



*"The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)*

# REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

OCTOBER 2003

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### Get Connected

We're looking for people who want to help spread the word that science and Bible agree. Regardless of your age, background or skills, we invite you to join us. We will be meeting throughout the winter to plan events and discuss how we can best serve the Puget Sound area. If this interests you, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org).

### Message of the Month

Through the MOM program, you can receive faith-building science apologetics messages each month from RTB. This is a great way to support the ministry while fostering your own spiritual growth. Beginning January 2004, the MOM will be available in cassette, CD or MP3. For information go to: [www.reasons.org/donate/mom.shtml?main](http://www.reasons.org/donate/mom.shtml?main).

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

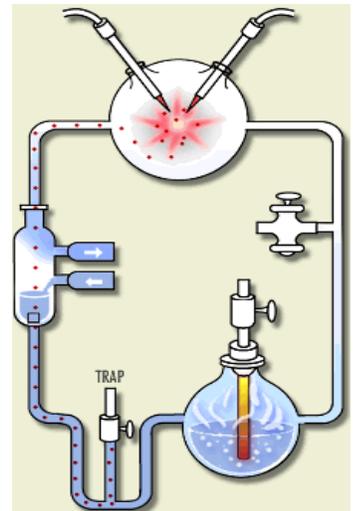
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## Primordial Soup Anyone?

CATHY BAKKEN

Most biology textbooks claim the 1953 Miller-Urey experiment shows how life's building blocks may have formed naturally on the early Earth. However, we have since learned that conditions on the early Earth were probably nothing like those used in the experiment and that the origin of life remains a mystery.

In 1953, biochemist Stanley Miller was working in the laboratory of Nobel Prize winner Harold Urey. They designed an experiment in which they circulated methane, ammonia, and water (gases believed to have been common on the early Earth's atmosphere) through a glass apparatus with a heated lower basin, or "ocean," (the early earth's ocean was believed to have been hot) and an upper globe, or "atmosphere." Electric discharges passing through the upper globe simulated lightning. After allowing this experiment to run for several days, the scientists sampled the liquid. They found small amounts of four organic molecules: sugars (the simplest carbohydrates), three different amino acids (the building blocks of protein), fatty acids (precursors of lipids), and nucleotides (the building blocks of nucleic acids, or genetic material).



The results of Miller and Urey's experiment became known as the primordial soup. Since amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, many saw this as clear evidence for the spontaneous origin of life. Modern theory and texts still lean heavily on Miller's "proof" of spontaneous generation of amino acids.

Few textbooks acknowledge that most scientists now consider Miller's experiments to be flawed. In the 1950's, the early atmosphere was believed to be made of the

See PRIMORDIAL SOUP, page 2

gases used in the experiment—hydrogen, methane, ammonia, and water vapor. By 1970, however, scientists understood the early Earth's atmosphere was nothing like this. It would have been made of gases emitted from volcanoes—carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and water.

In the most recent textbooks from Texas and California (two states where the textbooks chosen influence which textbooks are used across the country) the origin of life sections admit the wrong atmosphere was used but imply this is no insurmountable problem. However, in Miller-Urey-type experiments using the correct gas mixture, organic compounds are much harder to generate. The gases chosen for the original experiment are energy-rich and easily react with other stuff, the correct gases are not. Trying to get them to react has been described as trying to make water run uphill. Stanley Miller himself reported in 1983 the most he could produce in the absence of methane was glycine, the simplest amino acid, and then only if free hydrogen were present. The problem is many scientists say free hydrogen was essentially absent from the early earth.

Another origin-of-life problem stymies the experiment as well. For some still unknown reason, only left-handed amino acids can be used to build proteins. Miller's amino acids were both left-handed and right-handed. No one has figured out a way to separate out the left-handed amino acids to allow proteins to be built without the interference of the right-handed ones. In Miller's experiment, none of the amino acids had combined with others, let alone in the precise sequences needed to create functional proteins.

