The Universe Exists. We Exist.

What conclusions can we draw?
Hugh Ross’s argument
(as I understand it)

He accepts the observations and theories of modern cosmology and particle physics. (more than I do, in fact)

He makes three claims:

> The initial conditions are “fine tuned” to make our existence possible.

> Life is too complex to have happened by natural processes.

> The Bible has the right cosmology.

He argues that this is a scientific theory.
I will only make one point

Ross’s analysis lacks at least one essential feature, and therefore is not a scientific theory.

One telling fact is that none of this analysis has been published in peer reviewed scientific journals. His books do not make this clear, and that is the reason I’m giving this talk.
Biblical Cosmology

Ross argues that the Bible got it right first:

“All these scientists, were upstaged at least 2,500 years earlier by [the] Bible authors.”  
*The Creator and the Cosmos, p. 23*

“This ancient ‘religious’ document makes many pointed and challenging statements about cosmic origins, all of them provable.”  
*Creator p. 125*

In order to support this view, Ross constructs a nonstandard reading of the Biblical text.

*See The Fingerprint of God, Ch 14 & 16*

The only scientific way to test the validity of this reading is to check its predictions.
A scientific theory?

“Though no one is perfectly objective, some researchers are willing to gather and integrate the data to see which theory of origins is most consistent with the facts—whatever that theory may say about the necessity and characteristics of an Originator.”

Creator, p. 14

Two important characteristics of scientific theories:
• They are in accord with existing data.
• They predict the results of new measurements.

Ross’s theory fails badly on the second.
Was the universe made for us? (1)

I am not going to discuss the list of coincidences that Ross argues support this view. 322 of them can be found on the web, and you can judge them for yourself.

http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/design_evidences/20040505_probability_life_support_body.shtml

Ross argues that this data is evidence for a creator:
“Again we see that a personal, transcendent creator must have brought the universe into existence ... designed the universe ... designed planet Earth ... designed life.”  
*Fingerprint, p. 138*

I don’t have time to discuss the quality of Ross’s evidence. Instead, I’ll focus on a prediction of his analysis. (The only clean prediction I could find.)
Was the universe made for us? (2)

Ross argues that, not only is there a creator, but the creation was for our benefit. As a consequence, he asserts (predicts):

“... we humans have the 'good fortune' to exist at the one moment in cosmic history when the universe is most completely and clearly detectable.”  

Creator, p. 50

“... God created humanity at the precise moment in history ... when we would have the optimal view of the extent and splendor of His creation.  
If we had arrived earlier in cosmic history, we would see less ...  
If we had arrived later, we would see less ...”  

Creator, p. 56

Is this true?
Was the universe made for us? (3)

The situation that Ross describes occurs when the slowing of the cosmic expansion, due to matter, is balanced by the acceleration due to the “dark energy.”

We know the cosmic parameters well enough to calculate when this happened.

It happened between 6 and 8 billion years ago, i.e., before our solar system existed!

So ...
Was the universe made for us? (4)

The universe was created for Darth Vader.
Conclusion

Everyone begins a study with preconceived notions. Einstein had difficulty accepting the predictions of his own theory, and invented a “fudge factor” to evade them. His mind was later changed by new data.

Susceptibility to preconception is one reason that describing existing data is not sufficient. A scientific theory must be falsifiable. Successful prediction of new phenomena is a necessary component of scientific theory.

Ross’s theory does not have this component and thus is not science.
The conceptual basis of Ross's argument is not new.

“Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand.

Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.”

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1273)

Of course, Aquinas's cosmology was not Ross's. This underscores the importance of predictive power.