

### **Brief Summary of**

**James Gregory ‘Science and Religion’ dinner discussion, 20 December 2007,**

after the public lecture by Tom Wright

and attended by Fiona Bond, Malcolm Jeeves, Ulf Leonhardt, Bruce Longenecker, Andrew Miller, Nathan MacDonald, Wilson Poon, Eric Priest, Rona Ramsay, Peter Ranscombe, Edmund Robertson, Morven Shearer, Alan Torrance, Charles Warren, Tom Wright.

[For the lively nature of the debate and the jokes, try the MP3 recording on the James Gregory web site ([www.jamesgregory.org](http://www.jamesgregory.org))]

**Eric PRIEST:** Let us first go around the table introducing ourselves. I’m a theorist here in St Andrews, working on the boundaries between mathematics, astronomy and physics. I am also attending one of the two local Episcopal churches. Questions of science and religion have always fascinated me, but I’ve really recently started expressing my views in public.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** I’m a neuropsychologist here and an Anglican who has worshipped in a non-Anglican church for years because my main concern is student work. I’ve had interest in science and faith for some time. I had the privilege of meeting Tom a few years ago -- 36 years actually.

**Andrew MILLER:** I’m an ex-biologist working in the Andrew Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and I am interested in this whole science and religion debate, especially in a post-Dawkins world.

**Eric PRIEST:** And you used to be principal at Stirling and started up Cancer Research UK, didn't you?

**Andrew MILLER:** Better not go into all the jobs because I’ve been a bit of a gypsy.

**Fiona BOND:** I’ve been helping out with the organization of the Gregory lectures, although my main work is for small and medium size charities, not-for-profit organizations in business planning and funding strategy. But I think what I haven’t told Eric and Alan is that although my A-levels were in science, my degree was in theology, so that is part of my interest in getting involved in this in the first place.

**Peter RANSCOMBE:** I’m an editorial assistant with the Scotsman in Edinburgh, working across the professional pages in the paper and special projects. I studied physics at St Andrews, graduating in 2004. I also edit the United Reformed Church’s Synod of Scotland magazine.

**Nathan MacDonald:** I’m a lecturer in St Mary’s in Old Testament. I have a former life, for a couple of years in Cambridge, as a student of mathematics, until I realized there was something more interesting for me to do. And I go to the Baptist church when I’m here.

**Ulf LEONHARDT:** I'm in physics and astronomy here. I'm mainly doing theoretical physics but am also in charge of an experimental program. I find science and religion is very important, increasingly so.

**Eric PRIEST:** You also work on invisibility cloaks and artificial black holes, I believe.

**Wilson POON:** I'm an experimental physicist in Edinburgh who studied bacteria. I'm Episcopalian and for some strange reason I find myself on the doctrine committee. I also teach a little course on science and religion at New College in Edinburgh.

**Eric PRIEST:** He also writes poetry and I have here his latest poem on science and religion.

**Charles WARREN:** I'm a lecturer in Geography and Geosciences here; background in glaciology, now more interested in environmental management and sustainable development. In terms of cross-denomination: I still think of myself as an Anglican, but I've worshipped in the Presbyterian church for a number of years and I have an interests in the interface in science and religion.

**Morven SHEARER:** I'm based in biology here at St Andrews. I'm a neuroscientist who is beginning to edge more towards biomedical ethics. I'm a member of the Church of Scotland, and ditto, the same ending as everyone else: I've an interest in the interface between science and religion because it is part of what we are—because we hold these two things together. So how does it work out?

**Bruce LONGENECKER:** I'm here probably representing New Testament studies in this university. I've more of an interest in Tom Wright's work itself than science and religion. Our relationship goes back twenty years when—you won't remember this, Tom—but I sent you a letter saying 'I've just read your article'. Tom didn't write much in those days, but what he did write even in those days was superb. I wrote him a letter saying 'I've just read your article and it is a profound piece of work that has influenced me incredibly'. And he even wrote back. And later on he appointed me to my first position at in Durham.

**Rona RAMSAY:** I'm a researcher in biochemistry here with an interest in how enzymes work, whether it is to control the cell, or to be controlled by pharmaceuticals, in essence, in drug design. I attend Hope Park, one of the local Presbyterian churches. But in America where I spent sixteen years, I was the token scientist who got tackled on every issue relating to science and religion because I lived in a small town.

**Edmund ROBERTSON:** I'm a colleague of Eric's in Mathematics, with an interest in algebra, but more recently in the history of mathematics. I'm also an Episcopalian and am people's warden at All Saint's Church.

**Alan TORRANCE:** I teach theology and philosophical theology, or philosophy of religion in St Mary's. I'm a Church of Scotland minister and attend my local parish

church. I'm in dialogue with scientists largely through Malcolm Jeeves' initiations; we've been involved in two or three projects together. And now I'm very much enjoying working with Eric Priest. Given that Eric is doing the vast majority of work at the moment, I'm afraid I'm working from the sidelines.

**Eric PRIEST:** For those of you who don't watch television, this is Sally Magnusson:

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** I'm a freelance journalist doing most of my work for the BBC. Some of the work is religious. I feel hugely under-qualified in this company. My last encounter with formal science was in third year at school when my marks were similar to yours, Tom. So I feel a bit of an interloper at this eminent table, but I'm enjoying myself hugely.

**Eric PRIEST:** Let me then begin by summarizing what Tom Wright said in his lecture. He started out by talking about different ways of knowing: a scientific way of knowing, a historian's way of knowing, and other ways of knowing. He mentioned seven modifications to the original Jewish idea of resurrection and of hope. He described four strange features of the gospel accounts of resurrection; the silence of the Bible; the women as witnesses; the portrait of Jesus; and the apparent absence of Christian hope in the accounts. He also emphasized the importance of both parts of the double hypothesis of the tomb being empty and the real encounter of the disciples with Jesus. Then, he went on to talk about new creation; about faith, hope, and ended up discussing Peter's comments, concluding with the suggestion that love is the deepest mode of knowing.

Why don't I now just start off with an arbitrary question. What would you say to the scientist that said that, for aspects that are important to me, I need to either prove them mathematically or demonstrate them experimentally?

**Tom WRIGHT:** I think I would want to explore how on earth you arrive at criteria of importance if those scientific justifications have to be there as back-up. For most human beings, I've ever known, including people across science, things like beauty and love are hugely important but you can't put them into a test tube or into a formula and yet they intersect with things which you *can* put in test tubes and formulae. Human beauty is stunning, and human love is stunning, and you can do biochemical analyses of what's going on when two people fall in love or whatever, but whoever's had that happen to them knows that the biochemical analyses are not the sum total of what's actually happening there. So I would express puzzlement actually; I would just say, 'funny, either I haven't understood your meaning or I think you lead a very sort of shrunken sort of life'. I might not be quite so rude as that.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** I think that Tom is much more gracious than I would be. If somebody asked me that question, I'd begin by asking if they're married, I'd ask them if they have any girlfriends, and I'd ask them about all sorts of relationships, and then ask them to explain to me how each of these came about, whether they can be demonstrated mathematically or by doing an experiment. I think it would be a polite way of saying, 'I think you're talking nonsense. To ask that question: you haven't really thought what the

question means’.

