=We2rr_6v1Sw Accessed 2018 Nov 25

¹⁸ D, Russell Humphres, PhD https://creation.com/d-russell-humphreys-cv Accessed 2018 Nov 25

¹⁹ Resume – John Sanford http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a704d4_62220f65307b4ce292c3451d1f4bb0e0.pdf Accessed 2018 Nov 25

²⁰ Transformation 2 - Transformation Methods, http://passel.unl.edu/pages/informationmodule.php?
idinformationmodule=958077244&topicorder=3&maxto=7&minto=1> Accessed 2018 Nov 25

²¹ John Sanford, Chapter Director, Ratio Christi, https://ratiochristi.org/people/john-sanford Accessed 2018 Nov 25

²² John Sanford, http://creationwiki.org/John_Sanford Accessed 2018 Nov 25

mates. Dr. Sanford has published 100 over scientific articles and holds 25 patents.

Dr. Sanford co-developed the Mendel's Accountant software which if available for download free of charge.²³ "MENDEL is a genetic accounting program that allows realistic numerical simulation of the mutation/selection process over time."²² Starting with realistic assumptions, the program demonstrates why genomes are slowly deteriorating.

Dr. Sanford is president of Logos Research Associates.²⁴ From the website:

As scholars and scientists we delve deeply into the scientific controversies which affect Christian belief and unbelief. We are doing high quality original research that can challenge many academic dogmas of our day—in areas such as cosmology, geology, genetics, and archeology.

Dr. Sanford is the president and founder of Feed My Sheep Foundation, Inc.²⁵ Many of the chapters from *Biological Information:New Perspectives* can be accessed from there.

Below are selected quotes of Dr. Sanford that capture his transformation and mission: ²⁶

Modern Darwinism is built on what I will be calling "The Primary Axiom." The Primary Axiom is that man is merely the product of random mutations plus natural selection. Within our society's academia, the Primary Axiom is universally taught, and almost universally accepted. It is the constantly mouthed mantra, repeated endlessly on every college campus. It is very difficult to find any professor on any college campus who would even consider (or should I say dare) to question the Primary Axiom.... I would have to begin to explore some very big things, including aspects of theoretical genetics which I had always accepted by faith alone.

I felt compelled to do all this [re-evaluate evolutionary theory], but I must confess I fully expected to simply hit a brick wall. To my own amazement, I gradually

²³ About Mendel's Account, http://mendelsaccount.sourceforge.net Accessed 2018 Nov 25

realized that the seemingly "great and unassailable fortress" which has been built up around the primary axiom is really a house of cards. The Primary Axiom is actually an extremely vulnerable theory, in fact it is essentially indefensible. Its apparent invincibility derives mostly from bluster, smoke, and mirrors. A large part of what keeps the Axiom standing is an almost mystical faith, which the true-believers have in the omnipotence of natural selection.

What should I do? It has become my conviction that the Primary Axiom is insidious on the highest level, having catastrophic impact on countless human lives. Furthermore, every form of objective analysis I have performed has convinced me that the Axiom is clearly false. So now, regardless of the consequences, I have to say it out loud: the Emperor has no clothes!

Dr. Sanford and his wife Helen live in New York and have three children.

Summary

Here are some "takeaways" from the lives and careers of these men:

- There are excellent scientists who believe the Bible and take the Genesis account as true history.
- Many scientists have never questioned Darwinism but take it on faith. Once Darwinism is honestly considered objectively, little supporting evidence is found.
- Godly women can have a profound impact on the lives of their husbands.
- Evolution is a materialistic philosophy dressed up as science.
- God is faithful and honors those who honor Him (1 Sam 2:30).
- We have no idea how abiogenesis could work, nor evidence that it did.
- Abiogenesis is impossible by the known laws of chemistry and physics.
- Genomes are deteriorating, not improving.
- Evolution by a Darwinian process is impossible.
- Intelligent Design is good science and supported by evidence.
- Scripture is a reliable starting place for formulating scientific theories on origins.
- A paradigm shift from materialism to design is in progress.

²⁴ Logos Research Associates, http://www.logosresearchassociates.org/ Accessed 2018 Nov 25

²⁵ About FMS Foundation, http://www.fmsfound.org/> Accessed 2018 Nov 25

²⁶ Uncommon Descent (2006 Jun 01) Respected Cornell geneticist rejects Darwinism in his recent book, https://uncommondescent.com/intelligent-design/respected-cornell-geneticist-rejects-darwinism-in-his-recent-book/> Accessed 2018 Nov 25

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, December 13, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 237

We invite you and your family to come out and celebrate Christmas with TASC at our December meeting. We will have light refreshments. In addition, Dr. Dan Reynolds will present a talk entitled "A Few Modern Creationists." Come hear about the lives and careers of five scientists who are Christians and have taken a stand for Christ and creation.