



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

# REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

OCTOBER 2004

## What's Happening?

### [Privileged Planet Premier](#)

The new Privileged Planet documentary (based on the book) will premier October 15, 7:00 PM, at the Museum of Flight. Admission is \$5. To register, go to [www.discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org)

### [Case for a Creator Conference](#)

Best-selling author Lee Strobel will be doing a conference at The Bear Creek School in Redmond, November 12-13. For information or to register, go to [www.tbcs.org](http://www.tbcs.org).

### [NSTA Conference](#)

The Chapter will have a booth at the National Science Teacher Association Conference November 18-20. We need prayer and financial resources. Contact us if you can help.

### [Hugh Ross Visit](#)

Hugh Ross will be visiting the area later this year. If your group is interested in hosting him contact us ASAP. The chapter also does presentations on a wide range of topics.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

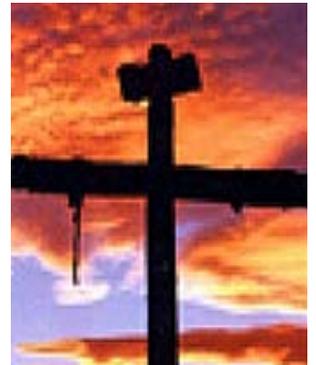
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## Fact, Faith and Confusion

GARY JENSEN

Dan Brown's book *The Da Vinci Code* (Doubleday, 2003) has been a hot item for almost two years. For months, it has been atop the New York Times "Best Sellers List." Reviewers hail the work as "brilliant" and "riveting." Critics, on the other hand, have labored to expose its flaws. I side with the critics. The book is riddled with errors not only in its details but also in its premises. That it is written as fiction does not negate the damage spread by its anti-Catholic and anti-Christian agenda.

The very notion, for example, the Roman Catholic Church reeled in all the Scriptures already in circulation, deleted their embarrassing "feminine" attributes, and got believers to swallow a newly-invented, masculinized god-head, is utter rubbish. That alleged scheme was both sociologically impossible to pull off at the time and it is unsupportable by any reputable evidence. Apologist Hank Hannagraaff and historian Dr. Paul Maier have responded with their book, *The DaVinci Code: Fact or Fiction?* (Tyndale, 2004) to set the record straight on Brown's long list of mistaken claims.



For all the attention the book has received, however, one aspect is not adequately covered. In addition to his implicit attacks, Brown also distorts the very definition of faith in the biblical sense of the term. In a conversation between the main characters, for example, Robert Langdon says to Sophie:

"Every faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of faith—acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove." [Proceeding, as Langdon does, to allege contradictory documents of all the world religions, including Christianity, Langdon continues] "Those who truly understand their faiths, understand the stories are metaphorical" (p.341,2).

To ensure a tight critique here, it is important for me to throw Brown a few bones. In truth, some aspects of Christianity are metaphorical. This is not news. The open teaching of Christianity from the beginning is that the God of the Bible is not a literal "Father," in the sense of having a physical body, and Jesus is not a literal "Son of the

See FACT & FAITH, page 5

# What ID Is and Isn't

MARK RAMBO

Most people understand the basic contention of the intelligent design (ID) movement. As William Dembski<sup>1</sup>—a prominent leader of the movement—puts it:

“The fundamental claim of intelligent design is straightforward and easily intelligible: namely, there are natural systems that cannot be adequately explained in terms of undirected natural forces and that exhibit features which in any other circumstance we would attribute to intelligence.”<sup>2</sup>

However, many Christians do not understand the bounds of intelligent design or the demarcation between ID and creationism. As a result, it is interesting and informative to examine some of the distinctions Dembski makes about intelligent design in his book, *The Design Revolution*.

## DEFINING INTELLIGENT DESIGN<sup>3</sup>

Dembski defines the basic premise of intelligent design this way:



“As a theory of biological origins and development, intelligent design’s central claim is that only intelligent causes adequately explains the complex, information-rich structures of biology and that these causes are empirically detectable. To say intelligent causes are empirically detectable is to say there exist well-defined methods that, based on observable features of the world, can reliably distinguish intelligent causes from undirected natural causes.”

ID is limited to the study of the signs of intelligence in the natural world and does not attempt to study the mind of the designer. Again, according to Dembski:

“Intelligent design is the science that studies signs of intelligence. But the designer’s thought process lie outside the scope of intelligent design. As a scientific research program, intelligent design investigates the effects of intelligence and not intelligence as such.”

