

## Big bang critic dies

Greg Demme & Jonathan Sarfati

Sir Fred Hoyle, the man who coined the term ‘big bang’, died on Monday, 20 August 2001, from complications following a severe stroke.<sup>1</sup>

Born in Yorkshire, England, in 1915, Hoyle was one of Britain’s best-known mathematicians and astronomers in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He spent decades searching for answers to questions of the origins of life and the origin and age of the universe. In the 1940s, he, along with Hermann Bondi and Thomas Gold, proposed the ‘steady state’ theory, a belief that the universe had no beginning or end, but always existed and would continue to exist.

All these men were strong humanists, so they rejected any theory that seemed to teach a beginning for the universe, because that would point to a Beginner.<sup>2</sup> Their bias was so strong that they were even prepared to violate the fundamental Law of Conservation of Mass/Energy, which states that mass/energy in the universe can neither be created nor destroyed. Of course, this fundamental law is consistent with Genesis—God’s creation of the space-time universe was **finished** after six days. But the Steady State Theory posits a continual spontaneous appearance of hydrogen atoms from nothing.

But because the evidence of the rapid expansion of the universe exceeded the predictions of Hoyle’s theory, and because of the reluctance to believe that fundamental laws were violated, many astronomers began to postulate that an explosion of highly dense matter was the beginning of all space and time. In his 1950 BBC radio series, *The Nature of the Universe*, Hoyle mockingly called this idea the ‘Big-Bang’, considering it preposterous.<sup>3</sup> Yet the theory—and the derisive term—have become mainstream, not only in astronomy but in society as well.

Hoyle readily saw through the fallacious assumptions behind the big bang theory. In 1994 he wrote, ‘Big-

Bang cosmology refers to an epoch that cannot be reached by any form of astronomy, and, in more than two decades, it has not produced a single successful prediction.’<sup>4</sup> Even though many people currently consider cosmic microwave background radiation a successful prediction of the big bang, this is very shaky, and would fit better with Dr Russ Humphreys’ cosmological model that involves God having stretched out the cosmos (Isaiah 42:5).

This should be a lesson to big bang apologists, who are seduced by its apparent teaching of a beginning of the universe and simply ignore the contradictions with God’s Word. What happens to their apologetic framework if the secular astronomical community goes along with Hoyle after all, and rejects the big bang? Then the big bang apologists would need to reinterpret their reinterpretations of Genesis!<sup>5</sup> Also, commenting on the general state of mainstream cosmology, Hoyle and several colleagues wrote, ‘Cosmology is unique in science in that it is a very large intellectual edifice based on very few facts. The strong tendency is to replace a need for more facts by conformity.’<sup>6</sup>

Though Hoyle was not a Biblical creationist or even a Christian, he eventually recognized the impossibility of Darwinian evolution. Hoyle regularly took to task the Darwinian establishment for ignoring the complex sources of information and information processing programs (like DNA) needed for the creation and continuation of life. He realized that life couldn’t have arisen by chance in a primordial soup on Earth. First, he tried to solve the problem by saying that if we had the whole universe to work with instead of Earth, then this might overcome the problem. Hoyle favoured and popularized a view called *panspermia*, the notion that life originated somewhere else in the universe and was driven to Earth by electromagnetic radiation pressure.

But eventually he realized that even this would be woefully inadequate as a materialistic explanation of life’s

origin. In his 1981 book *Evolution from Space* (co-authored with Chandra Wickramasinghe),<sup>7</sup> he calculated that the chance of obtaining the required set of enzymes for even the simplest living cell was one in 10<sup>40,000</sup> (one followed by 40,000 zeroes). Since the number of atoms in the known universe is infinitesimally tiny by comparison (10<sup>80</sup>), even a whole universe full of primordial soup wouldn’t have a chance.

