



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

# REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

JULY 2005

## What's Happening?

### [RTB Conferences](#)

Last spring, RTB conducted the Cosmic Fingerprints Conference at Willow Creek Church. Due to the success of that conference, it is being repeated in California this month, and in Hawaii in October. For more info, visit the RTB website [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org).

### [Hugh Ross Visit](#)

Hugh Ross will be visiting the Seattle area in November. If your church or group is interested in hosting a speaking engagement, contact the Seattle RTB Chapter for more information at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). We will be scheduling both day and evening events.

### [Myths About RTB](#)

There are several myths being circulated in Christian circles about what Hugh Ross and RTB believes. RTB has developed a response to these misconceptions that is posted on their website. Go to: [www.reasons.org/about/8\\_myths\\_about\\_rtb.shtml](http://www.reasons.org/about/8_myths_about_rtb.shtml).

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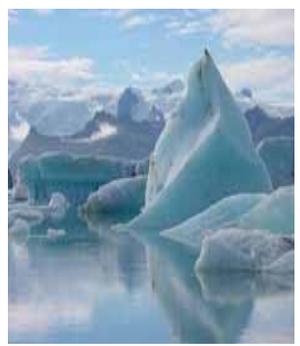
## Water, the “Lagom” Liquid

DON C. OLSON

There is a unique word in Swedish called “lagom.” It means “just right.” For example, not too much, not too little; not too hot, not too cold—just right. We could call “lagom” the Goldilocks word.

Now, what does this have to do with water? Such a common, ubiquitous substance as water, which nearly covers the earth, would not seem to be unique. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Water is a unique liquid unlike any other known liquid in the universe. It has a set of properties which are just right—in other words “lagom”—for the support of life on earth.

Let's take a look at some of these characteristics, starting with water's thermal properties. Like other liquids, water contracts (gets more dense and heavier) as its temperature drops. However, when it reaches a temperature close to freezing (4° C to be exact), something odd happens. At that point, a reversal occurs and water begins to expand (becoming less dense) with the dropping temperature. Furthermore, it undergoes an even greater expansion when it reaches 0° C and freezes into ice. No other naturally occurring liquid of any significant abundance does this.



It turns out these properties are just right to cause the coldest water in a body of water to rise to the surface and for ice to float on the surface. Without this behavior, the coldest water would collect and freeze at the bottom of bodies of water, such as lakes. Ice on the bottom would not melt efficiently during the warm seasons, so eventually these bodies of water would freeze from the bottom up until they were solid ice. This would happen in our lakes and seas and some rivers over vast regions of the earth which have a winter season and, in these regions, life in these bodies of water would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Imagine the Great Lakes frozen into a solid block of ice.

Another important property of water is solvent power. Solvent power is the ability of a liquid to dissolve chemicals. The life-supporting chemistry in our cells occurs in

See WATER, page 4

# Open Theism: An Erroneous View

GREG MOORE

Open theism (also known as openness theology, open view and free-will theism) is a theological position dealing with the relationship between human free will, God's will and the nature of the future. Open theists maintain that God does not know the precise direction the future will take because the future depends on the decisions we will make. This is the "open" of open theism—the future is "open" and not settled ahead of time.<sup>1</sup>

One motivation behind this theology is the desire to emphasize human freedom. Open theists argue God has created mankind with free will and, in order for human decisions to be truly free, God cannot know ahead of time the choices we will make. Thus, it is always within the power of human beings to perform, or not perform, any action. Such freedom is *incompatibilistic* because it is incompatible with the view that God is the cause of everything that occurs.<sup>2</sup>

Another concern of open theism is the age-old question of why there is evil and suffering in the world. Open theists claim an all-powerful God cannot be responsible for the tragedies in our lives and they must be the result of human decisions. This means that God is not totally sovereign over the events of the world. Instead, God so values our freedom that He does not normally override our decisions, even if those decisions produce bad results.<sup>3</sup>