So how do ID researchers determine if something is designed? Dembski coined the term *specified complexity* to define the characteristic trademark or signature of an intelligent causer. An item is considered designed, rather than a product of blind natural processes and chance, if it passes through his *Explanatory Filter* of contingency, complexity and specification. In other words, the item must be: (1) contingent (as in not necessary—necessary as a dropped ball will fall to earth due to gravity), (2) complex or highly improbable (Dembski uses a universal probability bound of  $10^{150}$ ) and (3) exhibit an independently given pattern or specification.

## DIFFERENCE FROM CREATIONISM<sup>4</sup>

Creationism focuses on the cause and beginning of the universe. Intelligent design focuses on arrangements of preexisting materials that point to a designing intelligence. According to Dembski:

See INTELLIGENT DESIGN, page 6

## In the NEWS...

### [Christianity Today](#)

A September article, “Unintelligent Debate,” discusses Intelligent Design. The author chastises ID leaders for being silent about the intellectual errors in young-earth literature and cites Hugh Ross as a model for confronting this issue. To read the article go to: [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/009/24.62.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/009/24.62.html).

### [Stem Cell Research](#)

Stem cell research has become a hot topic in this year’s presidential election. Hear Fuz Rana’s response to Nancy Reagan’s views on stem cell research. Go to “Ministry Update” on the right side of the RTB webpage, scroll down and click on this topic.

### [Intelligent Design](#)

The recent publication a paper by Dr. Stephen Meyer discussing intelligent design in the peer-reviewed journal *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* has generated intense criticism from Darwinists. To read the article or the controversy go to: [www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2002](http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2002).

### [Pastor Jack Hayford](#)

Jack Hayford, a strong supporter of the RTB Ministry, has been selected as the new president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Hear his comments on the age of the earth debate on the RTB website: [www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/index.shtml#young\\_earth\\_vs\\_old\\_earth](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/index.shtml#young_earth_vs_old_earth).

### [Religion Articles](#)

Jim Slagle of the Portland RTB Chapter writes a religion weblog for OregonLive, the online version of the Oregonian. A 3-part article titled “The Myth of the Problem of the History of Warfare Between Science and Religion” is particularly good. Check it out at [www.oregonlive.com/weblogs/regionblog](http://www.oregonlive.com/weblogs/regionblog).

### [Notable Old-Earthers](#)

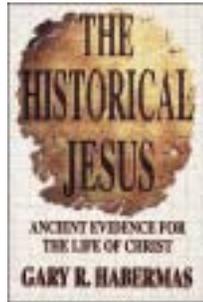
RTB apologist Lane Coffee has compiled a list of notable Christian leaders who are open to the old-earth interpretation of Genesis 1. You can check it out at [www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/notable\\_leaders/index.shtml](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/notable_leaders/index.shtml).

## Book Reviews

### The Historical Jesus

Gary R. Habermas  
College Press Publishing, 1996

Reviewer: Greg Moore



Some people argue the historical account of Jesus that is presented in the Gospels is not totally accurate. Some go so far as to suggest the Gospel writers were not motivated by historical concerns but a desire to communicate religious propaganda. Many such critics have sought to cast Jesus as a political revolutionary or even a magician. This book takes a critical look at these claims.

Habermas compiles historical data from both Christian and non-Christian sources to defend the Gospels' portrait of Jesus as God and savior. He begins by examining the early Christian creeds which preserve some of the earliest information on the life of Jesus. This is followed by a review of the archaeological data. He then examines non-Christian and Christian (non-New Testament) information about Jesus. His conclusion is not only are the Gospel accounts historically accurate but Jesus' life is one of the most mentioned and most substantiated in ancient times—in fact, much of ancient history is based on much fewer sources and less information.

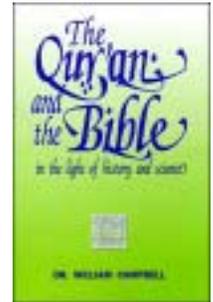
Habermas also dismantles the many fictitious tales that have been spun about Jesus. He examines the Swoon Theory, the claim Jesus survived death on the cross and was later revived. He examines the claim Jesus was a member of secret Essene society. He examines the notion Jesus was married, had children and his bloodline can be traced through royal families, secret organizations and age-old mysteries—first popularized in the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. He also takes a critical look at the radical Jesus Seminar which attempts to downplay the supernatural, especially in the life of Jesus.