**Wilson POON:** Steve Turner has a poem, which I can’t remember exactly what it says, but it’s along the lines of: ‘My wife, she said, she was just a bunch of biochemicals, but objected violently when I pinned her to the wall and used her as such’.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** You could presumably look at the human brain, if you knew more about it than we know at the moment, and deduce empirically what is going on during human emotion and behaviour.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** Well, you can certainly do that. Indeed, we do know an awful lot now about what is happening in the brain, and this has become linked to theology in a new field called ‘neuro-theology’, which is all the rage in America. What you can do is ask Buddhist monks or Christian nuns to pray or meditate and then you observe their brains in an MRI image, and you find that—surprise, surprise—exactly the same part of the brain is lighting up in these people. Then some scientists have decided they’ve now discovered a "god module" in the brain. So god must have made us because there is a ‘god module’. And you can link all sorts of religious experiences with different levels of biochemicals in the brain. There was a study in Scandinavia where they took two congregations of Christians whose method of worship was rather different, some were more expressive than others were. They discovered that the more expressive ones had five times the concentration of 5-hydroxytryptamine than the others. In other words, their Christian experience depended on it.

But all they are doing here is just observing what is happening in the brain at that time, and the fallacy of neuro-theology is as follows. Alan and I are very keen fly-fishers, and there’s a wonderful section from *The Complete Angler* that I sometimes quote and then ask people what sort of religious meditation they think it is referring to. "Wonderful!" they reply, "well, they were probably meditating on this or that", whereas actually they were just fishing. Then suppose Alan and I go fishing and both have our heads put in these machines, and surprisingly the same bit of the brain lights up. We all believe there are fish under the water, even though none of us have seen them. But because we all believe, we all have the same bit of the brain lighting up, this proves (a) that we have a fish module, and (b) that there are fish because we believe it. That may seem ridiculous but it’s exactly the logic of the neuro-theology module. So, we can in principle say which parts of our brain are working while we are, say, asking a question, but that will tell us nothing at all about the value of the question or the truth of the answer. Each of those has to be decided on the basis of the relevant evidence. I’ve gone down a sideline; I’m sorry.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** An interesting one, though.

**Alan TORRANCE:** Eric, if you said to me that you need to establish mathematically or empirically the things that are important to you, I just wouldn’t believe you, for a very simple reason. The whole of your career is committed to wanting to discover the truth of the matter, pursue scientific truth, and that can only happen within a moral universe. For example, every science presupposes integrity, duty, and obligation. Science cannot

function without these.

**Rona RAMSAY:** These are *social* obligations, though; they are not scientific ones. They are *required* for scientific endeavour, but they are social obligations.

**Alan TORRANCE:** They are social obligations without which science couldn't operate. The scientific community can only function as a community to the extent that it's committed to these values. Without those values there would be no scientific community. Those values, therefore, are extremely real. They are the *sine qua non* of the functioning of all science but they are not measurable mathematically or empirically. They're a reality which the whole scientific community presupposes and has to presuppose and yet they immediately suggest a world which is inaccessible to science. So the hard fact of the matter is, in my view, that all science is presupposing realities which go well beyond the bounds of empirical, mathematical investigation.

**Rona RAMSAY:** I think you're talking layers. A scientific experiment should be designed so that....

**Alan TORRANCE:** 'Should?' Where does *should* come from? That's a *moral* judgement.

**Rona RAMSAY:** That's a moral judgement. Ok, I accept that.

**Tom WRIGHT:** You shouldn't give in so readily. You can be a pragmatist and you can use the word 'should' in a purely pragmatic sense, as long as you are aware that you are doing that. And I think you can answer that science has to function; you want to discover empirically how the world is.

**Rona RAMSAY:** Empirically, you design an experiment to answer a question. You look at the data objectively and you get an answer. It doesn't require the communication; that is a social responsibility.

**Tom WRIGHT:** It's like honour among thieves, isn't it? If you're all going to make any advance pragmatically you have to be able to trust each other. It doesn't mean you are going to be trustworthy in other areas of your life.

**Rona RAMSAY:** But you're talking about social aspects of science, then, not about science itself.

**Wilson POON:** There's no such thing as looking at data 'objectively'. One of the things I teach every graduate student is that 'data is dumb!' One historian of science says the major task of science, like a barrister, is to turn data into evidence. Data only becomes useful when you think there is evidence *for* something.

**Tom WRIGHT:** When you're asking it a question.

**Wilson POON:** From the moment you say ‘evidence *for*...’

**Rona RAMSAY:** When you ask it a simple question.

**Wilson POON:** No, there’s on such thing as a simple question. Students who refuse to make a leap and say ‘I think this data is showing me this’ never get anywhere in science. People who don’t make leaps remain mundane to issues.

**Rona RAMSAY:** No, no, you make the leap *first*, and then you design the experiment that says ‘yes’ or ‘no’. It’s the only sure way to make reliable progress. We see too many intuitive leaps which get us into trouble.

**Wilson POON:** Then I’ve been doing pseudo-science wrong all my life. It’s how I do science.

**Alan TORRANCE:** Why do you think that it’s a bad thing for scientists to falsify their results?

**Rona RAMSAY:** That’s a social question again.

**Eric PRIEST:** As well as the social aspects, it's important that you have integrity in your search for the truth.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** Yes, that’s clearly an internal aspect rather than societal.

**Eric PRIEST:** Whether or not I told anybody else my results, if I falsified them, my conscience wouldn't let me live with myself.

**Rona RAMSAY:** You can’t find truth if you cheat.

**Eric PRIEST:** Yes, exactly.

**Tom WRIGHT:** I’m just wondering what Richard Dawkins would say because I feel a kind of natural theology growing up such that even the method of science, I think your hinting, will produce questions to which the only possible answer is in the realm of, broadly speaking, theology. You move into the moral universe, and then from there, where does the moral universe come from, and game over. I just suspect, I don’t know, but I just suspect that a Dawkinsite would come back with a kind of relentless pragmatism that no scientist can study the entire universe themselves, and they all need to stand on each other’s shoulders: as you go around the room and one person does this which enables somebody else to do that. So you have to basically trust one another. But you trust one another in the same way that players in a rugby scrum trust one another: they are basically playing in the same team, they’re not going to trip each other up. I’m thinking Dawkins could be just purely pragmatic because we all really want to know more about the way the world is and we have to trust the other people in their search.

**Wilson POON:** He would say it's a 'meme' of life because it's useful.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Yeah, that's right.

