

## William Dembski Part II

<https://mindmatters.ai/podcast/ep122>

Robert J. Marks:

We continue our discussion about Walter Bradley in his new biography, "For a Greater Purpose", today with William Dembski on Mind Matters News.

Announcer:

Welcome to Mind Matters News, where artificial and natural intelligence meet head on. Here's your host, Robert J. Marks.

Robert J. Marks:

Erasmus Press has published a biography by William Dembski and myself entitled "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley." William Dembski and I are listed as co-authors but we had contributions from a lot of people. If you get the book and read it you'll see indeed that this is the case. The foreword to the book is by the great Christian philosopher JP Moreland who knew Walter personally when they worked together at the Colorado School of Minds. And he tells a very interesting story in the beginning of the book about his relationship with Walter Bradley. Our guest today is William Dembski and he needs no introduction. I think everybody knows William Dembski. Your brand still survives, Bill.

William Dembski:

That's nice to hear.

Robert J. Marks:

Yeah your brand still survives. And we wrote the "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley" not necessarily to celebrate the life of Walter Bradley, which we certainly want to do, but it is rather to lay out an example of what somebody in academia specifically, and more general in life, can do and still do their day jobs. What he was able to do in terms of ministry, in terms of outreach, in terms of appropriate technology, in terms of crisis pregnancy centers even is just astonishing so that's what we want to talk about.

Robert J. Marks:

I wanted to talk first of all about when Walter Bradley was a professor and one of the things that he wanted to do was he wanted to talk about his faith and science. He talked about engineering and he wanted to talk about his faith and he and his wife they said, "Walter, you have to go in and you have to say something." And Walter went in and said, "I was going to say something about my faith and then I chickened out." So they went home and they prayed some more and then Walter went in the next day and said, "Okay, today I'm going to share my faith." And he went in and he chickened out.

Robert J. Marks:

You can see in the book that he did this for 22 times before he had the guts to actually make the presentation in class about his faith. It wasn't proselytizing it was simply saying that, "I want you to know that I'm a Christian and as a result of that I hope that you see its impact on the way that it treats

you." Then Walter went ultimately around to different universities including where I was at with the University of Washington sharing with faculty how to live out loud as a Christian.

Robert J. Marks:

If you have followed academia today you know that this idea of Christianity being talked about on college campuses is not celebrated very much. One time Walter was sharing his faith and the associate provost, this was at Texas A&M University, sent out a memo to 2,500 faculty saying, "You shall not talk about Christianity in the classroom." Wow. This was probably in response to Walter's doing this at Texas A&M. And this was a number of years ago of course. I'm sure that this assistant provost has moved on.

Robert J. Marks:

Walter immediately called him up - and this was one thing about Walter, he had a lot of guts - he called him up and says, "Look, you and I need to sit down and talk." And he went over and very politely said, "Okay, I think this might be a good idea not to be able to share your faith in the classroom but if you do this how are we going to keep quiet all of the people that dis Christianity and say that Christianity has nothing to do with science, that Christianity has nothing to do with the pursuit of knowledge. We have to get a rule where this doesn't happen either. How are we going to do that?" And the assistant provost paused for a second and he said, "I never really thought of it that way." And as a result, the assistant provost put out a memo and the memo basically retracted his previous criteria and he said, "Just be careful about talking about your faith to make sure that you don't alienate any of the students." Which I think was probably a fair thing.

Robert J. Marks:

But I thought that was a very fascinating response that we had from Walter Bradley in terms of defending his ability in the United States and our First Amendment rights to share faith, at least in public forums. Now, both Bill and I have had challenges at Baylor and one of those was Bill with the Palani Center which was - I forget what years were that Bill?

William Dembski:

1999 to 2000.

Robert J. Marks:

Yeah. And Walter was very supportive in your conflict with Baylor at that time. Tell us what was going on.

William Dembski:

Well he was I think probably cheering from the sidelines because he was at A&M at that time. He didn't come on to Baylor faculty till 2002. And so, he and I knew each other, we were very friendly. And so, I think he was certainly supportive of the type of research that I did. But it was an incredibly contentious time in the history of the university. I mean, the faculty were very divided over where Robert Sloan was trying to take the school because I think there was a secular arm to the faculty that was really just hoping that Baylor would blend in with the other secular schools and that its Christian identity would be muted. And if anything, Robert Sloan wanted to bring that Christian identity to the forefront but then also improve the quality of the school by hiring research professors such as Walter and yourself.