I recommend this book as an important tool to have in your apologetics arsenal. Science, historical and philosophical apologetics can open unbelievers' minds to the possibility of God. However, we still need to be able to demonstrate that Christianity is true. *The Historical Jesus* is very helpful in equipping apologists to respond to contemporary criticisms of the orthodox view of Jesus.

### The Quran and the Bible

Dr. William Campbell  
Middel East Resources, 2002 (2nd Ed.)

Reviewer: Dave Ouellette



Dr. William Campbell, a medical doctor, wrote *The Quran and the Bible* to challenge the claims made by Dr. Maurice Bucaille in his book, *The Bible the Qur'an and Science*. Bucaille's book can be found in most bookstores and is one of the primary materials Muslims use to claim the Bible contains contradictions and improbabilities.

In the first three sections of the book, Campbell provides a detailed comparison of the Quran and the Bible in terms of their origin and historical validity. Campbell points out the methods Bucaille used for disproving the validity of the Bible would falsify the Quran as well. Based on this analysis, Campbell concludes: "Neither the present Quran, nor the present Gospel accounts, have suffered any important change, they are essentially as they were written."

This lays the foundation for the rest of the book which focuses on the scientific problems in the Quran. Campbell describes several fundamental errors and contradictions in the Quran in such sections as "The Earth, the Heavens, and the 6 or 8 Days of Creation" and "Anatomy, Embryology, and Genetics." The question Campbell poses is, if scientific errors prove these sections of the Quran are wrong, how can we be confident about the validity of the other sections?

In later sections, Campbell compares Jesus and Muhammed. Using his knowledge of the Arabic language, he challenges Muslim scholars' claims that the Bible prophesied the coming of Muhammed in the Gospel of John. He also addresses some misconceptions Muslims have concerning Islamic doctrine. For example, he challenges the Muslim belief Muhammed will intercede from them on the day of judgment and no Muslim will remain in hell.

*The Quran and the Bible* is a detailed and revealing study of two of the world's major holy books. It also provides an effective response to the claims made in Bucaille's book, which many Muslims and others use to criticize the Bible and Christianity. In addition to obtaining a thorough understanding of the Quran, the reader will also gain a more in-depth knowledge of the Bible.

# From Evidence of Things Seen and Not Seen

DON C. OLSON

I was raised in a Swedish-Norwegian family with a strong moral code. Honesty and integrity were highly valued. I can't remember my family ever going to church but my mom thought her kids should have a Christian education so she sent us to Lutheran catechism classes. I didn't relate much to what was taught because I couldn't see a need for religion to be a good person. Sometime later, I read the Bible because as I wanted to find out for myself what it said. I remember I found the prose beautiful and thought it contained a lot of great teachings.

After high school, I attended Gonzaga University—a Catholic Jesuit University—where I enrolled in chemistry. I took a serious look at the Catholic religion but eventually decided it was not for me. After Gonzaga, I attended Purdue University where I got my PhD in Analytical Chemistry. Then, after two postdocs, one at UCLA and one in Denmark, I went to work for the Shell Oil Company.

During that time, I did think about the existence of God and was interested in spiritual things. I learned TM, which is a fascinating experience. I also looked into the beliefs of a number of religions but eventually became an agnostic (one who believes there might or might not be a God). I felt there was about a 50 percent chance there was a God based on the evidence at hand and that was my view for over 40 years. Looking back, I sometimes wonder if the Holy Spirit wasn't with me even during that period. I can picture Him saying, "I can have some patience with this guy; he just needs more time."

In 1992, I retired from Shell after 30 years of service. But, after a couple of months of retirement, I founded a one-man technology company I named Global FIA. In 1995, I moved to Gig Harbor and two friends with professional backgrounds similar to mine joined my company. About this time, my views on the existence of God began to change. One reason was new discoveries in science, particularly in the fields of astronomy and microbiology, were creating a body of evidence that pointed to an intelligent designer. This caught my attention and, as new discoveries were made, the probability of God began to grow in my mind.

