

# Denison joins debate with atheist Hitchens

April 9, 2009

DALLAS—Jim Denison, theologian-in-residence with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and other Christian apologists debated renowned atheist Christopher Hitchens recently during the first Christian Book Expo.



Panel debates whether the God of Christianity exists, and what difference it makes.

Denison and Hitchens were joined by Lee Strobel, author of *The Case for Christ*; William Lane Craig, research professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in California; and Douglas Wilson, a senior fellow of theology at New Saint Andrews College in Idaho.

The quintet debated whether the God of Christianity exists, and what difference it makes. While Strobel and Craig tried to deduce the existence of God starting with evidence from the natural realm, Wilson argued for Christianity on the basis that it is needed for a philosophical framework.

Denison and Hitchens may have tangled most directly as Denison noted that logic can take a person only so far toward belief in God. Part of that

journey must be taken on faith, helped in part by what a person experiences.

“Faith in God is a relationship,” he said. “All relationships require a commitment which transcends the evidence and becomes self-validating.”



Sam Hodges, religion reporter for the Dallas Morning News, interviews Jim Denison, BGCT theologian-in-residence.

Hitchens questioned Denison’s assertion, believing the God is Christianity is one of cruel control, watching people on earth treating each other horrendously. God watches everything people do to the point that even what they think can be considered a “crime.”

Denison countered that God “grieves” for the pain people suffer and “redeems all that he allows.” God wants a relationship with each person to the point that he gives each individual the choice of whether to connect with him.

“It is God’s sovereign choice to give us freedom,” he said.

Hitchens criticized Denison for seemingly speaking for God, saying, “So, you know the mind of God?”

“I know what God has revealed of his mind,” Denison responded.

[View a video of the debate.](#)