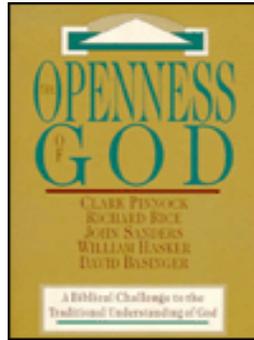
Open theism also maintains that God's greatest goal in creating mankind is to enter into a loving relationship with us. Open theists argue that true love requires "risk"—the risk of being rejected by the object of that love. Therefore, since God has genuine love, He must be taking a big risk in trying to win our affections. This implies that God can make mistakes in dealing with people, changes His mind, and changes His plans accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

Open theism is growing in popularity in the church and spreading quickly. Twenty years ago it hardly existed, but today it controls whole churches. One major denomination—the Baptist General Conference—was almost split-in-two by it.<sup>5</sup> On the surface, it does seem to offer a plausible solution to the issue of human free will and divine predestination. However, the God of open theism is inconsistent with the teachings of orthodox Christianity.

## GOD'S OMNISCIENCE

If God does not know the decisions we will make, He cannot have complete foreknowledge of the future. This is contrary to the orthodox belief that God is omniscient (all-knowing). Open theists claim they do not deny God is all-knowing. Some argue the future is unknowable by God because it is non-existent (i.e., it hasn't happened yet). Others argue God voluntarily limits His knowledge of the decisions we will make so our choices can be truly free.<sup>6</sup> However, both of these positions are problematic.

See OPEN THEISM, page 5



## *In the* NEWS...

### [Carl Wieland's Squishosaur](#)

Young-earth creationist Carl Wieland issued a rebuttal of Greg Moore's articles on the dinosaur blood/tissue issue. Moore responds in this new article. Go to: [www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/other\\_papers/moore\\_greg\\_carl\\_wielands\\_squishosaur.shtml](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/other_papers/moore_greg_carl_wielands_squishosaur.shtml).

### [Scientology: Religion or Racket?](#)

Responding to Tom Cruise's recent promotion of Scientology, Christianity Today recently republished an earlier article about the cult. A good primer on where it came from and what they believe. Go to: [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/136/54.o.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/136/54.o.html)

### [Habitable Zones in the Universe](#)

This article by Guillermo Gonzalez, co-author of *The Privileged Planet*, discusses how the concept of habitable zones was developed and the present state of research. Go to: [www.discovery.org/csc](http://www.discovery.org/csc) and click on the link below "Scientific Research."

### [The Pentecostal Gold Standard](#)

Jack Hayford, president of the Foursquare denomination, has been an outspoken supporter of RTB. There is an excellent article on him in the current issue of Christianity Today. Go to: [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/007/18.24.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/007/18.24.html).

### [The Stem Cell Madness](#)

This BreakPoint article examines the credibility of the claim that embryo stem cells can provide cures for a host of diseases. Go to: <http://www.pfm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=BreakPoint1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16305>.

### [Redefining the Debate](#)

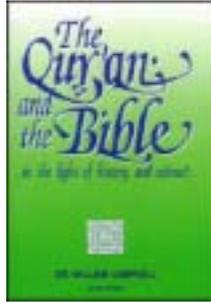
Catholics have been accused of accepting Darwinian evolution. This article discusses recent statements by a Catholic cardinal that indicate otherwise. Go to: [http://www.pfm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=BreakPoint\\_Commentaries1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16349](http://www.pfm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=BreakPoint_Commentaries1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16349).

# Book Reviews

## The Quran and the Bible

Dr. William Campbell  
Middle East Resources, 2002

Reviewer: David Ouellette



Dr. William Campbell, a medical doctor, wrote *The Quran and the Bible*, second edition, 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 is full of contradictions and improbabilities.

In the first three sections, 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?

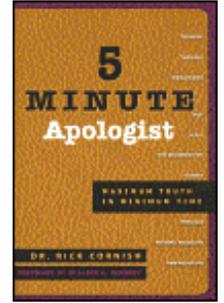
In later sections, Campbell compares Jesus and Muhammed. Using his knowledge of the Arabic language, he challenges Muslim scholars' claims the Bible prophesied the coming of Muhammed in the Gospel of John. He also addresses some misconceptions Muslims have concerning Islamic doctrine. For example, he 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.

