

GRASPING THE NETTLE

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016

GTN ROOTS ARE SPREADING COUNTRY WIDE

For entrepreneurs worldwide, the big question is 'how to get the big idea going viral!'

GTN has not quite achieved that status but within Scotland, it is spreading widely – and fast.

From the north, to the south, congregations have caught the vision and are eagerly grasping the nettle. Scotland's rural communities are engaging just as much as the urban areas.

In **Sutherland**, further to a recent GTN conference, churches are coming together in key localities to explore the God Question and equip themselves to think more confidently, and in a more informed way about science and God.



Beginning in Lairg, GTN spreads across Sutherland.

Across **Lanarkshire**, churches from many denominations are planning to move forward together in organising public events to highlight the GTN agenda in the community and to follow up by offering opportunities to explore the God Question. In mid November, more than 30 church leaders met together in East Kilbride to plan the strategy jointly

Meanwhile, the Presbytery of **Lochaber** is devoting a conference in February to investigate ways of impacting the community, having held Exploring the God Questions widely across the region subsequent to a GTN conference held last year addressed by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

GTN Chairman, Very Reverend John Chalmers expressed delight at the growth and spread of GTN. "Given that GTN was officially launched in June 2015, its expansion and the interest it has attracted is way beyond all reasonable expectations."

To discuss how GTN can support collaboration in your community, please get in touch by emailing office@graspingthenettle.org.

SUPPORT GTN ON FACEBOOK AND SPREAD THE WORD

GTN wants to promote a public debate on science and God and social media is a crucially important highway for the conversation.

Provocative clips will fuel the discussion. First up was Oxford Don, Professor Peter Atkins, a staunch advocate of atheism.



Professor Atkins - for whom a creator is completely unnecessary
Image: Vera de Kok

View it on our Facebook page and have your say on the professor's claim that scientists who believe in God are manifesting a deep seated childhood problem.

www.facebook.com/graspingthenettle

GTN CONFERENCE 2017

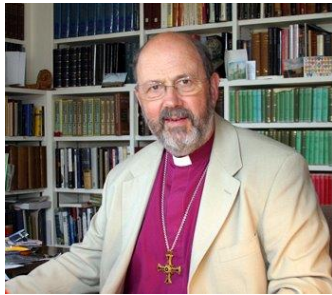
The Soul of Science and the Heart of Religion.

Don't miss GTN's second annual conference scheduled for 17/18 March 2017. Details and early bird booking available from Tuesday 13 December 2016.

See www.graspingthenettle.org/conference.

N T WRIGHT EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR GTN

GTN held its third annual dinner in September this year. Giving the keynote address was the



distinguished author Professor N T Wright, former Bishop of Durham and now Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity

at St Andrews University. With the title 'Wouldn't you love to know? – Towards a Christian view of reality, Professor Wright began by declaring his welcome and support for GTN. Tickets for the event sold out two weeks before hand. If you missed out, you can hear Professor Wright's address at http://www.graspingthenettle.org/watch/n_t_wright_2016

GTN EVENTS GO 'ON THE ROAD'

With the title 'Wonder-Full', GTN has begun a programme of events in individual churches but, more usually, for groups of churches to celebrate the wonders of our existence. Typically these events are the 'lead-in' to Exploring the God Question sessions that



Sarah Lane Ritchie: insight into the wonders of the brain.

follow. The first autumn event was held in Killermont Parish Church, Bearsden, Glasgow. Guests included two scientists, vocalists and a composer/arranger and together, in film, music and conversation, they celebrated the wonder of what it means to be a human being, functioning in the amazing way we do with intelligence and creativity. How can such wonder be explained? That's



Alan A Craig: A major Scottish musical talent. the God Question!

To enquire about having an event in your area, contact office@graspingthenettle.org.

CAN THE NETTLE BE GRASPED IN SCHOOLS?

Kharis Productions Ltd, producers of The God Question series, have released a new version for schools. With links to Religious and Moral Education as well as to a new popular subject, Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies, the series has been designed to have maximum fit with the curriculum.

Barbara Coupar, Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service described the new series as 'a fantastic resource' and predicted that it would be widely welcomed in schools. If you know of any teachers who might be interested, please direct them to the series website – www.thegodquestion.tv/introduce.

The material will also be very useful for chaplains and youth workers.



The very balanced approach to the subject has been welcomed by prominent members of the Humanist Society Scotland.

GO FORTH AND TELL

Grasping the Nettle urgently needs an army of enthusiastic ambassadors who will spread the word about GTN. PowerPoint slides, leaflets, film clips, publicity literature and Getting Involved cards can all be supplied. GTN will even supply the script designed to fit whatever timeslot you have available. Can you be available to help spread the word and grow the circle? The success of GTN could be affected by your answer. To discuss further, email office@graspingthenettle.org.

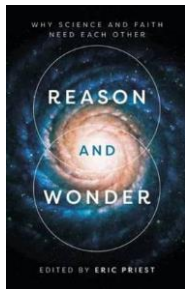


GTN AUTHORS AT WORK

Two scientists closely associated with GTN have recently published contributing to the public understanding of the relationship between Science and God.

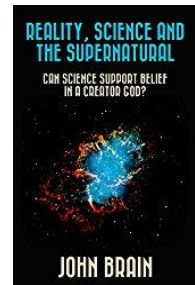
Reason and Wonder edited by Eric Priest

The book highlights fascinating discussions taking place between leading thinkers in science and theology. Far from seeing these as separate means of establishing reality, the book reveals how they are linked through a common search for understanding. Professor Priest is a fellow of the Royal Society and has been awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society.



Reality, Science and the Supernatural by Dr John Brain

This work, which started as a contribution to the Scientists in Congregations in Scotland initiative, addresses the question 'Can Science Support Belief in a Creator God?' In the book, Dr John Brain sets out on a personal journey 'to update my views on science and religion taking into account major recent advances in knowledge, particular in the physical sciences'. Dr Brain, has managed research and development programmes in the United Kingdom's National Engineering Laboratory. He is an advocate of GTN and hopes his book provides some support for those involved.



LET'S GROW THE CIRCLE IN 2017

More than 1500 people across Scotland are involved in some respect with the work and promotion of Grasping the Nettle. We hope to see that number expand dramatically in the year ahead.

A LENDING HAND?

Would you value having a scientist of experienced user of Exploring the God Question to lead your group sessions? Would you be willing to help others in thinking through issues relating to science and God? Please get in touch at office@graspingthenettle.org.