Hoyle explained this in his typically lucid manner, and as with the big bang, his turns of phrase have found their way into popular culture. For instance, he wrote,

‘The notion that not only the biopolymer but the operating program of a living cell could be arrived at by chance in a primordial organic soup here on the Earth is evidently nonsense of a high order.’<sup>8</sup>

Hoyle originated the famous illustration comparing the random emergence of even the simplest cell to the likelihood that ‘a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein’.<sup>9</sup>

Hoyle also compared the chance of obtaining even a single functioning protein by chance combination of amino acids to a solar system full of blind men solving the Rubik’s Cube simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> Some more problems with evolutionary ‘origin-of-life’ scenarios can be found on the *Answers in Genesis* Website in the Q&A pages under *Origin of Life*<sup>11</sup> and *Probability*.<sup>12</sup>

Hoyle eventually came to believe that the fine-tuning of the universe as a whole was further evidence for a designer:

‘A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics . . . . The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.’<sup>13</sup>

The fine-tuning of fundamental constants is indeed amazing, but creationists must be cautious—some of the alleged ‘fine-tuning’ presupposes a

big bang or other evolutionary cosmology.

Alas, Hoyle paid for his outright questioning of the materialist paradigm. In the 1950s, Hoyle had some ingenious ideas about stellar fusion, and predicted that the Carbon-12 nucleus would have a certain energy level (called a *resonance*) to enable helium to undergo fusion.<sup>14</sup> His co-worker William Fowler eventually won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1983 (with Subramanyan Chandrasekhar), but for some reason Hoyle's original contribution was overlooked, and many were surprised that such a notable astronomer missed out. Fowler himself in an autobiographical sketch affirmed Hoyle's immense contribution:

'Fred Hoyle was the second great influence in my life. The grand concept of nucleosynthesis in stars was first definitely established by Hoyle in 1946.'<sup>15</sup>

But for all his ability to see through popular anti-God science, Hoyle's own views about God were equally un-Biblical. He still held onto panspermia, and in his last book, *A Different Approach to Cosmology*,<sup>16</sup> Hoyle and his co-authors reaffirmed a quasi-steady-state theory for the universe, but this time one that requires ongoing episodic creation by some intelligent force within the universe (a complete denial of a six-day Creation *ex nihilo* by a transcendent, personal God).

Hoyle was also known as a science fiction writer. That he took to this sort of writing is not surprising, given his fascination with space and extraterrestrial life forces.

While Hoyle's comments on the big bang theory and Darwinian evolution are helpful, it is sad to see that Hoyle died apparently having rejected the truth about Creation. God has revealed the truth for all to see in the Bible, the History Book of the Universe. All the answers about the origins of life and the universe can be found right there in the first book, Genesis.

## References

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5. See 'What are some of the problems with the Big Bang theory?', <[www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/astronomy.asp#big\\_bang](http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/astronomy.asp#big_bang)>.
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15. <[www.nobel.se/physics/laureates/1983/fowler-autobio.html](http://www.nobel.se/physics/laureates/1983/fowler-autobio.html)>.
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## Time's alleged 'ape-man' trips up (again)!

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Once more, *Time* magazine has loudly trumpeted the 'fact' of human evolution, and once more, based on flimsy evidence.<sup>1</sup> The latest find is 'dated' between 5.6 and 5.8 million years old, although one toe-bone is 'dated' a few hundred thousand years younger. This was discovered by the Ethiopian graduate student Yohannes Haile-Selassie (no relation to the late Emperor) enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, and a student of well-known paleoanthropologist Tim White. His original papers were published in *Nature* with commentary.<sup>2-4</sup>

### Other recent 'missing links'

Readers should be aware that this is far from the only recent article that has tried to promote evolution on the basis of a few fragments of bone. Also, a claim that they've found the 'missing link' now is a tacit admission that they haven't found it before, despite their extravagant claims!<sup>5</sup>

Another alleged missing link is claimed to be even older at 6 million years, and was named *Orrorin tugenensis* or the 'Millennium Man' because it was discovered near the turn of the Millennium.<sup>6</sup> But this was based on 13 fossil fragments comprising broken femurs, jaw bones and teeth. There were accusations that the fossils were collected illegally, which were denied and seem to be unproven.<sup>7</sup>

Another recent evolutionary claim was *Kenyanthropus platyops*, allegedly 3.6 million years old. Readers would find our preliminary response 'Not another (yawn) "ape-man"?'<sup>8</sup> and follow-up article 'New Hominid Skull from Kenya'<sup>9</sup> helpful. Readers who are already familiar with these will see the latest *Time* article as *déjà vu*. It's a good lesson that there is no need to be frightened by the latest media anti-God proclamations—they have been discredited time after time. Another