## 5 Minute Apologist

Dr. Rick Cornish  
NavPress, 2005

Reviewer: Mike Brown



Dr. Cornish taught theology for seven years in the former Soviet Union. He is a graduate of Denver Seminary. This excellent handbook was developed as a result of materials he put together to teach apologetics to his sons. While Cornish designed it initially for high school students, it is an excellent work for Christians of all ages.

The subtitle of the book is "Maximum Truth in Minimum Time". Recognizing how hard it is to get people to read today, Dr. Cornish put together 100 short readings that can be read in approximately five minutes each. The book is divided into ten sections addressing:

1. Thinking
2. The Bible
3. Worldviews
4. God
5. Jesus
6. The Resurrection
7. Science
8. Miracles
9. Historic Religions
10. New Religions

The science section is the largest with 17 of the 100 readings. As you might expect with the foreword being written by Bill Dembski, he addresses the issue of Intelligent Design. He manages to provide a tremendous amount of evidence for creation and the Bible without bringing up the "Age" issue.

In the introduction he makes a statement that we should all be telling our church leaders.

"Research indicates that up to 80 percent of evangelical kids lose their faith in college. What happened in our churches and youth groups to allow this? No nation would willingly take 80 percent casualties in a war. Why do we? If we don't train our people, especially our young people, in apologetics, we'll lose this war, at least in America. Some believe we already have."

I believe this book should be in the library of every Christian, and they should be reading at least a segment each day.

a water medium. It is vital, therefore, that the solvent power of water be high enough to dissolve the chemicals used in life processes, but not too high or the water would dissolve the cells themselves. You guessed it, the solvent power of water is “lagom” for meeting these requirements. Water is also involved in some of the life chemistry. Therefore, it must be reactive, but not too reactive or it will destroy some of the vital components of the cells. Water’s reactivity, it turns out, is just right.

Another property of critical importance is viscosity. The viscosity of a liquid determines how easy it flows and how much pressure it takes to pump it around. Furthermore, the smaller the diameter of a tube that the liquid is pumped through, the greater the resistance to flow. Getting nutrients to our cells depends on the flow of the blood through billions of extremely small tubes called capillaries. These capillaries are so small that one could run 10,000 in parallel down a pencil lead. Because of their extremely small diameters, they cause a very high resistance to flow, and therefore to pump a liquid through them with a low pressure pump such as the heart requires that the liquid have a very low viscosity.

Water has a low viscosity which is perfectly fit for this application. If it were much higher, it would not be possible to easily pump blood through the capillaries. If it were much lower, shearing forces would damage the delicate structures of the cell. Viscosity also affects the rate of diffusion of nutrients between and within cells. The viscosity of water is also perfectly fit for this function. In a word, the viscosity of water is “lagom” for the support of life.

Solids, including ice, also have a viscosity. Because ice has a low enough viscosity, our glaciers slowly flow down slopes to the sea. There, icebergs calve and melt as they float into warmer waters. This recycling process helps to moderate the climate of the earth in a range that is fit for life. If ice had a much higher viscosity, flow of the glaciers would be much slower, and most of the water of the earth would accumulate and be immobilized in vast ice caps around the poles and on high mountains. Most of the earth would become a Sahara. If the viscosity of ice were much lower, glaciers would flow to the sea and melt much faster, which would also have a severe effect on the climate.

These are some of the properties of water that are “lagom” for the support of life. Because they are “lagom”, the earth teems with life. If they were not, the earth would be sterile. If this “lagom” liquid didn’t exist, it would have to be invented for life to exist. If you want to thank God for something really important, thank him for water.

For more information on water, I recommend the book, *Nature’s Destiny*, by Michael Denton.

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## Apologetic TOOLS

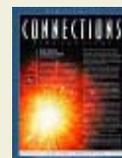
### [Creation Update Webcast](#)

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](#)

RTB’s newsletters are full of great articles on science and the Bible. They also provide updates on what’s happening at the ministry. To subscribe, go to the RTB website and register. Once registered you can search and print past issues by clicking on the newsletter icon.



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

Get fresh, faith-building messages each month while providing vital financial support to the RTB ministry.