William Dembski:

And so there was a real tug-of-war at the school and I was caught something in the middle there because I was this poster child in some way for what the president was trying to do with the school. And the thing is I wasn't particularly diplomatic or politically astute at the time. I think if there was a time machine for putting the present me back into the old me the Palani Center might still be around but such was the case.

William Dembski:

But yeah Walter, I mean he and I actually met it was as far back as 1992 at a conference in Dallas. It was a conference about the then-recently written book by Phil Johnson, "Darwin on Trial". And so he showed up there. He's not one of the main participants but how do I want to put this? Participants that were invited to do talks and write up their talks, basically to contribute to a volume but he was more there as a commentator. But I just remember seeing him there for the first time and thinking he was an impressive guy and our paths just kept crossing over the years. And with his interest in intelligent design - especially at the level of cosmology, fine tuning, seeing the hand of design in the structure of the universe and then also with the origin of life and then my work more focused on the mathematics of design detection and then applying these ideas to evolutionary theory - our paths kept crossing and it's always been cordial and I mean it's been a joy to work with him.

Robert J. Marks:

Yeah, that's great. Baylor in maintaining its Christian identity is not unique. In history there's been a lot of universities that started with a Christian identity and went by the wayside. I'm thinking initially probably in England, Oxford and Cambridge.

William Dembski:

Well, just in the U.S. I mean just virtually all the universities up until the late 1800s. I think Cornell was the first university that was really started on explicitly secular principles. But virtually every school if you look at their mottos there's some sort of biblical theme there that's there and that's expressing what they're trying to accomplish. But that has been the consistent pattern in the 20th century it was that schools that had a Christian identity, that identity kept being drowned out and just it really didn't do much to distinguish the school or the emphasis was much more I think with blending in and not having that Christian identity play much of a role if any.

Robert J. Marks:

So what happened there? What happened at Princeton? What happened at Harvard? And what are steps that somebody like Baylor can take in order to not go down that slippery path again?

William Dembski:

Yeah. Well, I don't know. I mean, each school I think has its own story. I mean Harvard there was a whole big Unitarian move in Massachusetts at the time. Princeton, I mean there is certainly with the seminary and the university there's some illustrious theologians connected with it. But I think there was a big cultural move I think towards a secular naturalistic point of view in which God and Christianity seems less and less plausible, less and less important. I mean, you think about who were the most important thinkers, the most respected intellectuals, the public intellectuals of the age. 17th, 18th century America it would be the preachers, the theologians. But then when you get into the 19th century, especially post-Darwin, post-Enlightenment, I think you get a much more secular view that doesn't really see Christianity as the central truth that ties everything together.

William Dembski:

So, the scientists, the business people, the titans of industry, these are the people that start getting the most play. They're the ones that have the respect. These are the people that you listen to. I think we see it even in our day with COVID-19. Science tells us to do this. And nothing against science, but I think often when you hear that "science tells us this", it's not that science itself is telling us this, it's that certain people with certain biases are using science to try to get you to do something, which is different.

Robert J. Marks:

Yes and science has been again, and again, and again, shown to be incorrect. There's a lot of stuff that does stick but I'm thinking about George Washington, for example, dying because they bled him to death. I mean, that was science at the time. And I'm thinking about John West's great documentary, if you have time to watch it I would recommend it highly, called "Human Zoos" on YouTube. Watch it, and how the science of you genetics. Did I say that right?

William Dembski:

Eugenics.

Robert J. Marks:

Eugenics. Eugenics - how the science of eugenics was used to substantiate racism in the early 20th century for quite a long time. And this was not something which is isolated among a bunch of bigots, but was a science, which science quote unquote, that was accepted by places such as Harvard, and Princeton, and the Smithsonian and other places. And you always have to ask yourself: With the history of so-called science and what science says is what makes us sure that today science is telling us what is right? There is established science and then there's science which is spun for political reasons and such and that's something which probably needs to be avoided quite a bit. This is fascinating. One of the other things about Walter is he had a lot of guts. We talked about the idea when he went to the associate provost and he said, "We have to make sure that the professors also stop dissing Christianity. They can't keep knocking Christianity if you want to play fair across the board." And this changed the provost's mind.

William Dembski:

He had such a disarming way. But the thing it is just sticking the stiletto in though.

Robert J. Marks:

It is.

William Dembski:

So he was a master. He is a master.

