

# MICHAEL SERVETUS Death by Fire!

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## Neil Inglis

Michel de Villeneuve (aka Michael Servetus) is an unjustly overlooked figure from the history of the Reformation. As a physician, he was known for his pioneering work in medical research, yet to him this was just his "day job." Under his birthname Servetus, he pursued his passion for theology—and in 1553 was burned at the stake as a heretic for his challenges to both Catholic and early Protestant orthodoxy.

That a respected scientist would cast aside a productive career for sectarian fanaticism is a paradox for skeptics. But reason and unreason can coexist in the same mind; and so, join NCAS on January 8 for a look at this sympathetic yet infuriating man's life and career. This bloodstained tale will take us from Spain (the land of Servetus' birth), to Switzerland, to Paris, then Lyon, and back to Switzerland for the horrific climax (with an unexpected detour via Chicago).

Neil Inglis is an NCAS Director, and an NCAS member since 1988 (not quite since the creation, in other words!). His day job is as a translator/reviser for an international organization. After hours, he too is intrigued by religious controversy, and is the chief book reviewer for the Tyndale Society Journal, a Geneva-based publication celebrating the life and work of William Tyndale, the first published translator of the Bible into English (who also met his death in the flames). For all that, he remains a skeptic.

**Saturday, January 8  
2-4pm**

**Montgomery County Library  
Bethesda Branch**  
7400 Arlington Road  
Bethesda, Maryland  
(A short walk from the Bethesda  
Metro station)



**National Capital Area Skeptics Public Lecture Series**

**FREE admission - Everyone welcome - members and non-members**

For more information call the 24-hour NCAS Skeptic Line recording at

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[www.ncas.org](http://www.ncas.org)



# Shadow of a Doubt

JANUARY 2005

THE MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA SKEPTICS

## Tired of Reading About Intelligent Design? Then Get a Bang Out of the . . . “*Big Bang: What It Was and Why We Believe It Happened*”

*Presented by the Smithsonian Resident Associate Program, Wednesday, January 19, 6:30 p.m., Ring Auditorium in the Hirshorn Museum, 7th & Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C.*

Everyone has heard of the *Big Bang Theory*, but how many can actually claim to understand it?

Physicist Simon Singh, renowned for making difficult ideas easier to comprehend, is the perfect guide on this journey into the cosmic past. Besides explaining what the *Big Bang Theory* actually is, he addresses why cosmologists believe that it is an accurate description of the origin of the universe. He also tells the story of the brilliant and eccentric scientists who fought against the establishment idea of an eternal and unchanging cosmos.

Along the way, he touches on other provocative topics such as the outstanding problems with the *Big Bang Theory*; the possible ending of the universe; and the workings of science in terms of the way ideas are developed, tested, and proved, and how they eventually overturn an established model.

Singh is a former BBC producer of the popular science program *Tomorrow's World* and author of the bestselling books *Fermat's Enigma* and *The Code Book*. His new work, *Big Bang* (HarperCollins) is available for signing after the lecture.

**Tickets: General Admission: \$15; RAP Members: \$12; Senior Members: \$11. Phone: 202-252-0012** 

## Presenting the UK's Darren Brown

Derren Brown is a unique force in the world of illusion—he can seemingly predict and control human behavior. He doesn't claim to be a mind-reader, instead he describes his craft as a mixture of applied psychology, magic, misdirection, and showmanship. Whatever you choose to call it, his unparalleled performances amaze and unsettle all those who watch him. This is a powerful and provocative form of entertainment, unlikely to be imitated for a long while.

Take a look at his website at:

<http://www.derrenbrown.co.uk/home.asp>

But for real fun, look at some of the small video clips of his amazing shows. I think it would be worthwhile going to the UK to see Derren. Hmm, I wonder if I can talk my wife into it? Maybe I could use some of Derren's techniques . . .

<http://www.channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/M/mindcontrol/video/index.html>

It is worth exploring the site, he will read your mind on the PC. Yes, try:

[http://www.channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/M/mindcontrol/reading\\_minds/index.html#](http://www.channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/M/mindcontrol/reading_minds/index.html#)

Amaze yourself and your friends! 

## Time to Renew!

Check your mailing label. If the renewal date has passed, please send to the NCAS address below \$30 (for 1 person) or \$40 (for 2-member households) for a 1-year renewal, or you will be dropped as a member. 



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