**Alan TORRANCE:** Tom, Richard Dawkins is a man with a mission!

**Tom WRIGHT:** Oh, sure.

**Alan TORRANCE:** Why is he a man with a mission? Because he believes that his argument is true. And that's the irony of Richard Dawkins: if you read *The God Delusion*, it's positively evangelical. And why is that? Because he holds to a series of values that he cannot himself make sense of within his own world view.

**Eric PRIEST:** But *The God Delusion* is a fundamental tract in the sense that it is closed. To me, one of the key things that you learn as a scientist, which is right at my core, is that I have to be open. I have to be open to other possible explanations. I have to be open—to new ideas, to the unexpected, to the imaginative, to the creative—all the time. As a scientist, that is central to what science is all about. And it's at the core of what being a religious person is all about: responding to what's outside you. To me, I think the greater enemy is fundamentalism right across the whole of society, and this is what we should be countering.

**Tom WRIGHT:** But there may be two different aspects. I mean, I know Thomas Khun has been kind of modified, not to say rubbished by some people, but there's normal science in his language, and then there is the sort of the leap into the unknown. I just wonder if that little debate five minutes ago was on that fault line. And you might find the same in religion too where, for some theologians, what you're doing is exploring a paradigm. There have been some really new ideas out there: 'right, let's explore them and see how they work'. Then others will come along and say, 'no, sorry, we're missing a whole trick here, let's do it differently'. And it may be that in different stages of different disciplines, and at different stages of people's own personal lives, there is a tendency towards settling down and making yourself at home with what you are starting to discover, or a tendency towards saying, 'no, we've lived in this house long enough; time to get a bigger one', if you see what I mean. So you might find all sorts of different combinations of some scientists doing the one rather than the other, and similarly with theologians.

There are some people at the moment in the world of international Anglicanism, who are saying, 'we've got to batten down the hatches: we've got to see this thing through'. There are others who are saying, 'No. We've got to rethink everything'.

**Wilson POON:** The story of Thomas in John 20 is relevant here. In that story, Mary Magdalene and all the other apostles stayed with the data. The Jesus that they knew has been resurrected and 'Rabboni' is what Mary called him. Thomas is the only one who believed—'my Lord, my God'—what is not required by the data but is consistent with it. He made that first Christian comment and then spent the rest of his life working on the

consequences: 'is it actually true?' And he committed himself to working it through.

Thomas had said in John 'let's go and die with Jesus', so he had made a leap with Jesus before. But he uniquely is the guy who made that final great leap. I find it resonates with the way I do science, that the leap I make is not required by the data, but it is consistent with it.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** Can I just pick up something that Alan Torrance said that links with what Rona was asking to begin with? Tom introduced the word trust, I think. Rona introduced the word 'social'. And Alan introduced the word 'moral'. Now there was a time when we could say these words are in a category different from the words of science. That was all very convenient, particularly in neuroscience and neuropsychology, because as long as you are studying things like memory and perception and thinking and how the brain is related to these cognitive activities, it's good, clean stuff with no implications for anything. But the waters became a bit muddy, you see, since the major development in the last fifteen years—and probably for the next few decades in neuroscience—is what is called social neuroscience, where there is now clear evidence for the way in which these words like 'morality', 'trust', are dependant on the proper workings of the brain. So if you find somebody with damage to the pre-frontal area of the brain, they are not able to exercise moral behaviour in the normal sense. Morality is as embodied as anything else in us. And the most recent experiments with fMRI have now identified the parts of the brain that are most active when people are trusting or not trusting one another. So the capacity to trust another person—trustworthiness itself—is embodied within us. And this introduces the rather (worrying to some people) thought that, just as almost everything in the biological world can be plotted on the gaps in distribution (some people have more of it, some people have less), so the capacity for exercising morality, for trusting others, including in the theological realm where we talk a lot about trusting in God, that also may not be quite evenly distributed in the way that all theologians and preachers assume everybody in the congregation has got the same amount. It is not so.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Yes, yes.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** And this I think is where another question comes in, right out of my field, but into yours now, a simplistic thing that a scientist then says, 'well, where there are problems here, the more grace abounds'. And the assumption there is that what is missing because my brain ain't got quite the right amount of stuff to lead me to trust in the way everybody else does, the grace of God compensates. So, I think, in these sort of discussions in the next decades, this whole issue is going to become much more important. We can't say, 'these are nice theological words, and *those* are scientific' because everything about us is embodied.

**Tom WRIGHT:** There was a lot of discussion twenty years ago about 'corporate knowing', a kind of earlier reaction against enlightenment individualism. But the idea of corporate knowing, with scientific communities usually being the prime example, is that in a scientific community you know it together. It isn't that *I* know it and you 'happen' to

know it. It is *we* who know whatever we know. What I think I hear you saying is that what used to be analysed in more functional outward terms has an actual brain structure correlate as well, which is very interesting.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** Everything we *do* has.

**Tom WRIGHT:** But if that is so remember Jesus' words, 'if you had faith like a grain of mustard seed'—in other words, you may not be a very trusting person in whatever internal sense that would mean, but the level that you're capable of may not actually be the most significant thing. As I said in the lecture, the sort of thing that 'knowing' is varies according to the object, and certainly the sort of thing that 'trusting' is varies according to the object of the trust. So that, if it really is the true God you are trying to trust in, then a little bit of trust in that true God is worth a lot more than a very great deal of trust in something that isn't quite that. I mean, I'm not sure that's actually a science and religion question, is it? It's very different. It's about the scientific analysis of what it means to exercise religious faith or trust.

**Nathan MacDonald:** But then if you move to your questions of epistemology, this part of the brain is presumably no different from any other part. That is, the more that these parts of the brain are exercised, the more neuron connections develop and the better those areas of the brain are in their functioning. This might be an issue related to your whole idea about this sort of larger epistemological structure in which science and history belong within faith, hope and love. The more that one exercises such virtues, the better they are refined, the more able they are to make good epistemological judgements.

**Tom WRIGHT:** And that's fascinating because the rise of the discourse of virtue ethics over the last few years as well, which have been very interesting to me—as a Pauline specialist, you don't really talk about virtues too much—I mean I doubt if Bruce (Longenecker) and I between us have read much on virtues in the course of our ordinary duties, as it were, for a long time. Because if you are justified by faith, not works, virtue sounds as though you are creeping back into works again, so you don't do that stuff. But actually, what I hear in some of the virtue discourse now is precisely that something inward, whether it's the brain, the mind, whatever, the heart, can actually develop. (London taxi drivers have a highly developed hippocampus.) In other words, it isn't static; the exercise of it means you actually grow more of it. So, yeah, maybe exercising faith and hope and love does mean that you become a more faithful, hopeful and loving person which is quite exciting really.

**Eric PRIEST:** And part of that is being in a community. In a Christian community you are more likely to exercise these.