Many origin-of-life researchers have been working away at these problems, proposing a variety of scenarios for the natural origin of the most basic organic elements. But their results have been disappointing. As *New York Times* science reporter Nicholas Wade wrote in 2000: "Everything about the origin of life on Earth is a mystery, and it seems the more that is known, the more acute the puzzles get." Once again, as Isaiah 55:9 says, God's creative powers are as expansive as the universe: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

*Cathy Bakken is secretary of the Spokane Chapter of Reasons to Believe. She is a librarian by profession and is in the process of completing the RTB apologetics training course.*

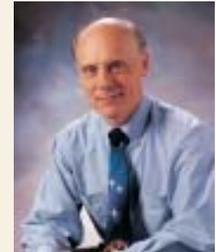
#### RESOURCES

1. "Origin-of-Life Predictions Face Off: Evolution vs. Biblical Creation," by Dr. Fazale Rana. *Facts for Faith*, Issue 6. <http://www.reasons.org/resources/fff/2001issue06/index.shtml?main>
2. "Carbon Monoxide Kills Hopes for Primordial Soup," by Fuz Rana, *Connections*, 2003, No. 1. <http://www.reasons.org/resources/connections/2003v5n1/index.shtml?main>

## HUGH ROSS VISIT

GREG MOORE

In September, the chapter brought Dr. Ross to the area for two events on the other side of the Puget Sound. One was held at Christ Memorial Church in Poulsbo, the other at Sequim Presbyterian Church in Sequim. The theme of the two events was "putting creation to the test."



About 200 people attended in Poulsbo and 500 in Sequim. At the chapter tables, we sold over \$2,000 in RTB books and videos—a new record.

It's exciting to see the impact the RTB ministry can have in reaching people who are thirsty for answers and reasons to believe. Our goal is to sponsor these types of events on a quarterly basis. In addition to Dr. Ross, we'd like to host some of the other RTB scholars. In particular, we'd like to get Dr. Fuz Rana, their chemist, up to this area. Fuz is an expert on biological evolution.

Of course, there's a catch. Before we embark on this ambitious plan, we must have the financial resources to make it happen. If this is an area where you can help, we need your support. The chapter is a 501C3 corporation and all donations are tax deductible. You can mail your donations to RTB Seattle Chapter, 1314 Mukilteo Boulevard, Everett, WA 98203. Please write "speaker fund" on the memo line. All donations to this fund will be used specifically for the purpose of bringing more RTB speakers into the area.

If your church or group is interested in hosting an event, contact the chapter for more information.

*Greg Moore is president of the local chapter. He is a trained RTB apologist and works for the City of Everett.*

# A World of Difference

MIKE BROWN

“What is it that everyone has, no one can live without, every important decision in life is made with, and yet most people do not even know they have? Do you give up? It is a world view. What is a world view? It is what makes a world of difference in how you view your life in the world. It is the framework through which you see and the basis on which you decide... A world view is all-important and yet most people are not even aware they have one. What is worse, most persons never stop to think about one.”<sup>1</sup>

This is how Norm Geisler begins his book *Worlds Apart*. Ask most people what their worldview is and they will respond with stunned silence. Every person should have a worldview that makes sense, and this worldview should be able to answer questions related to the following four things; *origins, meaning, morality and destiny*. What we believe about how we got here, determines what we believe will happen to us after death. There is *nothing* more important to investigate, than what’s going to happen to us at death! Yet most people spend more time investigating what television to purchase than they do the important questions of life.

While there are numerous religions and cults in our society (too many to learn them all) most fall within three predominant worldviews; atheism, pantheism, or theism. By understanding these three basic beliefs, we can effectively witness to almost anyone we come in contact with. For example, here are how they differ as to our origin and destiny:

| Worldview | Origins               | Destiny                            |
|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Atheism   | Blind chance          | The end—worm food                  |
| Pantheism | An illusion           | Reincarnated/<br>transmigrated     |
| Theism    | Created for a purpose | Judgment—eternal life or damnation |

These examples alone, destroy the myths that all religions are basically the same—or of equal value. John Stackhouse gives us a simple illustration of how naïve it is to assume all religions are basically the same: “Do you really not distinguish morally between the rites of infant baptism and infant sacrifices? Does offering widows social and economic support in their bereavement make the same sense to you as expecting them to be [burned to death] on their husband’s funeral pyre? This naïve relativism rarely stands up to a question of this sort.”<sup>2</sup>

In *Unshakable Foundations*, Geisler and Bocchino give a more extensive

See WORLD OF DIFFERENCE, page 6

## APOLOGETICS TOOL KIT

### [Webcast](#)

Join Hugh Ross each Tuesday for the *Creation Update* webcast: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (PT) at [www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation\\_update](http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation_update).

