



# GRASPING THE NETTLE

## NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2021

### GTN Online is Back!



As the ‘season of mists and mellow fruitfulness’ approaches, we are delighted to announce that it also heralds a new series of ‘GTN Online’ events. And just as Scotland’s iconic Forth Railway Bridge links land masses across a watery divide, so Grasping the Nettle works at *connecting people*—who are interested in big questions—with subject experts and the opportunity to enquire further and discuss more. This session our guest list includes Professor Jason Leitch, Scotland’s National Clinical Director, now a household name. See pages 2 and 3 for more details of the coming programme.



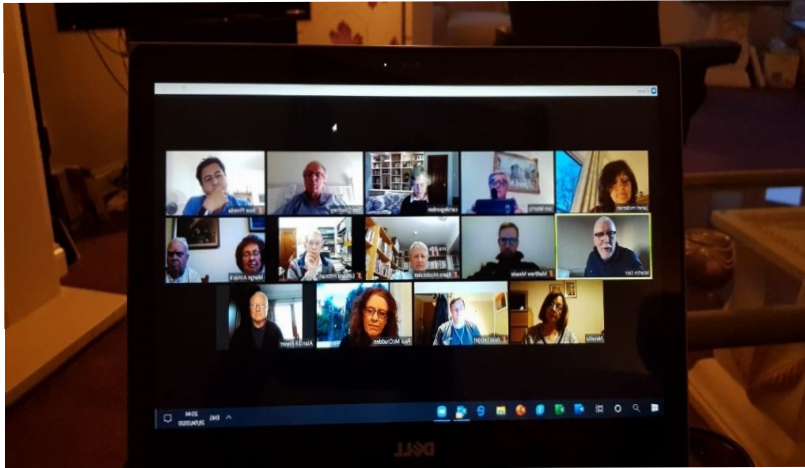
Professor Jason Leitch, one of GTN Online’s featured guests in the season ahead.

### Clearing the Fog

Just before the headline photograph was taken, the famous bridges across the forth were almost indecipherable through the enveloping morning mist but, little by little, as the temperature rose and the fog cleared, the full resplendent reality of this feat of Scottish engineering was laid bare. Similarly, GTN is about making the God question—for many shrouded in mystery—a clearer picture through the opportunity to explore it in some detail and in a systematic way.

In session 20/21, around 400 people joined the exploration, with many attending on several occasions. Afterwards we surveyed the group to measure responses to their experience of the events. The results are summarised on page 2. We look forward to welcoming explorers ‘old and new’ to GTN Online 21/22.

## What the Audience is Saying About GTN Online



*Intellectually stimulating, valuable, of high quality and useful as a means of examining faith issues.* These were some of the descriptions used by members of our online audience in an evaluation survey carried out by our statistician, researcher and youth development officer Shahrukh Gill.

Very heartening for the organisers was the feedback that the majority of the

respondents said they could foresee circumstances in which they could use information from the sessions when in conversation with others, whether of the same or different beliefs.

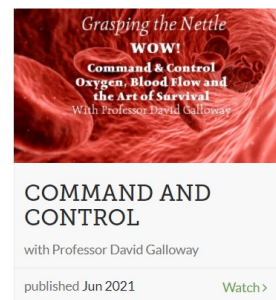
### The Chance to Review

The audience especially appreciated the opportunity to review the sessions via the 'Watch' section at [www.graspingthenettle.org](http://www.graspingthenettle.org).

As a reminder to respondents to the evaluation survey, A

Taste of GTN was a special compilation of abbreviated content from the main sessions of 2020/21

In this section of the website we invite you to access some important film presentations given especially for Grasping the Nettle.



## A Taste of What's to Come

**Thursday 7th October. 7.30pm**

### **WOW! 'Invisible Warriors: Viruses and Bacteria**

**with Dr Neil Ritchie**



For our opening session we welcome Dr Neil Ritchie, as our principal guest. A consultant infectious diseases physician and honorary clinical senior lecturer at the University of Glasgow, Neil will pull back the curtain on how viruses and bacteria are a crucial part of an invisible system making our lives possible. WOW!