**Tom WRIGHT:** You are more likely to do so; indeed, you jolly well *need* to in order to function -- especially for a bishop!

**Andrew MILLER:** Objectivity is normally thought of as an achievement of science—we can see things objectively, which means that it's got to be believed by everybody. But

in fact, objectivity is simply a kind of inter-subjectivity because you can't have objectivity without subjects. And objectivity is simply many subjects agreeing that this is the thing. And that's where the community, and the morality, and the trusting, and the fact of science as a community activity come in. You can do it on your own in a sense, but, at the end of the day, it's got to be something that will convince others, otherwise you should suspect the results of your interpretation. But I really feel that the pragmatic approach that we've been talking about is only just starting. There's a huge future in understanding more about why and how we think. We might even discover a biology of philosophy, maybe even a biology of theology. But that wouldn't mean that it's *explained away* in any way.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Right, right.

**Andrew MILLER:** It simply means that a biological or a neurobiological account has been given of this particular human activity. I think we shouldn't stop our science here, and regard the rest as God or consciousness or morals and so on—it's the old 'God of the gaps' idea. I think we should be much more courageous and interested and really pushing forwards as much as we can the extent of human knowledge, which I do really feel is only just groping its way around at the moment. We can understand more about why we think the way we do and why Richard Dawkins thinks the way he does as well. I mean I'm serious about that. I know Richard Dawkins very well indeed: I worked in the same department for fifteen years in Oxford. It's really important not to adopt Richard's conclusion that, because he can understand certain things, there is no more to be said about them. And that's where I think we should start conversing more with theology, with philosophy and indeed with morality.

**Eric PRIEST:** Tom, how would you respond to the committed atheist who says, 'I'm excited by and accept what Richard Dawkins says'.

**Tom WRIGHT:** I confess I didn't finish *The God Delusion*; it's the sort of book that once you put it down, it's very hard to pick it up again. He doesn't pick good conversation partners: he chooses very cheap shots. He only has really the one new argument which is, if I can remember at this time of night after all this good wine, that, if there were a God, God would have to be higher up the evolutionary scale than the cosmos, but the things that are higher come later, and so he couldn't have made them in the first place. It's an old question that was answered fifty or a hundred years ago by various people who have pointed out that acorns fall from oaks. And, as well as acorns growing into oaks, they also come from oaks. In other words, assuming a unidirectional growth in complexity seems to me extraordinarily naïve.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** Why do you think people respond so eagerly to Richard Dawkins?

**Tom WRIGHT:** That's interesting: why does his book—and Christopher Hitchens' book is even worse—why does it fly off the shelves? The funny thing is that I would understand it in America much more than I understand it in Britain, because in America

so many people are still bruised by fundamentalist Catholicism, fundamentalist Protestantism or whatever, and they're reacting and are eager to be told that actually God is not a big bad daddy in the sky -- *in fact* he probably doesn't even exist and—phew!—isn't that alright now? So people want to hear that message in America, but I would have thought that in the UK people intuited it a generation ago. Some people I meet have been unchurched for three or four generations, but why are they so eager? It must be something to do with the fact that the rumour of God has not gone away in the way that the secularists said it would.

**Eric PRIEST:** But also I don't think that the media and television help. I'm sorry, Sally.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** I feel personally responsible. [Laughter]

**Tom WRIGHT:** We had this debate, in England at least, about BBC's 'Thought For The Day' two or three years ago where the secular society (or somebody) was saying that we should have secularists doing thought for the day because it shouldn't just be the Christians. And someone said, 'you have the other fifty-seven minutes of the hour for a completely secular point of view; surely you don't want these three minutes as well'. Now some people have not realised just how much that agenda *has* come in.

**Eric PRIEST:** I think it's easy to knock Richard Dawkins. I can sense that around the table. However, we spent several months at our house-group going through his book chapter by chapter, and trying to get to grips with what were the arguments behind what he was saying, to decide whether they have any substance or not. I think one of the problems I felt very much was that he was knocking down a straw donkey; that the version of Christianity he was attacking is certainly not worth following, since it bears very little relationship to what I know. For example, he says, 'Faith is blind trust in the absence of evidence. It is a process of nonthinking. It is an evil precisely because it requires no justification and brooks no argument'. To me that definition of faith has no relation to what I understand by faith.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** But the question is: where did he get *that* definition from?

**Edmund ROBERTSON:** I think Eric is right, you see. I don't think we should believe that just because people are reading Richard Dawkins they believe in it. I mean, they like a good argument and he *is* presenting an argument. And so it has been read by many, many people.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Rather, they like good knockabout stuff. It's not a 'good argument' technically.

**Edmund ROBERTSON:** Oh, yes, I don't mean good argument in the sense that it's a sound argument, I mean good argument in the sense that it's a fun argument. He's having a go.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** But what has been so wrong and so unattractive about the

presentation of the Christian gospel that Richard Dawkins should become so appealing?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Quite — that's what we need to wrestle with.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** Yes, why aren't we doing the same thing?

**Andrew MILLER:** But do people really respond to the presentation of Christian apologetics or to the living of Christian lives? If we focussed more on 'lived' Christianity— a lived religion — would it be more effective?

**Wilson POON:** I just wonder whether it's a coincidence or not that these have both occurred after 9.11. Many atheists are shocked after 9.11 that religion still has such a powerful hold, and they're frightened. And so when someone in the (false) name of science comes and knocks religion, they breathe a sigh of relief and say, yes! This is more true of Daniel Dennett than of Dawkins.

**Tom WRIGHT:** It's as if a farmer reckons he's managed to eradicate rats from the farm entirely, and then one morning he wakes up and finds, no, there's an entire nest of them, right in the centre of the barn. Then he's going to go after them even more vehemently with great fury since he thought he had got rid of the creatures. That's what we're saying, isn't it?

This is where the whole 'religion in public life' question ought to come back in and both religion and science ought to be part of public life and not hived off sideways. You've got to have the political dimension, and the case has to be made because it isn't widely believed, that religion goes bad when it is excluded from its place in public life not when it is given a place in public life. Of course, the Americans don't believe this because they look at us (the English at least) and say, well you have an established church (we gave that up with Thomas Jefferson) and that's why you have some many problems in England. But it's absolute rubbish because the established church doesn't mean—as Church of Scotland people know—that the state tells the church what to do or vice versa. It means you have a creative, open-ended partnership, which when it works well can really be win-win and lead to all sorts of positive ways. It's within that context that you have healthy religion which is open-minded and has its windows open to what's going on.