### [Newsletter](#)

Subscribe to RTB’s free newsletter, *Connections*. Phone 626-335-1480 or sign up electronically at [www.reasons.org/forms/maillist.html?main](http://www.reasons.org/forms/maillist.html?main).

### [Free Training](#)

RTB’s *Apologetics Training Course* is available free on CDROM through the chapter. Contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org) for more information.

### [Websites](#)

Here are other old-Earth websites to check out:

- [www.accuracyingenesis.com](http://www.accuracyingenesis.com)
- [www.answers.org/newlook/NEWLOOK.HTM#top](http://www.answers.org/newlook/NEWLOOK.HTM#top)
- [www.arn.org](http://www.arn.org)
- [www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/Wiens.html](http://www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/Wiens.html)
- [www.bibleandscience.com](http://www.bibleandscience.com)
- [www.christianity.co.nz/science.htm](http://www.christianity.co.nz/science.htm)
- [www.cowbbq.org/index.htm](http://www.cowbbq.org/index.htm)
- [www.evidence.info](http://www.evidence.info)
- [www.evidenceofgod.com](http://www.evidenceofgod.com)
- [www.genesisfoundation.org/ie4.html](http://www.genesisfoundation.org/ie4.html)
- [www.geocities.com/athens/thebes/7755/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/athens/thebes/7755/index.html)
- [www.geocities.com/darrickdean/relsci.html](http://www.geocities.com/darrickdean/relsci.html)
- [www.geocities.com/vr\\_junkie/thebibleandscience.htm](http://www.geocities.com/vr_junkie/thebibleandscience.htm)
- [www.gps.caltech.edu/~tisco/yeclaimsbeta.html](http://www.gps.caltech.edu/~tisco/yeclaimsbeta.html)
- [www.ibri.org](http://www.ibri.org)
- [www.kiva.net/~kls/index.html](http://www.kiva.net/~kls/index.html)
- [www.leaderu.com](http://www.leaderu.com)
- [www.lordibelieve.com](http://www.lordibelieve.com)
- <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~sjdando/CE.htm>
- [www.newcreationism.org](http://www.newcreationism.org)
- [www.origins.org/index.html](http://www.origins.org/index.html)
- [www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rossuk/creation.htm](http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rossuk/creation.htm)
- [www.str.org](http://www.str.org)
- [www.swordandspirit.com](http://www.swordandspirit.com)

This is not an endorsement of these sites but, to our knowledge, they are Christian and worth checking out.

# The Age of the Earth

DR. J.P. MORELAND

The argument is that if you take the days of Genesis as not being six days and take them as maybe longer periods of time, then where do you draw the line...why wouldn't the same reasoning imply that we'll eventually have to reinterpret the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus. Let me give you a counter-example. I doubt that anybody in the room takes the biblical passages that say that 'Jesus will call his angels from the four corners of the earth' to teach a flat Earth. I also doubt that anyone here says that when the sun rises and sets it literally means an earth-centered universe. But you must understand that...there were times when the church interpreted the text that taught that God—Christ will call his angels from the four corners of the world to teach very obviously that the world has four corners. The text says that. There is absolutely no evidence in that text that it means anything other than four corners. You can read it until you're blue in the face, and it says that the Earth has four corners. Similarly, the Bible says the sun rises and sets. Now, that's what it says. You can dance around it all you want. That's what the text says. But there's nobody in here that believes that. No one in here believes the earth has four corners. And so, what we've done is taken that language and interpreted it metaphorically. Similarly, with the rising and the setting of the sun, we treat that...phenomenologically—we say that's the language of description; it is not meant to be taken literally.