Robert J. Marks:

But he does it so, so wonderfully. He finally asked the provost, he said, "Where did this complaint come from?" And it turned out it came from two atheist professors, the provost finally admitted. So Walter, in true fashion of Walter Bradley, contacted the two professors that were atheist and said, "Let's set up a time and meet. I'd like to talk to you about this." And he never got a response. They didn't do anything.

Robert J. Marks:

Something else that was very bold that Walter did, Baylor does not allow atheist student groups but there was nevertheless an atheist student group that met on the Baylor campus. Now, I don't know what your initial reaction would be but mine would be something like, "We have to go in there, pound our fists, and we have to say these atheists cannot meet on the campus." Walter didn't do that. He decided that he would join the atheist group, sit down and have a chat with them. So he sat down and had a chat with them and went over some of their objections and then ultimately invited them over to his house. And this atheist group met with Walter for a number of different weeks and finally the whole group disbanded because of what Walter did. He killed the atheist group with his love, with his compassion. And I tell you, that's another example of taking a lot of guts to do things.

Robert J. Marks:

And so, we're talking again about Walter Bradley's book and many of these stories and other stories are covered in the book written by, authored by William Dembski and I called "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley." And we're going to put a link to that and it's available on amazon.com, and there's no doubt that you will enjoy it. It's a wonderful, wonderful biography and you will learn a lot. You will learn a lot about what you can do in order to increase your ministry, in order to increase your effect on people doing your day job. Walter did all of this stuff while being a very successful researcher in mechanical engineering. He attracted millions of dollars in external grants and was just a model of what a mechanical engineering professor should do but in his spare time he did this. He did these incredible things.

Robert J. Marks:

One of the things that Walter did, and this is outlined in the book also, is he had the guts to go to over hundreds of campuses and make a presentation called "Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God." That's a pretty provocative title. Have you ever heard him give that talk Bill?

William Dembski:

I'm sure I have. I don't remember that title exactly but I know that that was the, I mean that was the theme that he was always hammering.

Robert J. Marks:

Yes. He's given it here, he's given it in dozens of foreign countries. And of course with a title like that on a religious unfriendly campus he drew quite a crowd and he always presented it, like you said Bill, in this very disarming manner. And he was asked questions at the end and he was always able to answer them calmly and convincingly. And often the entire meeting would leave and there would always be students which came up and wanted to talk more about it. So he had an incredible impact. That's one of the first places that I met Walter Bradley when I was at the University of Washington. He came there and did that sort of thing.

Robert J. Marks:

So yeah, one of the other things that Walter Bradley did in his presentation in his faith is he was the one that helped create and promote the arm of Campus Crusade which is now referred to as Crew that ministered towards college professors. There were many college professors such as me that because of the penalties of coming out with your faith and talking about faith and science publicly you were afraid

that you would get ridiculed. And he had been through this and he went to different campuses and talked to different professors including myself and said, "You need to come out of the closet."

Robert J. Marks:

And it was very exhilarating for me to do that at the University of Washington because one of the things that I found out is when I was very vocal about expressing my faith that people gave me more respect. It was like that if I was ashamed of it they would come and kick me in the chins and bully me and things of that sort. So yes, the book is "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley." The book is published by Erasmus Press which is a imprint that Bill Dembski owns, right?

William Dembski:

Right.

Robert J. Marks:

Yeah. So tell us about Erasmus Press. You have another book coming out with Erasmus Press which I look forward to reading and it has something to do with baseball. What's the deal?

William Dembski:

Well, Erasmus Press is an imprint so it's actually Influenced Publishers is the publishing house. And it's a small publisher but we try to do interesting things. And the baseball book is titled Dalko, The Untold Story of Baseball's Fastest Pitcher. And it was about five years ago that, I have an interest in the game, I have a son who plays who's a pitcher and is really good...

Robert J. Marks:

Do you used to play baseball?

William Dembski:

I never really, I mean I enjoyed just hitting around a sandlot but never anything formal.

Robert J. Marks:

But your son Will is quite a pitcher I understand.

William Dembski:

He's good. And so he made it first team all-state in high school I think two years running and so he's real good. So anyway, I love the game and so you always wonder who brought the hottest heat, who had the most gas, who could throw the ball the hardest. And the overwhelming testimony as you start looking into it, it was a fellow named Steve Dalkowski. He was born 1939. He died actually of COVID.

Robert J. Marks:

Really?