**Rona RAMSAY:** I would agree with that, and if I could take that a little further, is that not a problem with science? Many people say science is here and religion is in a separate corner over there, whereas to me, as a scientist who is also a Christian, they are all together. We've been given minds to explore things, and we can explain them in scientific terms or we can make sense of them from a faith viewpoint. It's all part of the continuum. So we need to bring them back together.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Absolutely, but it is part of the problem with the Enlightenment, which insisted on a heavy-handed split of sending God off upstairs and carving up the lower world to ourselves. That was basically a political decision, a very convenient political

decision. But it's had so many spin-offs in the way that we think, in the way that we behave, the way that we act. And yet the Enlightenment has, as I've hinted, brought us such great blessings as well that I certainly don't want to say, 'oh well, stop the Enlightenment, let's do something different'. So what are all the great gains that must be now enhanced in wherever we're now going to go? The challenge is to enter a post-postmodern world, where we've heard the critique of modernity, but then have moved through postmodernism and out the other side. And nobody else is really leading the way at the moment. We have to do some fresh thinking and I think that's hugely exciting.

The other point I was going to make is about the arts. The public reaction against the secularist myth is very interesting. Cathedrals have more worshippers each year for Christmas than ever before. We now have two advent services in Durham cathedral and two Christmas eve services because there just isn't enough room. You don't need to advertise, people just come. And it's kind of pre-articulate: there is something going on there, they know they want to be part of it, and it gives meaning to their lives.

**Eric PRIEST** And there's also a thirst to understand. There's a response to experiences and to what's inside and a sense that Christianity really means something. But there's also a desire to underpin that feeling with understanding. That's partly why we had so many people there today: five hundred and fifty of them. I imagine many of them are puzzled by Dawkins and sense that he is wrong but want to have the arguments to support their feelings.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Yes, but feelings are a late Enlightenment emphasis, and I'm wary of the word 'feelings'.

**Eric PRIEST:** But for a holistic life it's the combination of reason and intuition that is significant: feelings are part of us as human beings, right?

**Tom WRIGHT** Oh, feelings are hugely, enormously important.

**Eric PRIEST:** But it's balancing them that's important.

**Tom WRIGHT** They cannot substitute for thought. One of the dangers in post-modernity it seems to me was that previously people said 'I feel' when they meant 'I think', but they wanted to be polite because 'I think' implies you could actually be wrong whereas 'I feel' just means, well, this is how I am. But then, having made that linguistic shift for politeness' sake, feelings began to take the place of thinking. And now in postmodernism they actually trump thinking, which can be driven out altogether. When we're having a staff meeting and one of my staff says 'Bishop, I feel very strongly we should put so and so....' I say, 'I don't care what you feel. I want to know what you think'. We feel, we can emote all over the place, but it doesn't get us anywhere. Feelings are hugely, hugely important but not in that context.

The other thing that struck me, before 9.11, was when the National Gallery did that amazing exhibition 'Seeing Salvation' by Neil McGregor for the millennium. The

broadsheets rubbished it. They said, 'who needs to see these pictures of a dead man all over the place. It's just not healthy; it's not where we are as a culture.' The public ignored the broadsheets and voted with their feet. Tens of thousands of people trooped through the National Gallery to see these pictures of Jesus on the cross. It tells you that there's a deep, deep hunger. Neil McGregor did an astonishing presentation to a clergy conference on Christian faith and art and had everybody eating out of his hand.

**Eric PRIEST:** Any comments by people who have been relatively quiet?

**Fiona BOND** Actually there was an interesting question that Craig Brown from the Scotsman asked you, Eric, and I'd be interested to know reactions from the table. The question was, 'Is fundamentalism more of a threat to religion or science?' Does any one have comments about that?

**Malcolm JEEVES** One scientist I met claimed that you can't be a Christian and believe in science, because most of the Christians he had met were anti-science. But the problem is fundamentalism and creationism, which is a real issue for the Christian church today. I think we fudge the issue if we pretend it's not. So far in this country it's only beginning, but it's being funded by the Americans more and more. In America, however, it is a major problem already, and I don't know what the answer is because it's such a powerful force.

**Wilson POON:** Malcolm, can I make a confession. For 4 years I was a dyed-in-the-wool, read-in-the-books seven-day creationist.

**Eric PRIEST:** I think you mean six-day!

**Malcolm JEEVES** And what led to changing your views?

**Wilson POON:** It was *not* science. It was whilst I was doing my PhD, that I started to think about the philosophy of science. And I realised that the six-day creationists had a wrong philosophy of science which goes along the lines of 'the theory of evolution cannot explain one particular effect and so must be wrong'. I realised that I'm doing science because I believe broadly the paradigm that there is a puzzle and so I have to go and do my PhD. So I was thinking on the one hand about philosophy of science and on the other about theology. What kind of God do I believe in? I believe the sort of God who is present on the cross when Christ says, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' I believe in the sort of God who actually doesn't leave such obvious traces of him around. You know, he's not the sort of God who put a God-stamp on everything: I'm here, I'm here, I'm here. It was thinking about a meta-scientific issue that got me out of it. But then what frightened me was that most of my creationist friends in Cambridge were scientists. And I realised that none of us scientists have read anything that should be interpreted literally since we were fifteen.

**Fiona BOND:** But isn't this partly a blurring of the lines between what Tom was describing earlier as science being the study of the repeatable vs. the study of the

unrepeatable in history.

It seems to me that in science there is an awful lot of study of the unrepeatable now and that has opened the doors wide to very different interpretations of scientific data. Physics, cosmology, geology. And that means that there is now language for talking about unrepeatable data that wasn't there before and perhaps that's why Dawkins has such currency.

**Tom WRIGHT:** And coming the other way, the so-called social sciences are trying, it seems to me, to make history into a science, looking at what has happened in communities and trying to deduce quasi-scientific laws from it. Someone said in TLS 'if you have to call it a science it probably isn't'.

**Andrew MILLER:** Since we are talking about Richard Dawkins, I must tell you a story. Alister McGrath has written so many books that he has an agent to go and speak to publishers about his forthcoming books. He wanted to write a book on evolution and Dr. Dawkins, something like God and Dr. Dawkins, and so his agents went to speak to the publisher and they said, 'That's fine, we know Alister McGrath very well because he's published all these books. But who is this chap Richard Dawkins?' at which the whole meeting just collapsed! I'm looking forward to meeting Richard again. I see him quite often; I'll tell him that story.

**Eric PRIEST:** One of the arguments Dawkins does make is that religion is bad for humanity because it's the cause for a lot of evil, historically.

**Wilson POON:** So is science!

**Tom WRIGHT:** The Enlightenment secularist myth starts off with *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and they have to guillotine thousands of their own in order to prove the point. The French Revolution kind of falsifies the Enlightenment dream before it's even got off the ground. The Enlightenment gave us penicillin, but it also gave us Hiroshima, so these things are two-edged swords. Of course, you then have to say that it's what human beings do with these tools that's important.