The second reason I attribute to one of my business partners, Graham Marshall, a scientist and deeply religious person. Graham and I would discuss science and inevitably the discussions would extend to science and the Christian beliefs. These discussions got my mind engaged even more with the question of God's existence and helped me a great deal in my journey to God. Graham also introduced me to the Reasons To Believe ministry, an immensely helpful resource for me in my journey.

To make a long story short, I eventually arrived at a point where I saw a compelling body of evidence that God does exist. But, compelling as the body of evidence was, it is not an absolute proof of God. So, from this body of evidence, a leap of faith was still necessary to a belief in God. To me it was a tiny leap, but nevertheless, a leap of faith. I didn't take the leap of faith at this time. Instead, I launched into the next leg of my journey, an investigation of Jesus.

When it came to Jesus, I had many doubts, even doubts about my doubts. These

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## Apologetic TOOLS

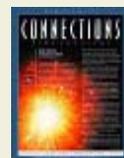
### [Creation Webcast](#)

Join Hugh Ross each Tuesday, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM (PT), for an exciting discussion about how the latest scientific discoveries provide powerful evidence for the God of the Bible. Listen live through the RTB website. You can also listen to and download past episodes from the website.



### [Free Newsletter](#)

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### [Message of the Month](#)

Get fresh, faith-building messages each month while providing vital financial support to the RTB ministry. Available on audio tape or CD. To learn more about the program, contact the chapter for a free tape or CD. Or, go to the RTB website and click on the M.O.M. icon.



### [New Tract-Like Brochures](#)

RTB has introduced four new brochures for evangelism and initiating science and the Bible discussions. Topics include: How Did Life Emerge, What the Big Bang Says about God and Design, Is the Universe Designed for Humanity, and How Long Were the Creation Days. \$3 for a pack of 20 (one kind or 5 of each). Order at 1-800-482-7836.



### [RTB Training Course](#)

Take RTB's Science and Evangelism Correspondence Course and become an official RTB apologist. The course retails for \$350 but is available through the chapter for \$150. Course materials include audiotapes or CDs, two videos (VHS or DVD) and seven books. For more information, contact the Seattle chapter. Scholarships are available from the chapter.



Father” in the sense of being physically born from a goddess. Language by its nature falls short in expressing these matters. Elementary wisdom, however, understands this.

Christians also concede that by strict definition Christianity is not absolutely provable (this situation is in fact parallel with scientific and historical inquiry in general). Notice, however, that atheism, agnosticism, humanism, scientism, and post-modernism aren't provable as faith positions either. Rather, one must do the work of actually weighing the case for each position and choose the strongest position.

However, beyond these two points, Brown utterly confuses his readers just as he appears confused himself. What we find in the above quotation are a series of non-sequiturs, half-truths, and the confusion of terminology. Readers may rightly wonder whether Brown knows in his own mind what he is talking about. His basic intention, however, is hard to miss. The author wishes to convey to his readers that faith is an irrational act.

This gets at the heart of perhaps the most fundamental challenge in modern Christianity—the need to recover and commend to our world a biblical and accurate definition of faith. Is faith a leap into the dark for no reason? Or has there been a costly perversion of the term that betrays instead a fundamental confusion about faith, both inside and outside Christianity?

The contemporary attack on Christianity by outside critics in fact has less to do with the lobbing of embarrassing facts into our yard than it does with relegating faith to the realm of mere feelings and the irrational. [Note, for example, Stephen J. Gould's *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (Ballantine, 1999), p.22; and Joseph Campbell's conversation with a Catholic priest, in *The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers* (Anchor, 1991), p.266; to name just a few.] Yet non-Christians are only part of the problem. In my 20-plus years as a pastor, I have often been confronted by Christians who were offended by my attempts to defend our faith. Two friends of mine were recently asked to leave their positions as pastors of a large Christian congregation because they sought to equip their church with skills for defending Christianity in our secular climate. It seems the challenge of proclaiming the Gospel in our day demands not merely the defending of the Gospel, but also defending its defense!

We must recover a sense of faith that includes the rational because the Bible itself points us in that direction. While we are not called to understand God's ways in an exhaustive way (Job, Isaiah 55:9) and while it is true we often “see in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12), the Bible does lead us to believe it is reasonable to trust Him. Nowhere in Scripture (Matt. 18:3 notwithstanding) is it ever hinted that we must deny our intelligence to trust in God. To the contrary, readers are commanded to love Him with “all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). Indeed, the prophets urged their hearers to rethink the folly of idolatry (Isaiah 44:9). Paul writes our refusal to think will be one of the standards of judgment against sinners (Romans 1:18).