So then, suppose that you believe that...those texts do not teach that there are four corners and that the sun rises and sets? Are you now going to deny the virgin birth? Are you going to give up the resurrection? No, of course not. So, the point is...that the general argument from adopting a certain view of one text, there's no way to block the slide to doing that to other texts, is an example in philosophy of what is called hasty generalization; it makes a generalization based upon a slim sampling of evidence. The fact of the matter is that when you interpret biblical texts, you've got to take each one at its own merits and you've got to do the very best you can to handle that text by itself. And so from the fact that one particular text is handled in some way, it does not follow that...other texts will need to be handled in any way whatsoever, unless you can show that there's a clear parallel in the way that the two texts are being handled.

Now, when it comes to the...flat earth and the rising and the setting of the sun: it was scientific evidence that caused people to say 'maybe we'd better re-look at those passages.' There was nothing exegetically or strictly in the Hebrew grammar and syntax. There

See AGE OF EARTH, page 7

## SEA VENTS RULED-OUT

As researchers concede that Earth's early atmosphere could not support prebiotic molecule formation, some origin-of-life researchers point to deep-sea hydrothermal vents as the source of prebiotic molecules. However, recent studies indicate this is very unlikely.

For the synthesis of prebiotic molecules at deep-sea hydrothermal vents ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) must be present. Ammonia serves as a key starting material in the synthesis of amino acids and other biologically important nitrogen-containing compounds. Therefore, ammonia must have somehow *formed* at deep-sea hydrothermal vents as a precursor to prebiotic molecules.

Researchers recently evaluated the likelihood of ammonia formation under primitive hydrothermal vent conditions. In principle, ammonia could form from nitrogen gas in two ways: one involving hydrogen sulfide, the other involving iron sulfide. What their experiments demonstrated was the hydrogen sulfide route yields insufficient quantities to sustain prebiotic molecule formation, while the iron sulfide route occurs far too slowly to have contributed to ammonia formation.

This lack of adequate ammonia production at deep-sea hydrothermal vents makes it extremely unlikely as the origin of life site. More importantly, it rules-out another naturalistic model for the formation of prebiotic molecules on the early Earth. By all accounts, the origin of life was simply miraculous—something the Bible has told us for centuries!



From "Sea Vents Closed as Life-Origin Site," by Dr. Fazale Rana. Connections, Volume 4, Number 2. <http://www.reasons.org/resources/connections/2002v4n2/index.shtml?main>

## Book Reviews

### Can Man Live Without God

Ravi Zacharias  
Intervarsity Press, 2002

Reviewer: Michael Klein

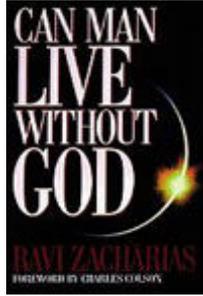
I am not sure who urged me to read *Can Man Live Without God*, but whoever did deserves my deepest gratitude. This wonderful book deals with Christianity and the philosophies and religions with which Christianity competes. There is so much in this book, one really has to read it more than once to absorb all the information.

Ravi Zacharias methodically lays out the case for Christianity. He systematically and thoroughly dismantles both secular and religious objections to the Christian faith, leading the reader to the ultimate conclusion that Christianity, alone, stands above the rest of the world's religions and worldviews as the only valid answer to life's deepest questions.

While reading this book I couldn't help but think that Zacharias had established himself as C. S. Lewis' successor in the field of Christian intellectual debate. Zacharias is a native of India and raised in the Hindu faith, and his conversion to Christianity gives him a credibility that many Christian writers lack. It is interesting that Zacharias, Lewis, and indeed many of the strongest proponents of Christian apologetics have come from outside the faith.

Zacharias is masterful in illustrating his points with either historical or real life examples and uses a style that is both easy to read and engaging. At 240 pages, *Can Man Live Without God* is not especially long, however, Zacharias covers a lot of information, and the reader would be well advised to ingest this wealth of information slowly and thoughtfully.

*Can Man Live Without God* is one of the best books I've read on the subject of Christian apologetics and should have a place along side of C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* as one of the best Christian studies in apologetic thought.