This year’s series is titled, “Adam: Miracle, Myth or Monkey?” Available on CDs. 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.



Many passages in the Bible explicitly state that God knows all things and the future exhaustively. 1 John 3:20 states: “He knows everything.” Psalm 139:4,16 states: “Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely ... All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” God’s foreknowledge of the future is also demonstrated by biblical prophecy (e.g., Daniel’s prophecies, the Old Testament Messianic prophecies, etc.).<sup>7</sup> If the Bible prophecies are not true, then Jesus erred when he stated that Scripture, prophetic passages included, “cannot be broken” (John 10:35).<sup>8</sup>

Open theism also suggests time is part of God’s nature and tries to restrict God to the present. However, the Bible clearly teaches God is eternal, He existed before the universe and created the universe. Therefore, since God exists independent of the space-time dimensions of the universe, He is not restricted by, nor contained within, our linear dimension of time—the succession of events from the past, through the present, to the future. Thus God is able to indwell our past, present and future simultaneously.<sup>9</sup>

God foreknowing the decisions we are going to make does not violate our freedom. Logically, God knowing what we are going to do does not mean that we can’t do something else. Our future choices are entirely free and ours to make, they are simply known in advance by God. In this, our natural ability to freely choose has not been removed.<sup>10</sup> However, the open theist claim that God voluntarily chooses to not know our future decisions is illogical. God would have to know all the future events related to our decisions in order to know what to choose not to know.<sup>11</sup>

#### GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE

If God cannot exercise complete control over the decisions we make, He cannot be completely sovereign. This is contrary to the orthodox teaching that God is omnipotent (all-powerful). Open theists claim God is indeed powerful and capable of bringing certain events to pass, but the future cannot be settled ahead of time because it depends on our decisions. Thus, God limits his power to make room for human beings to use their power.<sup>12</sup> This is also problematic.

God’s absolute sovereignty over the creation and time creation is clearly taught in Scripture. The Bible states God knows in advance what He will do and what the results will be. For example, Psalm 33:11 states: “But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.” And, Isaiah 46:9-10 states: “... I [God] make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”<sup>13</sup>

Orthodox Christianity claims the Bible is infallible. However, if God is not completely sovereign, He could not control the free-will decisions of the Bible writers and the Bible could be full of errors. For example, when

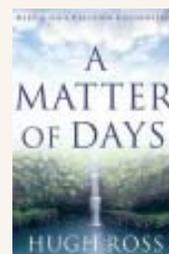
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## RTB Resources

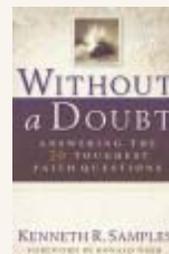
In this new book, *Origins of Life: Biblical and Evolutionary Models Face Off*, Hugh Ross and Fuz Rana reveal how life’s beginnings can be tested. They examine the latest origin-of-life research and explode the myth of a naturalistic origin of life. *Intermediate/Advanced, Hardback, US\$ 12.95.*



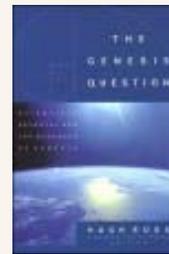
The length of time represented by the word “day” in the Genesis creation account is a source of controversy in the Christian church. In this new book, *A Matter of Days*, Hugh Ross explores how this controversy developed and addresses many of the key issues of the debate. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$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



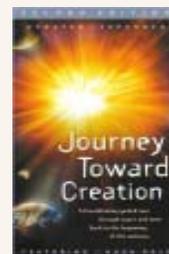
In this new book, *Without a Doubt*, RTB philosopher and theologian Ken Samples gives readers a great apologetics handbook. The question-and-answer format is easy to follow and addresses 20 prominent issues skeptics raise about God, the Bible and Christianity. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$ 9.95.*



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 perspective. 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.*



RTB Webstore - <http://store.reasons.org>

God commission Paul to write the Book of Romans, Paul could have made mistakes or included something God didn't want written in the Bible.<sup>14</sup> This not a problem from the orthodox perspective because human beings can do whatever they want, but what they want is determined by God, or at least foreknown by Him.