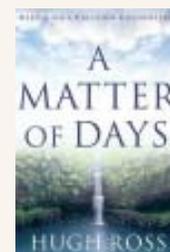
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## RTB Resources

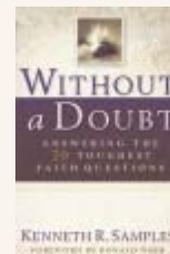
In this new book, *Origins of Life: Biblical and Evolutionary Models Face Off*, Hugh Ross and Fuz Rana reveal how life's beginnings can be tested. They examine the latest origin-of-life research and explode the myth of a naturalistic origin of life. *Intermediate/Advanced, Hardback, US\$ 12.95.*



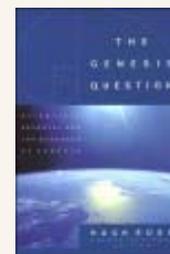
The length of time represented by the word “day” in the Genesis creation account is a source of controversy in the Christian church. In this new book, *A Matter of Days*, Hugh Ross explores how this controversy developed and addresses many of the key issues of the debate. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$ 9.95.*



In this new book, *Without a Doubt*, RTB philosopher and theologian Ken Samples gives readers a great apologetics handbook. The question-and-answer format is easy to follow and addresses 20 prominent issues skeptics raise about God, the Bible and Christianity. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$ 9.95.*



Does the Bible teach the earth is 10,000 years old? How does science and the book of Genesis relate? In *The Genesis Question*, Hugh Ross examines these and other issues from an old-earth creationist position. A great book to share with Christians and skeptics. *All Readers, Paperback, \$US 9.95.*



Is life in the universe common or rare? What are the odds of finding other Earth-like planets? Take an amazing journey as Hugh Ross examines how the universe has been meticulously fine-tuned for human life using state-of-the-art computer animation. *All Viewers, VHS or DVD, \$US 19.95.*



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“Creation[ism] asks for an ultimate resting place of explanation: the source of being of the world. Intelligent design, by contrast, inquires not into the ultimate source of matter and energy but into the cause of their present arrangement, particularly those entities, large and small, that exhibit specified complexity.”

So, creationism looks beyond the facts of nature, such as the Big Bang, and attempts to identify the Causer. ID examines the facts of nature, focusing on those that defy naturalistic explanation, to demonstrate the need for an intelligent cause—though they do not attempt to identify the Causer.

#### IS ID DISGUISED CREATIONISM?<sup>5</sup>

Critics claim ID is simply a cleverly disguised form of creationism. According to Dembski, creationism has prior religious presuppositions: a supernatural agent who creates and orders the world, and the biblical account of creation is scientifically accurate. ID, on the other hand, is theologically neutral. Dembski states:

“[ID] has no prior religious commitments and interprets the data of science on generally accepted scientific principles... [It] nowhere attempts to identify the intelligent cause responsible for the design in nature, nor does it prescribe in advance the sequence of events by which this intelligent cause had to act.”

Thus, while creationists may see ID as a form of creationism, ID researchers see their work as free from any religious presuppositions. Although many ID proponents are Christian, being Christian is not a condition of membership. This is why the ID movement is often referred to as a “big tent” approach.

#### IS ID A THEOLOGICAL ENTERPRISE?<sup>6</sup>

While ID has theological implications, it is not a theological enterprise. According to Dembski, the only resolution to the question “Do certain types of natural systems exhibit clear hallmarks of intelligence?” cannot be decided on philosophical, theological or ideological grounds but must be decided through careful scientific investigation. For example, the Big Bang has theological implications but that does not make it a theological enterprise. To Darwinists who argue ID is a theological enterprise Dembski responds:

“Darwinism has radical implications for theology and that in challenging Darwinism, intelligent design likewise has radical implications for theology. This is not to say that intelligent design is a theological enterprise any more than Darwinism is a theological enterprise.”