**Thursday 28th October 7.30pm**

### **As I See It: Science, God, the Virus and Me**

**with Professor Jason Leitch**

As Scotland's National Clinical Director since 2015, Jason has been at the heart of advising the Scottish Government on the pandemic. He will feature in a special live session of GTN's popular online series As I See It in which he will give a personal perspective on science, faith and the pandemic.



November (date to be confirmed)

## Exploring Further: Footprints of God?

with Archaeologist John Sode-Woodhead

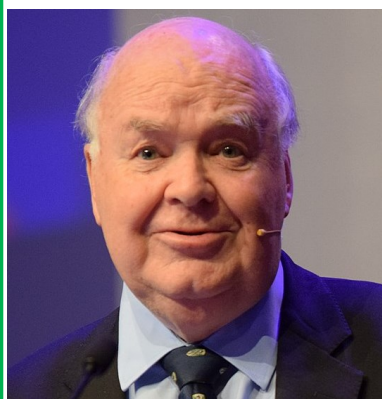
With Scottish roots, and now based in Israel, John grew up in Nazareth. Having studied archaeology at the Universities of Edinburgh and Tel Aviv, he went on to lead some very important excavations in Israel. Join us in this session as John uncovers footprints in the stones of the past and evaluates what archaeology can contribute to evidence for a Christian worldview.



Wednesday 19th January

## Exploring Further: With One Eye on the Future

with Professor John Lennox



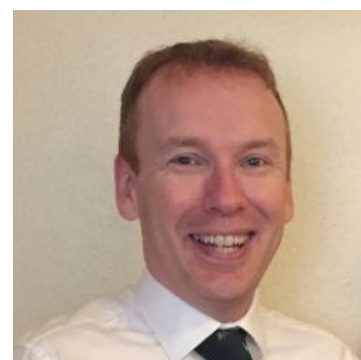
Renowned for his contributions to the science/God debate, more recently John Lennox has turned his attention to how science is shaping our future and the implications. Basing his presentation on his book 2084, Professor Lennox will help us anticipate moral and religious challenges that might lie ahead and whether it seems likely that we are heading for an earthly utopia in which even the problem of mortality is solved by science.

Thursday 10th February

## WOW! Wonders of the Brain

With Dr Ian Morrison

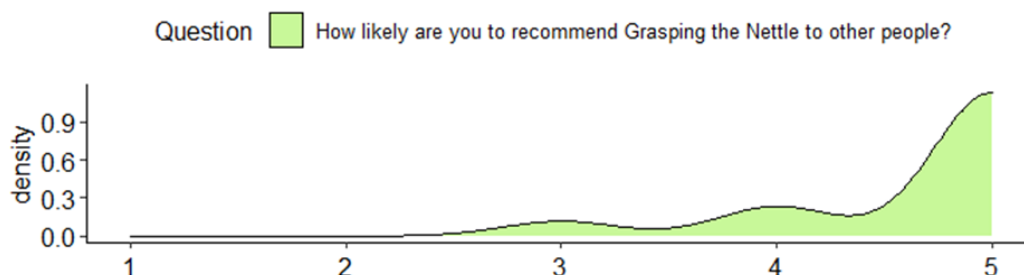
Having trained in Glasgow, John Hopkins Hospital and the University of Texas, Austin, Dr Morrison is a consultant neurologist in NHS Tayside, a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Join us for this fascinating session in which we will experience wow factors associated with our cerebral control centres!



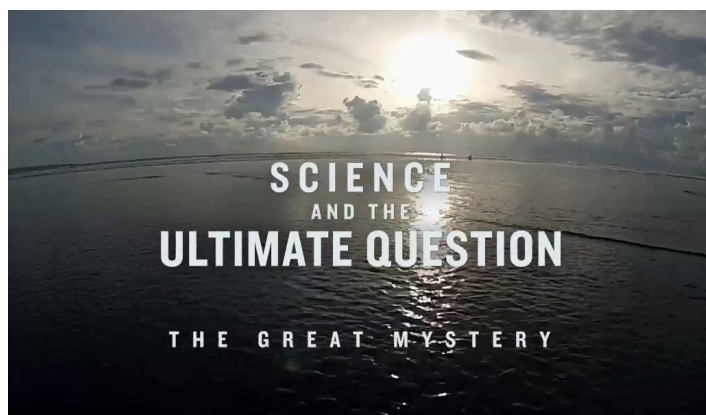
**REGISTRATION FOR BOTH OCTOBER SESSIONS IS NOW OPEN. SIMPLY NOTE YOUR INTEREST TO [office@graspingthenettle.org](mailto:office@graspingthenettle.org). Places are limited!**

*And so much more to come, including on climate justice!*

Why not recommend GTN to others? In our recent survey most respondents were enthusiastic or very enthusiastic about doing so.