If I can just go back, a point about fundamentalists and creationists which, which has just been born in on me recently, is that the so-called 'creationists' do not actually believe in creation. They tend, in my experience, to be radical dualists who really think that God is going to have an Armageddon in which he is going to blow the world of space and time and matter to smithereens and we will all end up on clouds playing harps. They haven't read Romans 8.18-26, which is screened out of their Bibles, and it's a very serious problem. Their commitment to six-day creation is not a commitment to the *goodness* of creation. It's actually simply a way of saying, 'therefore, phew! The Bible is true after all, therefore our theology on everything else will stand'. It's simply a way of proving the Bible true, but they haven't begun to wrestle with its meaning. And then the real irony is, one stage further, that the people who shout loudest about creationism right now are radical social Darwinians when it comes to the 'might is right' argument in international

geopolitics. You know: 'we have the guns, the bombs, the tanks, and so we have to go and act as the world's policeman'. I'm sorry, that's the way it looks. And that is just naked social Darwinism it seems: we have developed, we are the enlightened ones; we are the ones who have got all this technology, therefore, etc.

**Andrew MILLER:** Could I just ask a question, coming back to your lecture? You made an interesting point that is in the New Testament: Jesus' tomb is empty but there's a new body. And I think you were saying that it was recognizable and so on, but it was a glorified body, a spiritual body, something like that.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Transformed.

**Andrew MILLER:** Transformed? So I would like to know what is the relationship between the original body and the transformed one because I think scientists have to accept everything that there *is*. And if there is a new spiritual world that we should really be thinking about and studying, that's part of reality and so approachable by science. So what is the relationship between the old body and this new one?

**Tom WRIGHT:** One of the most significant things, it seems to me, in the resurrection narratives is the mark of the nails. Jesus says, 'examine me and see'. In other words, there is continuity. And it's not just any old continuity. It's the continuity which brings through into the new creation the marks that speak of authentically self-giving love in the old creation. Which says something to me about continuity between the present world and the future one as we are now: that the things which will last into the new world from where we are now are the things that are done out of that same self-giving love. That's kind of a broad brush. The marks of the nails imply that Jesus' old body didn't sort of frizzle up and a new one grow *de novo*. There really is continuity, and it's such an odd thing: there is no kind of Old Testament background for talking about that stuff. Why would they make that up?

**Malcolm JEEVES:** I think I'd want to gloss that a bit. I'd want to talk about a mysterious continuity because I was a bit concerned about the word 'physical'. I can't think of any biblical warrant for believing that the bits of my present body (of which, in any case, ninety percent are changing every seven years; most of it is water) will continue. In any case, how about the Christians who were blown up ... I can't think of any good reason for believing all those bits are going to be gathered from somewhere and therefore I think the key thing is that it will be identifiable embodiment and not to take it beyond that, otherwise you get into all sorts of unnecessary tangles for which I see no biblical warrant.

**Tom WRIGHT:** No. I'm quite happy with that and I remember you saying thirty-five years ago from 1 Corinthians 15 about God gives it a body, the seed and the plant, God gives it a body.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** I'd better explain: I was giving a bible study on Resurrection in Oxford. I'm glad you remember that.

**Tom WRIGHT:** I do, it was very striking. There's no problem about that but I do want to say that God is capable of transforming Jesus' physical body into a new body and yet he didn't get a new body which then—like, for instance, St Francis—acquired some nail marks for the sake of it. There *really* is continuity. But of course, they faced this in the second century. The rabbis face it. Tertullian faces it, you know: 'If a cannibal eats a Christian and then the cannibal gets converted and becomes a Christian and he dies—who's going to get which bits of the body when they are [both] raised? And Tertullian just sort of says, 'shh, don't ask any questions'. Origen anticipates what Aquinas says a thousand years later and it seems to be exactly right: that yes, our bodies *are* in a state of flux, and Origen already knew that; it's not a new idea. But there is appropriate continuity of form with perfect ease of discontinuity of matter. C.S. Lewis picking that up in his book *Miracles* says like the curve in a water fall: continuity of form, discontinuity of matter. And that seems to me perfectly all right.

**Eric PRIEST:** Maybe there is also a sense of an evolution after the Resurrection in that Jesus asks Mary not to touch him, but Thomas to touch him.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Well, that is fascinating and there are all sorts of things going on there.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** Am I right in thinking that in the forty days after crucifixion there are only about two events.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Well, there is the fleeting meeting in the morning with the women in Matthew. But then there's the evening, both in the Emmaus road and then back in the upper room. Then there's Matthew's event at the end and the scene by the lake in John. So you'd probably get about a half-dozen events if you try.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** So what was happening during those forty days?

**Tom WRIGHT:** When I published my book on Resurrection, Charlie Moule wrote me a delightful letter. He said he'd always wanted to ask where did the risen Jesus get his clothes from. It's silly question but actually if you take the story seriously things like that do come up. I don't think they're problematic. But you see, the question of where is Jesus during that time is related to the question of the Ascension and you can't begin to address that without completely ditching most Western ideas about heaven, the platonic or 'up in the sky' stuff. Coming to terms with this much more extraordinary thing of heaven being God's space which intersects and interlocks with our space, and the idea that Jesus' body is equally at home in either. The idea of a physical or a transphysical or whatever *but solid body* being at home in heaven is just a slap in the face for most modern Platonists.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** What's your understanding of what's happening at the ascension then? What does your imagination give you as a picture?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Imagination isn't terribly helpful here. But if I start with a broad-brush picture of heaven and earth *not* as 'heaven up in the sky and earth down here', but as

heaven as a different dimension which is God's dimension which intersects with ordinary reality and which in Judaism happens in one place in particular, namely, the Temple. The Acts of the Apostles begins with the Ascension, but pretty soon you find the Church as counter-Temple movement, because Jesus is now the place where heaven and earth actually have met for good. So, the Temple is going to be under judgement. Quite a lot of Acts plays down that line. From the Resurrection onwards the body of Jesus is equally at home in heaven and earth. The Second Coming (when heaven and earth will be united) is not a matter of Jesus the spaceman flying around somewhere. It's a matter of the veil which separates heaven and earth being drawn back so that heaven and earth which are at present close to each other but not transparent to each other become transparent to each other at last. Which is why the New Testament doesn't always talk about Jesus 'coming', it sometimes talks about his appearing: when he appears, we shall be like him, we shall see him as he is. In other words, he is present but hidden.

**Edmund ROBERTSON:** Could I ask about one point I really didn't understand. You talked about Paul as not being a witness. I always thought Paul *was* a witness.

**Tom WRIGHT:** I didn't say that. It was your colleague, John Haldane. I didn't actually take him up on that but I could have done. The nature of Paul's seeing of Jesus is a kind of specialised thing requiring, metaphorically and literally, a chapter to itself. Paul is quite clear in 1 Cor. 15, that it is both a real seeing of Jesus in sequence with the other real seeings of Jesus and also that it is odd. He says it's like one born untimely: it really shouldn't have happened like that. It was out of proper time, and yet was part of the real sequence. And so, just as the Resurrection is *sui generis* so far, so Paul's seeing of Jesus, he himself says, was *sui generis* which means it's extremely difficult to get a handle on it. But the really important thing is that it actually is a seeing of Jesus which Paul has had and the Corinthians haven't: 'Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus my Lord?'. That's his criterion for being an apostle, that he is a witness to the Resurrection. So any attempt to reduce Paul's seeing of Jesus to his internal mental or psychological state simply won't work in terms of Paul's own understanding. We could always say Paul was wrong, but that's his own understanding, certainly.