#### IS ID RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED?<sup>7</sup>

Dembski states Darwinian critics of ID “find it inconceivable that someone, once properly exposed to Darwin’s theory, could fail to

embrace it wholeheartedly, much less doubt it.” Therefore, these critics conclude intelligent design must be religiously motivated. However, Dembski argues the ID rebuttal is motivated by science, not religion. He states:

“The reason design theorists take seriously such implications is that we are convinced that Darwinism is, on its own term, an oversold and overreaching science theory.”

According to Dembski, “Darwinism has achieved the status of inviolable science.” The problem is not that Darwinists hold their theory tightly, the problem is they hold their theory dogmatically such that their theory *cannot* be incorrect. In Dembski’s view, this violates the tenets of science. He states (citing Damask):

“[Scientists must have] faith in human inquiry and its ability to render the world intelligible...It takes the possibility of error not as an obstacle to knowledge but as a basis for humility, a humility that is always willing to question and test to make sure we are not deceiving ourselves.”

#### OPTIMAL DESIGN<sup>8</sup>

Critics question why ID proponents put the word “intelligent” in front of “design” when it seems that much of the design in nature is anything but intelligent. According to Dembski, there is a difference between intelligent design and optimal design:

“[ID] stresses that design is due to an actual intelligence, but leaves entirely open the attributes of that intelligence.”

As an example, Dembski points out that no one would argue automobiles from Detroit are not designed, yet it could be argued they are not optimal.

Dembski also states that critics who raise this issue assume to know the purpose and scope of the designing intelligence. For example, some question design on the basis of things they deem to be sub-optimal designs. However, Dembski points out an intelligent designer of an ecosystem would not so optimally design a predator such that all its prey, and so itself would be eventually destroyed. Rather, the intelligence would design a balanced ecosystem with each subsystem designed for the overall equilibrium of the ecosystem.

#### ID & THE DESIGN ARGUMENT<sup>9</sup>

While some see ID and the design argument as the same, there are clear differences. The design, or teleological, argument begins with features of the physical world that exhibit evidence of purpose. From such features, the design argument then attempts to establish the existence and attributes of an intelligent cause responsible for those features. In contrast, Dembski states intelligent design “seeks to

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to identify signs of intelligence to generate scientific insights.” To highlight the difference he gives the following illustration. A natural theologian might point to nature and say, “Clearly, the designer of this ecosystem prized variety over neatness.” A design theorist trying to do intelligent design research on the same ecosystem might reply, “That’s an intriguing theological assertion. Maybe I’ll think about that after hours. Right now I’m looking into the sources of information for that variety.”

It is also important to note that much of the design argument focuses on cosmology—how the universe points to a creator. ID is focuses primarily on biology. According to Dembski:

“Although design remains a much discussed topic in cosmology (is the universe as whole designed?), with intelligent design’s focus on biology, most of the discussion and controversy now centers on biology (is there design in the universe and specifically, in biology?).”

## CONCLUSION

Intelligent design is clearly an ally of creationists and many of its’ leaders are devout Christians. However it is important to recognize the differences between the two movements. The primary goal of creationism is evangelism, using the facts of nature to point people to the truth of the Bible and the Gospel. The focus of ID is on changing the nature of science—changing the way science is conducted and challenging the dominance of the naturalistic, Darwinistic worldview. Both movements serve a useful purpose. ID is experiencing success in changing the way science is taught in public schools, for exmample, where creationism has had limited success. However, for those who want to use design to point unbelievers to the Creator of the Bible, the RTB model is much more potent approach.

*Mark Rambo is a civilian employee of the Navy. He is a trained RTB apologist and coordinates the Seattle chapter's involvement in local conferences.*

## REFERENCES:

1. William A. Dembski, Ph.D. in mathematics and philosophy, associate research professor at Baylor University and a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute.
2. William A. Dembski *The Design Revolution* (IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2004), p. 27.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 33 – 37, 84, 88.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 38 - 40.
5. *Ibid.*, p.41 – 44.
6. *Ibid.*, p.45 – 49.
7. *Ibid.*, p.50 – 56.
8. *Ibid.*, p.57 – 63.
9. *Ibid.*, p.64 – 71.

doubts led to lots of questions. So I engaged these doubts and questions, and began searching for information and evidence, both through reading and speaking with people. Lots of people had answers to offer but little or no evidence to support them. Then someone recommended Lee Strobel’s book, *A Case For Christ*. This was a great resource for me. Lee Strobel is an investigative journalist and was an atheist who set out to prove that Jesus was not God. Before he finished the book, he became a Christian because the body of evidence he found convinced him Jesus is God. I even contacted Lee Strobel by email and started an email dialogue with him. Between my wife, family members, Lee Strobel, a bible study group at my church and others, I was able to ask a lot of questions and express my views and that was a great help to me.