## SCIENCE AND THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

**A New Global Series by Kharis Productions  
on Science and Religion Begins its Journey**

Kharis Productions and Search for Truth Charitable Trust (SFTCT) have released a new series on Science and Religion geared to a global audience.

Although the themes are similar to *The God Question*, up to 50% of the filming—as well as around half of the contributors—came from the Far East.

But the global feel of this new series is in more than locations and people. Whereas *The God Question* series mainly contrasted how Christianity and Atheism answer the big questions of existence, the new films also incorporate the perspectives of Buddhism and the traditional Chinese religion Daoism.

Professor John Spence, Chair of SFTCT, said of the new series, "*One aim is to open up the topic of science and religion principally to a Far Eastern audience and to demonstrate how four widely held world views can be compared and contrasted. Where does the finger of truth and reality seem*



Venerable Sik Hin Hung of the University of Hong Kong explains how Buddhism attempts to answer the big questions.



Professor Yi Wang of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology is a cosmologist who sees compelling evidence for the existence of a creator in the natural world.



Theologian Prof Alister McGrath claims that if Christianity is true it is "a game changer"

*to point in relation to what is behind our existence? However it is expected that this content should be of interest worldwide".* Science and the Ultimate Question has recently been released to Kharis Productions' international distributor 'Flame' who have secured the first sale to FTV Prima, a mainstream channel in the Czech Republic. A version, entitled **Science and God: The Search for**

**Meaning and Truth**, will soon be directly available to the public via *The God Question* Website. All programmes in both series are available with optional subtitles in Mandarin.



Via the series, visit sacred places of Buddhism and Daoism in China, Hong Kong and Thailand.

Meanwhile *The God Question* series continues to spread around the world, increasingly on Video On Demand channels. More recently re-named Science Vs. God? (the question mark is essential) the most recent network to acquire it is Dot TV, a new digital channel with worldwide broadcast aspirations.

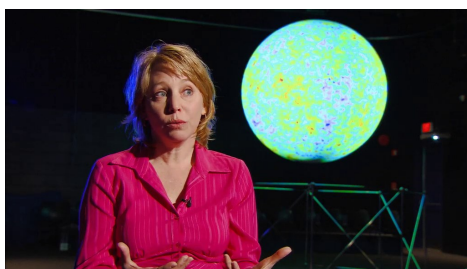
## Take a Fresh Look at Exploring the God Question



Since its official launch in June 2015, Grasping the Nettle has promoted the view that the question of God's existence is one that can be logically and clearly examined; we need not rely on vague hope, intuition or—worst of all—wishful thinking. In Romans 1:20 Paul emphasises that God himself is evident *'in the things which have been made'*.

The challenge of putting that thesis to the test was taken up by the producers of *The God Question*, a series which has now spread around the world, including on many mainstream TV channels. But rather than compile a one sided argument, each programme recognises that a movement called New Atheism came to prominence in the noughties, claiming that there is evidence aplenty the God does *not* exist and that science is in the business of supplying all the answers we need to the big questions.

Cue the battle for truth with world renowned advocates from both sides converging on the scientific evidence, available from our understanding of the cosmos, the development of life on earth and the wonders of human consciousness. *"We believe one of the benefits of the series is that it does not presuppose any real scientific literacy on the part of viewers,"* said co-producer Karen Rollins. *"The programmes provide the audience with key science content in making an informed decision on the God question. Another valuable characteristic is that both the atheist and theist interpretations of the evidence are clearly set out in each of the three themes. The audience can adjudicate where the finger of truth points"*



NASA's Dr Kim Weaver studies the cosmos.