**Eric PRIEST:** Talking about eyewitnesses, what's your reaction to Richard Bauckham's book about Jesus and the Eyewitnesses where he says that the gospels are actually much closer to the original eyewitnesses than had previously been thought.

**Tom WRIGHT:** If you look at the back of the dust jacket, you will see what my reaction is because I wrote a blurb for it.

**Eric PRIEST:** Was it favorable?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Oh, yes; they wouldn't have printed it otherwise. It's stunning. Like so many things that Richard has done—and I have an enormous regard for him—it is an extraordinary piece of work. He may be pushing the boat out too far in some places, I mean it's a huge new thesis and it will take ten years for the scholarly community to sift it and say, 'well, he's actually right about this but he may have overstated the case on

that'. But it completely rocks the entire Bultmannian paradigm back on its heels.

**Eric PRIEST:** The way he says he thinks John was actually John the elder, an eyewitness, and that a lot of Mark is actually the words of Peter translated into better Greek by Mark.

**Tom WRIGHT:** And in a sense he's simply bringing back what people said in some parts of the second century and various people have said ever since.

**Eric PRIEST:** He's giving a lot more evidence for it.

**Tom WRIGHT:** and doing it with a lot more scholarly apparatus. But this gets us to a whole point: I started to be aware a few years ago that in some English evangelical or fundamentalist circles there was a massive concentration on Paul, or at least one reading of Paul, and an almost dismissive attitude to the gospels, that 'the gospels just kind of give you some kind of back-up information about Jesus but the real thing is *The Gospel* which is: 'Jesus died for your sins, so get on your knees now'. And I actually think now that the whole Western tradition since the late Middle Ages has not known what the Gospels were there for, and that has something to do with the same dualistic attitude to creation which then is at the root of the science religion polarization. And that if we solve the one, we might be part way to solving the other. Does that make any sense?

**Eric PRIEST:** So our understanding of the Gospels was distorted?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Yes, and has been forever. Calvin, bless him, didn't know what the gospels were there for: for him they are a sequence of interesting stories from which you get doctrinal and ethical points. Instead to me they are a narrative about the kingdom of God.

**Alan TORRANCE:** I entirely agree with you, (not quite on Calvin perhaps!) but I entirely agree with you otherwise. One thing I really liked about your lecture was your talk of creation and new creation. It would be very easy for us in encouraging this science and religion dialogue to have our agenda defined by Richard Dawkins and try to argue, as I was doing a little bit earlier on, for the necessity of affirming within science a moral universe, and then to try working up from that basis to the justifiability of theism and then fitting the Christian faith and, indeed, Jesus into this predetermined, Procrustean bed. What was absolutely superb about your lecture, Tom, was that you categorically refused to do that! If it is the case that God is Emmanuel in Jesus Christ—if it is the case that God is there redefining our perspectives or our horizons, transforming our perceptions, the way we process and interpret reality—if that's really what it is, *and that's emphatically what the Synoptics, the Johannine material and the Pauline material are seeking to articulate*, then it's not a question of our establishing safe religious bases, moral universes and so on and working up to that. Your refusal to approach the faith in this way was one of the things I found most valuable about today's lecture. This is emphatically something which, in my view, the Church needs to be unambiguously clear about. One of my heroes on this issue is Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who saw this particularly

clearly. In his opening lecture on Christology, he started by saying this, 'To the extent that Jesus Christ *is* the Logos, from our perspective he must not be *seen* as the Logos—like a word or idea that we fit within our prior 'logoi', within our framework of thinking. From the perspective of our finite, alienated human thinking, he requires to be seen to be the *Anti-logos*, he said, or the Counter-logos: that is, as the one that transforms, or, in his words, 'crucifies' our modes of classification, our ways of interpreting reality such that they can be reconceived and recreated from that Centre that is the Incarnate Logos, 'God-with-us'. And what Christian faith is holding forth is nothing less radical than that. What we are presented with is an 'either... or...'. Either we begin by recognizing the Incarnation and the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Jesus Christ, in which case (exactly as you articulated so magnificently this evening), our whole understanding of reality requires to be rethought from that centre. Or we start with Dawkins, seek to justify religion in response to the agenda he has set, that is, in ways prescribed by secular culture. But when we do this, we can only find ourselves seduced into reconceiving 'Christianity' from a very foreign basis and affirming only those facets of the Gospel that can be accommodated by argumentation of this kind.

It is imperative that Christians have sufficient confidence in the Gospel itself to challenge Dawkins's crude fundamentalism (and to do so rigorously and with unambiguous clarity!) in such a way that they don't find themselves in a situation wherein their attempts to defend the faith to a secular culture end up determining the shape and grounds of their Christian affirmation itself. Christian faith is based not on arguments which a secular culture can affirm but on the recognition of God's redemptive presence with and for humanity in the person of Jesus Christ – and that recognition is not the gift of any process of rationalistic argumentation but the reconciling and transformative presence of the Holy Spirit!

**Tom WRIGHT:** It's the illustration of the college being given the picture and determinedly forcing it to go in the JCR bar or wherever, where actually it doesn't do any good there.

**Alan TORRANCE:** Precisely!

**Malcolm JEEVES:** How do we translate these ideas to people who have completely different world views?

**Eric PRIEST:** Well, first of all we have to live the Christian life in all that we do and secondly we have to communicate it in language they can understand. Part of the problem is that many have grown up without the Christian language.

**Tom WRIGHT:** and the word God doesn't mean to them what it ought to mean for us.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** You were talking about differentiating between resurrection and resuscitation, I was wondering, during the resuscitations that do occur, both from Jesus' hand and the disciples later on, what's actually happening? Is that also part of the new creation? What is death in that context?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Yes, it does seem to be part of the new creation. It is very odd that there are tales throughout Christian history of some missionaries—it is often missionaries who tell these stories—who, when faced with somebody who's died, are actually able to raise them to life. But even if that happens, they will of course, go on and die again. Just to take the paradigm case, Lazarus, where, within the chapter where his raising happens, some people are plotting to kill him because now he is evidence on that side, as it were, so he clearly can die again.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** What's happening materially to a dead body that's already stiff?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Well, I'm not an expert on this, but there is a whole set of near-death, or so-called 'near-death', experiences where people are clinically dead, and there is a whole literature as you know of people who have died and have been pronounced dead and who then have been aware of being told, 'sorry, you've got to go back again'. We've probably all met one or two people who might have had that either as a first or second hand experience.