Open theism also casts doubts on the promises and predictions of Scripture since they are subject to human decisions. However, God has given His solemn word that all of His promises will be fulfilled. For example, there are explicit predictions in God's covenants (e.g., Abrahamic, Davidic, etc.) indicating that God has arranged the future in the unfolding of His promises.<sup>15</sup> The Bible makes it clear that God's providence is always in motion, not in a responsive way, but in a guiding and providing way that works for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).<sup>16</sup>

#### GOD'S IMMUTABILITY

If God does not know everything that will occur in the future, His wishes can be frustrated by human decisions. Thus, God must take risks, make mistakes and change His plans as the unknown future unfolds. This is contrary to the orthodox teaching that God is immutable (constant and unchanging)—He is perfectly self-sufficient, dwells in eternal bliss and is not affected by our decisions.<sup>17</sup>

Open theists point to various passages of Scripture that suggest God reacts to what the people on earth do. For example, God is pleased when people obey Him. When they disobey Him, He is angry. Sometimes God seems to change His plans—as he did in the days of Noah. Likewise, the New Testament tells us that God's wrath is against sinners, but when they repent and believe, He changes that wrath into love and acceptance. These passages deserve special consideration because they seem to support open theism.<sup>19</sup>

These passages employ anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms. An anthropomorphism is a figure of speech in which God is spoken of as having human body parts or appearance. An anthropopathism is a figure of speech in which God is spoken of as having human feelings or emotions. This style of writing makes the Bible more understandable. However, God does not change in these instances—His character and plan remain constant. What changes is God's outward providence in keeping with the situation. Actually, God would be changing his character if his outward providence did not adjust to a change in the situation.<sup>20</sup>

Open theists also argue that, since Jesus experienced emotions and changes, God the Father must have a similar character because Jesus is the exact image of the Father. However, the answer to this lies in the unique person of Jesus Christ. He alone of the Trinity became man, and continues to be God and man in one person forever. The actions, thoughts, and emotions of Jesus pictured in the Gospels are those of a man, a human being. Jesus suffered in his humanity, not in

his deity. Thus, it is sloppy theology to attribute the human aspects of Jesus' life to God.<sup>21</sup>

While the idea of a suffering God may prove comforting to people who are suffering, but how can we trust a god who changes in experience, knowledge, emotions and actions? If the future is truly open and God's plan is overcome by unforeseen events, there is no security that God will continue to love us. And, if our free will is more powerful than God's ability to protect us, there is nothing to prevent us from turning away from the Christian faith and forfeiting our salvation. If God is dependent on our decisions, then He also powerless to respond to our prayers.<sup>22</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Open theists speak of God's "general sovereignty" in which God macro-manages the overall plan, micromanages a few of the specifics, but leaves the remaining details open for human free-will decisions. However, to insist that we are somehow partners with God in shaping the future simply elevates the autonomy of man above the sovereignty of God. This model of a reduced God is not only is unscriptural, but fails to provide a God who is capable of working out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will (Eph. 1:11).<sup>23</sup>

The idea that evil and suffering stems from human decisions is also troublesome. It fails to provide lasting hope because it implies that no one is really in charge of human events. It also fails to inspire trust in God since His best intentions can be trumped by our decisions. Evil and suffering needs to be understood in the context of God's plan. God is not surprised by evil actions but superintends and overrules the evil and tragic things in our lives, wonderfully working them for good. From the first sin to the greatest sin in history, God sovereignly disposes His will.<sup>24</sup>

Open theism is diametrically opposed to orthodox Christian beliefs. It is an attack on the God of the Bible and a dangerous continuation of the doubt in God that began in the Garden of Eden. As Christians, we must agree with the Bible that God controls men, men do not control God. God not only knows where He is going, but where His people are going and how they will get there. Only the God of orthodox Christianity can truly be our helper, our refuge and our strength in the face of persecution, trials and affliction. God's glory, not our happiness, is God's primary goal, and should be our primary goal as well.<sup>25</sup>

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

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*Continued on page 7*

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## 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). 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.