

Book About Ropens



This book says very little about “finding God,” but boy it says a lot about “searching for ropens.” It’s 354 pages long, yes that’s a long book. Don’t bother even opening it, if you get your hands on a copy, unless you want to spend a lot of time reading. Once you get started, it’s really hard to put it down, and I’m just passing along what other people have said about this third edition and previous editions. I almost forgot to mention the name of the book, *Searching for Ropens and Finding God*.

The author, Jonathan Whitcomb, is a devout Mormon and makes no effort to cover up that fact. Yet he says more about Baptists than about Mormons, and that’s because so many Baptists have been searching for the ropens. Even so, the book is not about churches. It’s about men who have braved the steamy jungles of Papua New Guinea to get a photo or a bit of video of a ropen. The religious motivations are mentioned but not put on a pedestal. You’ll find a few pages about faith in God, but you’ll find many chapters about the ropens and about the people who see modern pterosaurs, and those eyewitnesses almost never say anything about religion. This is mostly cryptozoology.

Here is the title page:

Searching for Ropens and Finding God

*Walking by faith and working with people of other faiths,
In a quest for the discovery of modern living pterosaurs*

This flies high above a common true-life adventure, revealing the early stages of what may become the most unsettling scientific discovery since Copernicus and Galileo. It soars above disputes about religion, revealing why an official discovery of an extraordinary animal was delayed for so long. Above all, this explores human experiences—of eyewitnesses and those who interviewed them. People have become connected by common encounters: Persons of various faiths, with various levels of education, from various countries and cultures, have seen a living pterosaur.

A few Americans explored a few islands in the southwest Pacific, in brief expeditions scattered between 1993 and 2007, looking for a modern pterosaur. “Creationist” each man was labeled, yet many of those following them carried no religious purpose. The creatures have many names: seklobali, duwas, wawanar, indava, kor, kundua. In Papua New Guinea, natives in isolated communities speak in village languages numbering in the hundreds, yet many natives carry a common fear in the dark: a huge glowing creature flying in the night. Natives on Umboi Island call it “ropen.”

Three American Christians—one middle-aged LDS-Mormon high priest and two younger Protestant Young Earth Creationists—explored parts of Umboi Island in two separate expeditions in 2004, interviewing native eyewitnesses of the elusive ropen. They returned home even more convinced that long-tailed pterosaurs live, even thrive, in Papua New Guinea.

This resulted in the publication of several books, two scientific papers in a peer-reviewed journal, and over a thousand blog posts, written mostly by those who trudged the jungle trails of Umboi themselves and spoke with the eyewitnesses face to face. Those two expeditions in 2004 also cleared the path for other searches in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere, including expeditions led by those with no religious purpose in searching for ropens.

Why has the official scientific discovery been so long delayed? The causes are multiple and interrelated, but one obstacle has been resolved. Speculation that religious bias of investigators has played a big part in sighting reports of apparent pterosaurs—that conjecture has been shot down.

Jonathan David Whitcomb

I'll tell you what I like best about the title page. “Working with people of other faiths” and “it soars above disputes about religion.” You won't find much about Muslims, Jews, or Hindus in this book. It's about Christians of different denominations who work together to find a modern pterosaur. I also like the part at the end: “Speculation that religious bias of investigators has played a big part in sighting reports of apparent pterosaurs—that conjecture has been shot down.”

I don't mean that there's hardly anything about religion. You'll find some pages about that. But the meat of the book is searching in Papua New Guinea and in other countries, searching for pterosaurs.

Here is the first page of the Introduction:

Introduction

Expect answers in this book: why my associates and I traveled to a remote tropical island to search for living pterosaurs and why so few professors have given us any hope that they still live. What about adventures, with danger, failure, and success? Yes, expect those, but I hope my readers will discover more than adventure—a purpose in life—as worthy a purpose as I have found. This is not an instruction manual for finding God, yet I suggest that the spiritual quest gives you the highest reward.

After reading this book, if one person finds a reason to live and abandons thoughts of suicide, what a reward for all of us involved! This is not a textbook for preventing suicide, yet I suggest each of us can find ways to bring meaning into the lives of persons around us, motivating all of us to keep living and learning.

Is this a tool for promoting Biblical Creation and ridiculing evolution? Clear thinking we need, without fear, allowing us to discover both truth and error in whatever camp we find ourselves, entrenched or visiting, at the moment. I suggest we beware of simplistic labels. That said, expect explanations for why my associates and I have rejected extreme naturalism philosophy and Darwin's unlimited common ancestry philosophy, what some call the General Theory of Evolution.

This is not propaganda for any human philosophy, yet I extoll the accomplishments of those Young Earth Creationists who have been my associates for many years. I suggest we allow ourselves to find literal truth in the Bible, regardless of whatever passages we had assumed were mainly symbolic. For those who think that pill too bitter, at least avoid ridiculing those labeled "creationist."

Responding to a strange idea by negatively labeling its advocate—that can blind us or at least blur the border between truth and error, even if our concept is better. When in human history has one person always been wrong? And when one pearl is found in the mud of an old oyster bed, expect another.

For many years, my associates and I have encountered obstacles that hinder Americans from learning about sighting reports of apparent pterosaurs. One is the shock that such creatures, possible pterosaurs, could fly around without landing in a newspaper headline; that's too shocking for many Westerners. Another obstacle is thrown out from the grand stands onto the track where we run: Creationists are behind live pterosaurs, they proclaim, and those skeptics reject the idea because of the label they use in ridicule. We've often smelled that bulverism.

But it's more than bias against those who believe in literal interpretations of passages in Genesis. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to getting our ideas noticed is the shock. Here's how I put it: Not everybody embraces a live pterodactyl.

How can I avoid shocking people? A few years ago I needed to question hikers in a wildlife sanctuary in Southern California, near where an eyewitness had seen an apparent pterosaur that he estimated was thirty feet long. What would you have done? I avoided words like "giant pterodactyl," of course, asking people

I like this part about helping people avoid suicide:

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The book doesn't say exactly, in so many words, how to help anybody avoid suicide. It's not in the words exactly, but these men have endured years of ridicule and disappointment, yet they keep living and trying. It's in their examples, never giving up hope or becoming despondent. The author suffers more failure than anybody else, if you read the book to the end. But he too keeps on going, like everything has to turn out right in the end. I guess readers can follow that example and keep moving forward in their own lives, in whatever they are doing.

New Pterosaur Book on Ropens

My first exposure to a remote tropical island with a giant reptile—when my younger sister Cindy and I were infants—came from Mommy reading Peter Pan. When I was four, the new sister was born, not to the name chosen by Cindy and me, “Captain Hook,” but to a name chosen by compromising parents: “Wendy.”

Advertisement



Searching for Ropens and Finding God—The perfect gift for a loved one or for yourself

You deserve a break from the ordinary routine. Treat yourself to an extraordinary true-life adventure about encounters with flying creatures that most Americans thought became extinct long ago. Find out for yourself what may fly over our heads at night.