Since its launch to an audience of around 60 invited guests at Chatelherault Country Park on a snowy Saturday morning in March 2013, the series has travelled the world and has had the potential to reach a staggeringly large audience of 820 million people through multiple broadcast channels from CBC Canada to NRK Norway and from True Vision TV, in Thailand, to the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and more. The non broadcast version has gone to more than 30 countries.

*Exploring the God Question* is the 6 part version directly available to the public. It comes either on DVD or via web streaming and with a full colour study guide. Ideal for using with interested groups of any composition, it is highly recommended for use in churches and in homes. **If you have never grasped the nettle with *The God Question*, it is time to right the wrong!** See [www.thegodquestion.tv/explore](http://www.thegodquestion.tv/explore)



And while nervousness about coronavirus continues, why not ask GTN to host some online sessions for your group? Our Liaison Officer, Rev George Lind, will assist in anything from advising to presenting and leading the discussion. Enquiries to [office@graspingthenettle.org](mailto:office@graspingthenettle.org)



## A View from the Chair

### GTN is on the Move

By Very Rev Dr Martin Fair



Martin Fair, GTN Chairman and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2020/21.

I'm delighted to greet you as the reasonably newly-appointed Chairperson of the Grasping the Nettle Steering Board—and whilst doing so, to thank my predecessor, Angus Morrison, for his sterling work over the last few years. Having been at the very first meeting of those who gathered to discuss the possible formation of a body such as Grasping the Nettle, I feel in a privileged position to have been part of the movement throughout the whole of its life to date. We've come a long way, that's for sure!

But notice, please, my choice of word in describing Grasping the Nettle as a movement rather than, for example, an organisation.

Of course, we always seek to be well run and properly organised but principally we want to be going places. Standing still is a recipe for pretty soon falling backwards. As chair of the Steering Board, I'm committing to making sure that that doesn't happen.

We've got a great programme for this autumn season, the details of which you'll see in this newsletter and on our website as they are confirmed. We'll be welcoming back some GTN favourites and welcoming some new faces. Together, they'll cover a range of fascinating and highly contemporary subjects. Of course, we'll still be online and I'd encourage you to get fully signed up to everything that's coming to you - in the comfort of your 'front room'.

Grasping the Nettle. We're on the move.

## Investing in Young People in Scotland



Grasping the Nettle wants to invest in young people and the next generations. Recognising that reaching successive populations of youth requires working in partnership with them, it is proposed to form a consultative group of young people to help advise in the process and even to take up leadership roles. If you or any young people you know might be interested in an initial chat with GTN please get in touch with us at [office@graspingthenettle.org](mailto:office@graspingthenettle.org).

## Reaching Children Everywhere

Search for Truth Charitable Trust is committed to assisting parents and teachers in addressing the big questions with children. The central resource being developed is an animation series entitled The Story of (Nearly) Everything. For an update, contact [office@graspingthenettle.org](mailto:office@graspingthenettle.org)



Young explorers Mackenzie and Ajay are at the heart of adventures to the beginning of time.



## New Film Now Widely Available

Professor John Lennox is famous around the world for his defence of the Christian world view in the face of the popular atheist claim that belief in God is all nonsense. As an author, and notably as a debater of prominent atheists, the Oxford Professor of Mathematics and a Philosopher of Science has championed and argued the Christian cause around the world. Now the story behind his valiant stand against the tide of naturalism and atheism is told in this recently released movie, made initially for cinema.



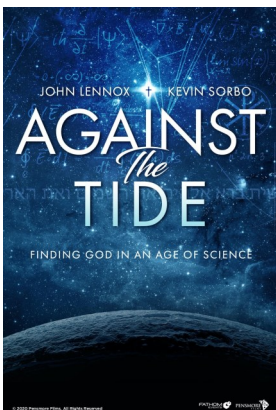
Archive footage of East Berliners attempting to escape to the West during the rule of the Soviet Union

*Against the Tide* is a travelogue, a science documentary, an odyssey into Biblical history and more. Narrated by American actor Kevin Sorbo (star of Hercules and Andromeda) who also joins John Lennox on the journey, the story begins in Northern Ireland before moving to Cambridge, Cardiff and Oxford – while incorporating visits to East Berlin, Hungary and Russia. Learn why and how John Lennox learned to speak fluent German and Russian and see a younger version of the man arguing the case for Christianity behind the Iron Curtain.