William Dembski:

Yep. And but the thing is he played for New Britain, Connecticut in high school and then within a week of his 18th birthday in 1957 all 16 teams at the time - there were 8 in the national league, 8 in the

American league - were looking to recruit him but he signed on with Baltimore. And I mean, the estimates are that he was hitting 110 miles an hour. I mean, people who caught him and who also caught Bob Feller who saw Nolan Ryan pitch, the fastest recorded pitch with any sort of modern technology is Nolan Ryan and it was I think about 101 near the plate and so when you extrapolate back it's about 108. And so, but the people who saw Ryan pitch saw Koufax, saw Bob Feller, they all say that Dalko was faster and even a lot faster.

William Dembski:

So it's just an interesting story. What makes it all so interesting is that he had this phenomenal arm. He was not particularly big. He was 170 pounds, maybe 5' 11" but he, he had this once-in-a-century arm. And the other thing though is he couldn't control it. I mean, there are times he could. He pitched in high school back to back no hitters and then he could walk as many as he struck out. So he could strike out 18 in a game, walk 18 and lose eight to three or something like that.

Robert J. Marks:

It reminds me of who was it? Charlie Sheen played Wild Thing. And he was Wild Thing in what was the movie, do you remember?

William Dembski:

Was it Major League?

Robert J. Marks:

Yeah Major League I believe it was.

William Dembski:

And then I mean, it was Luke Nuke LaLoosh in Bull Durham is modeled on Steve Dalkowski. I mean Ron Shelton, the screenwriter for that, played minor league ball and knew of Dalko. So Dalko was, Steve Dalkowski was the inspiration for the Nuke LaLoosh character played by Tim Robbins. So yeah so it's a fascinating story. The thing is he never made it into the majors. In fact, after six years in the minors he was just at the point in 1963 he was pitching against the Yankees. It was finally, he was settling down and I think he had struck out Roger Maris, had struck out some major Yankee players in an exhibition and he blew out his elbow.

Robert J. Marks:

Oh, is that right?

William Dembski:

I mean blew it out is perhaps overstating it but it seemed that he was never quite the same and then he was just at the point, I mean probably the next week he would have made it into the majors. So, there's a Greek tragedy aspect to it. The Icarus who flies too high and comes tumbling down the Tantalus where all the goodies are always just out of reach. Sisyphus is always almost getting up to that precipice and then it just comes tumbling down. So it's a fascinating story. I don't think there's anything quite like it. And it is I mean, I'm convinced that and I think my coauthors are and we were tracking down people who are getting close to a 100 years old now who remembered him and I mean the overwhelming testimony is none faster.

Robert J. Marks:

The name of the book is "Dalko: The Untold Story of Baseball's Fastest Pitcher" by Bill Dembski, Alex Thomas and Brian Vikander. And that's one of the imprints of Erasmus Press.

William Dembski:

Yeah.

Robert J. Marks:

So the other one that we're talking about, we went down a rabbit trail a little bit, was another imprint of Erasmus Press, "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley." We haven't had time to talk about everything but if you want to find out what Walter Bradley had to do with the movie "Unplanned", if you've seen the movie "Unplanned" which is a story of a crisis pregnancy center and somebody that worked at Planned Parenthood and was disgusted when she finally saw an abortion happening and turned totally the other way. What does that have to do with Walter and his wife Anne?

Robert J. Marks:

And another thing is what has Walter done in order to make people know that there are Christian professors? One of Walter's laments was he went through his entire undergraduate and graduate experience and never had one professor say that he was a Christian. So what has Walter done in order to address this? And these are in the book. We don't have time to cover everything in the book but I recommend it highly of course because I'm a coauthor but it is well written. We've been getting a lot of great compliments about it. It has five stars on amazon.com and we recommend it to you.

Robert J. Marks:

So our guest has been William Dembski who is the coauthor with me of "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley." The forward by JP Moreland available at amazon.com. We suggest that this is a great present and a great read. We should mention also that it's available in Kindle form and also in Audible. I'm listening to most all of my books today on Audible and so this book is also available on audio. So, that wraps it up for this time. So until we meet again for Mind Matters News be of good cheer.

Announcer:

This has been Mind Matters News with your host Robert J. Marks. Explore more at [mindmatters.ai](http://mindmatters.ai), that's [mindmatters.ai](http://mindmatters.ai). Mind Matters News is directed and edited by Austin Egbert. The opinions expressed on this program are solely those of the speakers. Mind Matters News is produced and copyrighted by the Walter Bradley Center for Natural and Artificial Intelligence at Discovery Institute.