**Andrew MILLER:** So they weren't really dead?

**Tom WRIGHT:** Well now, it's very interesting how imprecise our language about death actually is. The Victorians were very worried about this, which is why they had those tubes put in coffins, so that, in case you turned out to be alive after all, you could communicate or ring a bell and weren't left to die eventually, as it were, by accident from suffocation.

**Malcolm JEEVES:** But you can produce near-death experiences with specific anesthetics.

**Tom WRIGHT:** To be sure. But it is interesting the experiences people have had.

**Sally MAGNUSSON:** But the point that's being made when it's described in the Gospels is that it is miraculous, that the people *really* are dead.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Exactly. But the trouble is that when somebody comes back now we say 'they weren't really dead', whereas a doctor might say that for a full twenty-four hour period this person was actually dead. And then, astonishingly, they might in fact wake up again. So then there is a slippage in terms just of the meaning of what we mean when we say dead. When I was working on this little book, *Surprised by Hope*, I read quite a lot of stuff which made me realise just how slippery this area is. However, you see the idea of the miraculous is itself one of the things which is in need of revisiting on the science and religion front when you say miracle to most people. I don't use the word miracle usually when I'm discussing what's going on in the New Testament because, to most people today, the word miracle conveys a deist idea of a god who is outside the whole process and occasionally reaches in and does something and then goes away again, which is not the biblical idea. The biblical idea is of a God who is present, always working delightedly with the grain of the world he's made, and sometimes, to our surprise, what for the

moment looks to us against the grain of the world he's made, but out of his continuing presence of providence, not out of an absence which occasionally leaps in and does something silly. I resist the word miracle, and I resist the word supernatural because it seems to me to convey exactly same dualism. I get shot at by some people who have built up this (to me) rationalist apologetic, where you argue for the propriety of a supernatural world and then once you've done that, you can do almost anything you like, as Newman found.

**Eric PRIEST:** So the relation between God and his world, in your view...

**Tom WRIGHT:** Is much more complicated than that of the blind watch maker.

**Andrew MILLER:** I think that's absolutely right. To go back to Alan's very challenging point that the last two hundred years has given the driving seat to science and we are fitting in with that. We should in fact be approaching it from a logocentric, Christocentric view. That's fine but, two points. One, the Christian church had eighteen hundred years to do that, and why is it that these last two hundred years we've gone in a different, wrong direction. And the second is that I feel, I think, —I even believe—that speaking in terms of such arguments and apologetics is all fine, but it's actually lives lived that impress people. I don't think arguing against dogma will do any good at all by itself. We can be right or wrong, but that won't help at all unless people *live* out their beliefs.

**Alan TORRANCE:** It might be both/and, because part of a lived witness is a witness that says 'no, we're not going to be dictated to by this nonsense. This is clearly, demonstrably problematic'. And that kind of gracious confidence is actually part of the living witness, I think.

**Nathan MacDonald:** In relation to the new creation idea, which I like very much, the Resurrection provides us with the prototypical foundation for the epistemology that you're sketching, in which ultimately the theological virtues are a form of epistemic way of knowing and that history and science belong within this. The question that this raised for me is how is one going to figure in other religious traditions? The issue came to me very strongly, I suppose as an Old Testament scholar, particularly when you addressed the issue of the Red Sea, partly because some parts of the Old Testament, for example, Deuteronomy 29, wants to describe those events at Egypt and in the wilderness in a very similar way to the way that the New Testament wants to talk about Resurrection. It wants to use language of spiritual sight -- e.g. the beautiful passage in Deuteronomy 29, 'The Lord did not give you eyes to see or ears to hear what God did in Egypt but now he's giving you the opportunity to see it' -- the wonderful thing in that section of Deuteronomy 29 is that the people who are being addressed are the children of those who actually saw the events, so the hearers, the children, were not those who actually physically saw them. But Moses says, you did see it, whereas your parents, who did physically see it, didn't see it. So the Old Testament works with these categories of spiritual sight which is also the way that the New Testament often deals with the Resurrection accounts, the most famous one, of course, the Emmaus road. So I suppose I wanted to hear your thoughts on that.

I should also say that, on the way to the lecture, as I was walking down Market Street, I just saw a bus go past with an advert for the cinema on the side, 'Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium' -- and the tag-line was: 'You have to believe it to see it', and I thought, how wonderful, I'm already being prepared for the lecture.

But I like your Resurrection paradigm because it is centred on the key elements of Christology and the way the world is. Ultimately within Christian thought, our way of knowing is because that's the way God is, the way the Christ is. And yet there is just that nagging question of what one does about other religious traditions where spiritual sight is important and particularly within Judaism.

**Tom WRIGHT:** Yes, very much so. If I was going to start to talk about the whole question of Christian faith and other faiths I think I would want to make about five or six preliminary moves and now is not the time for that... except to say that, the more I've studied early Christianity, the more resurrection stories just stick out like a sore thumb, that there is *nothing remotely like this* in Judaism or Islam and, *a fortiori*, Buddhism and Sikhism and Hinduism. That isn't a way of saying 'therefore Christianity is automatically superior', let alone that all Christians are automatically sort of superior human beings to adherents of other faiths, because you know that, I hope, we're growing past and out of that sort of approach. It's just to say that this is so different, it's actually more different than most Christians in the West have actually begun to realize —and the Christians in the West I think have sold themselves short. And, you know, I think that we have to get into a *Vive la difference* mode.

Last time I did one of these dialogues with Muslims, I was relieved to find that nobody around the table had the slightest idea of saying, 'oh, we all really agree then, don't we'. There are *some* things that we do remarkably agree on, there are convergences we did not expect. But those only highlight all the more the very striking and dramatic claims that the different traditions make, and you can't flatten them out. As I say at the end of *The New Testament and the People of God*, there is a family likeness and the Christians might be wrong, but they are not saying the same as the Jews.

But that pulls me back to Sally's question, about communicating it, because yes, living the Christian life as the context for different kinds of evangelism is fine, but I suppose because I'm Bishop, I am more and more concerned with the corporate aspects. I'll give you an example. In South Shields at the moment, we're trying to raise some new money for a project called West Harton Action Station, in one of the grottiest areas of the North East of England. You know, when finally somebody comes along and cleans up all the needles and condoms in the front and backyards, within a week it's back to looking as it did before. There's massive unemployment, drug abuse and depravation. Half the shops have shut, and so the banks have shut because there is just no money around. But some ordinary local Christians, got together off their own bat, different Churches, and took over an old bank, and started a literacy training course, a credit union, a computer training centre, a mothers and toddlers group, and an old people's drop-in centre. I've been there two or three times, and it makes you weep because they are actually doing the

gospel on the street  
England, because the  
because of course the  
Guildford -- if any  
Resurrection is over  
new book, *Surprise*  
evangelism, and ea  
evangelism and apo  
you're doing the ju  
actually it makes se