Eventually I accumulated a compelling body of evidence in my mind that Jesus was indeed God. For me, the evidence had to be compelling; strong wasn’t enough. There were still a few questions lingering in my mind but I didn’t feel these were critical and that answers to them would come in time. Now, I was ready to take both the leap of faith to God that I had put off earlier and to believing in Jesus as my God and my savior. However, there was a problem. I didn’t know how to take a leap of faith. In fact, I wasn’t sure what faith really is. Sure, I have known the word most of my life and I could look it up in Webster’s, but I wasn’t sure what it was in my mind or in my heart.

So I sent an email off to Lee Strobel thinking, since he made a similar journey, he might have encountered the same problem. His answer was “read my book, *The Case for Faith*.” He also gave me a prayer from the book of Mark, which was: “I believe, please help me with my unbelief.” This prayer made sense to me. Unbelief is different from non-belief. Non-belief is an act of the will not to believe. Unbelief is saying, “I want to believe but I don’t know how.”

Here are some of the things I learned about faith. Faith is based on evidence. I liked that because that is the path I had taken. Hebrews tells us faith is evidence of things not seen. God wants us to know Him by a leap of faith from the evidence. Faith is about a choice, a step of the will, a decision to want to know God personally. That is what I needed to do, make a step of the will, and then act on it. As I was pondering this, I came to realize my leap of faith had already happened. It had sneaked up on me. Now, I knew I was where I wanted to be and I decided to follow Jesus.

You might think this was the end of my journey but it wasn’t. I had faith in my mind but I wasn’t sure I had it in my heart. I needed a sort of leap of faith from my mind to my heart. I was ready for this to happen but I didn’t know how to make it happen. While I was pondering this, I noticed something odd had been happening to me at church services. Sometimes when a certain verse was sung in a hymn, or something was said in a sermon, or someone said a certain prayer, I would get a powerful

And the Psalmist urges us to consider (a rational act) the reality of God (Psalm 8:3).

Quite apart from the Bible, the word “faith” is consistent with a reasonable act. When you say, “I have faith in you, John,” do you mumble under your breath, “so I’ll throw my caution to the wind.”? Of course not! Rather, you are effectively saying, “Your track record of the past gives me confidence in you for the future!” The denial of rationality in the act of faith demeans the person we say we are trusting. It is rationally-based confidence, on the other hand, that alone crowns faith’s object with dignity.

And the message of Christianity is indeed worthy of your faith in this sense. It is not within the scope of this essay to lay out the broad range of supporting evidence for the truth of the God of the Bible. Reasons to Believe offers a host of materials to that end. My point is to invite you to consider the truth of the God of the Bible with your mind. Discover for yourself trusting Him is not nonsense but the smartest choice among alternatives.

*Gary Jensen is a Lutheran Pastor. He is a trained RTB apologist and is active in the Seattle Chapter.*

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upwelling of feelings in my chest, often bringing tears to my eyes. I realized I didn’t need to make it happen, my faith had already made the leap from my mind to my heart. This was one of the greatest discoveries in my journey: some things you don’t have to make happen, you just have to be ready and the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

There is another delightful thing I learned about the Holy Spirit during my journey. If you have some doubts or questions and you engage them seriously and search for answers, you will likely be visited by the Holy Spirit. Looking back, I think the Holy Spirit may have been with me from the time I first read the Bible in my boyhood. When I came across the Lord’s Prayer in the Bible, I loved it so much that I decided to say it every night before I went to sleep. I don’t quite understand why, especially when I was an agnostic, but perhaps I wanted some help in the 50 percent probability side that there was a God.

That is my story. I know it is not the end because I have a great passion to know all one can know about God and I will be on this journey the rest of my life.

*Don Olson is an analytical chemist. He lives in Gig Harbor and is active in the Seattle Chapter.*



## Seattle Chapter Reasons to Believe

### Who Are We?

The Seattle 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 the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians 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 word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and seek to provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

### What Do We Do?

Our mission is 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 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 scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). Your tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

## Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, 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.