### Not by Chance

Dr. Lee M. Spetner  
Thomas Nelson Inc., 1997

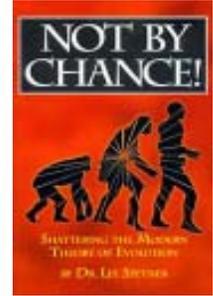
Reviewer: Dave Ouellette

Dr. Spetner (Ph.D. in Physics) wrote this book to refute the conclusions put forth by Richard Dawkins in *The Blind Watchmaker* and document the contradictions in the neo-Darwinian evolutionary model. The main focus is on the issue of randomness—the claim that species evolve by random variations which are culled and directed by natural selection.

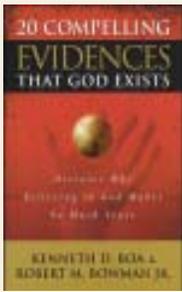
Spetner begins the book by exposing the false assumption of genetic randomness. He describes the various ways geneticists have determined that genetic material can be altered and how these are not just haphazard events. He then marshals evidence from experts in the field of mathematics of evolution to demonstrate how a single mutation is unlikely to play much of a role in evolution.

One of the key points the book makes is that for a mutation to be cumulative it must meet two requirements: it must have a positive selection value and it must add a little information to the genome. According to Spetner, evolutionists use clever arguments to show why evolution should work but they ignore the second requirement. The question that must be addressed is whether random changes can give natural selection enough of the right genes for evolution work. Spetner's conclusion is it much more likely a mutant will vanish than spread through a population. There are some known cases of evolution with copying errors but they only show a kind of microevolution that cannot be extended to macroevolution.

This book addresses a critical problem within the neo-Darwinian model which is the mathematical probability of a random event adding information to a system. Is the use of *random* and *information* in the same context an oxymoron? To Spetner, it certainly is.

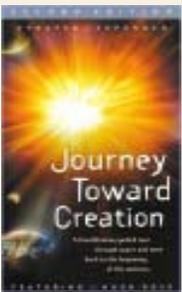


## HELPFUL TIDBITS



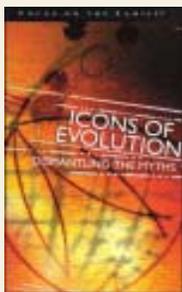
If you were asked to give reasons why you are a Christian, what would you say? This book takes a multidisciplinary approach to this question. One of the real gems of this resource is it summarizes many of the scientific arguments for the God of the Bible that are

advanced by Reasons to Believe. Available now from the RTB webstore.



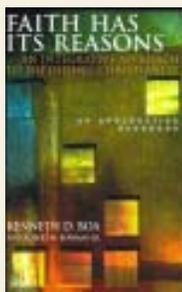
Is life in the universe common or rare? What are the odds of finding other Earth-like planets? Embark on an amazing journey, out in space and back in time, as Hugh Ross explores the astronomical evidence for a universe that has been meticulously fine-tuned for

the benefit of human life. Available from the RTB webstore in VHS or DVD.



Explore the conflict between ideology and science as high school biology teacher, Roger Dehart, challenges the “icons of evolution” which are marshaled as the best evidences for Darwinian evolution. *Icons of Evolution* takes viewers on a fascinating journey into the

hotbed of this controversy. Available from the RTB webstore in VHS or DVD.



Authors Kenneth Boa and Robert Bowman explain four main approaches to apologetics—reason, fact, revelation and faith—and show how to integrate them into a cohesive apologetics system. This book provides a comprehensive overview of apologetics issues to

enable Christians to share their faith. Available from the RTB webstore.

WORLD OF DIFFERENCE, *Continued from page 3*

comparison of the three worldviews.<sup>3</sup>

|        | Atheism                | Pantheism              | Theism                |
|--------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Truth  | Relative, No Absolutes | Relative to this World | Absolute Truth Exists |
| Cosmos | Always Existed         | Not Real, Illusion     | Created Reality       |
| God    | Does Not Exist         | Exists, Unknowable     | Exists, Knowable      |
| Law    | Relative, Man Makes    | Relative to This World | Absolute, Objective   |
| Evil   | Human Ignorance        | Not Real, Illusion     | Fallen Nature         |
| Ethics | Created by Humanity    | Relative               | Absolute, Objective   |

Paul Copan wisely advises that in our culture today our apologetic must follow a three-step process: 1) Build the case for objective truth, 2) Build the case for theism over atheism and pantheism, and 3) Build the case for Christianity over Judaism and Islam.<sup>4</sup> Whether we look to science, philosophy or theology, the physical, mental and spiritual evidences all line up with the Bible and no other belief system. Atheism ignores the spiritual, and pantheism ignores the physical. The Bible alone provides the proper balance of all three.