While part one of the film highlights why science points inexorably towards a creator, part two delves into history, travelling to iconic sites in Israel where, in dialogue with Sorbo, the Professor cogently makes the case for historical evidence pointing clearly to Jesus of Nazareth being the creator God incarnate. At the heart of the argument: the reliability of the gospel records and the evidence for the resurrection.



At the Pool of Bethesda, Kevin Sorbo queries with John Lennox how a scientist can believe in miracles



Acquire your copy of the film today at [www.againstthetidemovie.org](http://www.againstthetidemovie.org). It is available on DVD or to web stream. There is a free study guide available to download from the website.

View it to develop your confidence in the Christian faith, share the film with others, use it within the church or when safe to do so, organise a public screening in your community. Direct any questions arising to [office@graspingthenettle.org](mailto:office@graspingthenettle.org)





Setting up for filming in Jerusalem

## What They're Saying About Against the Tide...

*"Brilliantly filmed."*

*"The whole production is wonderfully well executed. It has left me buzzing with excitement."*

*"This could both challenge sceptics and equip believers in a really significant way."*

*"Beautiful, powerful and intriguing."*

*"Inspiring film. Many are asking the big questions and the film really opens that up in a special and unique way."*

*"A truly excellent film."*

*"Amazing production."*

*"A great film to have on university campus."*

*"Magnificent film."*

AGAINST-TIDE
 HOME
ABOUT
ENDORSEMENTS
RELATED MEDIA

# AGAINST THE TIDE

JOHN LENNOX & KEVIN SORBO / PENSMORE FILMS / KHARIS PRODUCTIONS

**A JOURNEY WITH A DIFFERENCE...**

Against the Tide is a travelogue, a science documentary, an excursion into history, an autobiography and more! But at heart, it is the story of one man's daring stand against the tide of contemporary atheism and its drive to add belief in God to society's catalogue of dead ideas.

**AVAILABLE TO WATCH/ORDER NOW**

Watch now with online streaming rental

[RENT NOW](#)



## Stay Connected with GTN

At GTN we are expanding our social media presence beyond **Facebook**. Find us now on **Instagram**, **Youtube** and **Linkedin**:



<https://www.instagram.com/graspingthenettle/>



[Grasping The Nettle - YouTube](#)



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/grasping-the-nettle>



<https://www.facebook.com/graspingthenettle/>

This wider range of social media can help keep you updated with the upcoming events of GTN as well as revisiting our previous efforts and conversations.

It is well established that social media can be powerful channels of communication but that happens most especially when supporters spread the word offer their 'likes', comments and become 'followers'. GTN needs your help to spread the word, so please connect not only yourself but help and encourage others to connect too.

### Widening the Profile

Meantime we are delighted to share the encouraging news that the **As I See It** series which was placed on Facebook has had more than 6000 views. You can also access it in the 'Watch' section of our website [www.graspingthenettle.org](http://www.graspingthenettle.org).

## GTN Support Personnel

Increasingly GTN is building a network of colleagues committed to helping you explore our agenda with members of your church and/or friends and family. Several are willing to help lead Exploring the God Question study groups. That number includes GTN's Liaison Officer Rev George Lind who also is available to provide taster sessions of The God Question resources or present a fuller picture of the multi-dimensional GTN to your church or church leadership or diocese or presbytery.



Rev George Lind, GTN  
Liaison Officer



Shahrukh Gill, GTN  
Youth Development  
Officer

Our social media is now being led by Shahrukh Gill, an honours graduate in psychology and about to begin training for the ministry. Shahrukh also holds the title 'Youth Development Officer' and is particularly eager to be in touch with young people in Scotland to interest them in exploring why Christians can confidently believe what they believe. In days of "missing generations" from church the importance of this initiative cannot be overstated.

You can get in touch with either George or Sharukh through [office@graspingthenettle.org](mailto:office@graspingthenettle.org).

GTN is an interdenominational initiative of churches in Scotland, using Exploring the God Question as its key resource. It is administered by Search for Truth Charitable Trust (Charity No: SC039465. Company No: SC340300), a registered charity and private limited company registered in Scotland.