Vinoth Ramachandra sums up the typical American today. “The religion practiced by an increasing number of Americans may be entirely of their own manufacture—a kind of eclectic synthesis of Christianity, popular psychology, *Readers’ Digest* folklore and personal superstitions, all wrapped in the anecdotes of the individual’s biography.”<sup>5</sup> When we take the time to build a relationship of love and trust with someone, we will identify the flaws in their worldview, then *gently* show them why their world-view doesn’t work and why only Christianity has the proper view of the condition our world is in. All other belief systems offer no hope—Christ is our only hope!

*Mike Brown is active in the local chapter and is in the process of completing the RTB Apologetics Training Course.*

### REFERENCES

1. Geisler, Norman L. *Worlds Apart*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989. p.9.
2. Stackhouse, John. *Humble Apologetics*. New York: Oxford Press, 2002. p.6
3. Geisler, Norman L. and Peter Bocchino. *Unshakable Foundations*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2001. p.69.
4. Copan, Paul. *True For You, But Not For Me*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1998. p.163.
5. Ramachandra, Vinoth. *Faiths in Conflict?* Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1999. p.142.

was absolutely nothing about the literary genre of the passage or the historical-grammatical method of interpretation that could tell you anything at all about one way or the other—it was scientific evidence. So now the question was raised by the church interpreters: 'Is there anything essential to this passage that's violated if we take the four corners of the earth to be metaphorical?' Now, their answer was, in that particular passage, 'no.' That particular text can allow for that without violating the teachings of the scriptures in that particular text. Now, is this procedure risky in other passages? You bet. But does it follow that it should never be applied? No, you've gotta take texts, each text, on its own. So, the devil's in the details, and you've got to be very, very careful.

Now, when it comes to the days of Genesis...I'm of the view on this that while we ought not allow science to dictate to us our exegesis of the Old Testament, nevertheless, if there is an interpretation of the Old Testament that is exegetically permissible—that is, and old age interpretation; that is to say, if you can find conservative, inerrantist, evangelical Old Testament scholars that say that the interpretation of this text that treats the days of Genesis as unspecified periods of time, and that is completely permissible thing to do on exegetical grounds alone—then my view is that is a permissible option if it harmonizes the text with science because that option can be justified exegetically, independent of science.

Now...I'm not a Hebrew exegete. But I will tell you that two of the best-known exegetes of the Old Testament in the American evangelical community are Gleason Archer at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Walter Kaiser at Gordon Conwell. Walter Kaiser and Gleason Archer are respected in the entire United States as being faithful expositors of the Old Testament. Both of them know eight to ten Old Testament languages, and they both have spent their entire lives in Hebrew exegesis. Both of them believe the days of Genesis are...vast, unspecified periods of time, and are in no way required to be literal twenty-four hour days.

*Used with permission. This excerpt is from a presentation Dr. Moreland did at Northshore Church in Everett on February 2, 2002.*

## REASONS TO BELIEVE SEATTLE-AREA CHAPTER



### Who Are We?

The Seattle-Area Chapter of Reasons to Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons to Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in Reasons to Believe. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of people of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His written word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and believe new scientific discoveries are adding to the already compelling case for the God of the Bible.

Reasons to Believe is at the forefront of these issues. We provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to naturalism and young-Earth creationism. We look forward to introducing you to the national organization and connecting with you at the local level.

### What Do We Do?

The Seattle-Area Chapter exists to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove the barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other resources that are scientifically sound and faithful to Scripture.
- Providing a local team of trained apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Administering a free apologetics training course to help Christians shed their fear of science and use science to spread the Gospel.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Working with teachers and school administrators to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of Darwinian evolution.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to skeptics and unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

## Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God and science, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.