



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

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

OCTOBER 2007

What's Happening?

[RTB Creation Updates](#)

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[D'Souza Debates Hitchens](#)

On October 22, Christian apologist Dinesh D'Souza will debate Christopher Hitchens, author of *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. For more information on the debate, check out D'Souza's column at www.townhall.com. We'll report on the debate in a future issue of our newsletter.

[We Do Presentations](#)

The Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics ranging from the scientific evidences for God, to the age of the earth debate. If your church or group is looking for speakers, contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

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So Easy a Caveman Could Do It?

E. STAN LENNARD, M.D., Sc.D.

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The slogan of the popular Geico commercials is now familiar to most television viewing people. It shows the frustration, resentment and anger of cavemen toward certain twenty first century corporate executives who portray their company's product as being so easy to use that these mere cavemen can do it. It is a marvelously successful ad campaign.

Who are these cavemen? They most likely represent Cro-Magnons¹, human beings who lived at least 35,000 years ago. How do contemporary human beings, or "moderns," consider the first humans in terms of their intellectual and physical capacities? Words that come to mind include ignorant, crude, violent, and powerful, and they are assumed to have been linguistically primitive, even guttural in expression. But such adjectives are not justifiable descriptions of the first humans, Homo sapiens sapiens, created by God in the imago Dei (Genesis 1:27, 5:1-2). Even the ads show the cavemen as articulate and able to use cell phones, check airline boarding passes and order roast duck with mango salsa! The ads suggest that cavemen were not primitive but were remarkably sophisticated.



These commercials draw attention to a trait that distinguishes human beings from other animals, namely their sophisticated linguistic capacity that emanates from a mind. What makes this kind of communication possible with other humans? An examination of neural synaptic transmission offers a model for the mechanism, not only with other humans but also with God.

In Genesis 2:7 God breathed the breath of life into Adam, the crown of His creation. Human beings alone received spirit from God, and through it an interactive relationship with Him and life that transcends the physical, temporal life on Earth.² The first humans manifested spiritual awareness and were—considering their resources—artistically, socially and technologically advanced. These attributes have been documented as far back as 50,000 years ago when advanced human culture appeared out of nowhere, marking the appearance of God's image in a created

being.³ What “modern” could survive and thrive as they did without the benefit of shopping malls? These first human beings, or cavemen, were concerned with ideas such as God, morality, purpose, destiny, the meaning of life and what happens after death.⁴ Of particular interest are cranial vault analyses of fossilized remains of the first humans. These show cerebral structures, called Broca’s region for speech and Wernicke’s region for language comprehension, identical to those of modern humans that enable sophisticated linguistic communication.⁵ Language characterizes *Homo sapiens sapiens*,^{6,7} the only creation of God that possesses the intellectual capacity to acquire knowledge, discernment and judgment through experience—*wisdom*. As the Geico ads suggest, the first humans were indeed remarkably sophisticated.

In the Genesis accounts we see that Adam had an interactive communication with God. Endowed with the human spirit, two-way communication was possible between God, who is Spirit, and the human mind.⁸ The mental capacity of human beings gives us a unique awareness of self, a concept of the mind that cannot be attributed to or localized within the physical brain.⁹ We are aware of our unique personal identity, our “I,”^{10,11} with which Adam communicated with God, the “I Am.” Let us examine the model by which this interaction may be better understood.

The neural synapse (<http://en.citizendium.org/wiki/Synapse>) is an elegant and complex molecular machine.¹² It transmits information^{13,14,15} as action potentials, or nerve impulses, according to codes. Codes are also associated with genetic expression, language being integral to both.^{16,17} The release of neurotransmitters from synaptic vesicles across synaptic clefts is stochastic, and the probability of their transmission across synapses is proportional to the strength of impulses carried along neural fibers to synaptic complexes.^{18,19} The arrival of an impulse stimulates an influx of calcium into the complexes that stimulates a series of intracellular chemical and molecular configuration changes. These changes mobilize vesicles containing neurotransmitters bound at presynaptic grids to release their contents into the synaptic cleft. The magnitude of the impulse determines the probability that neurotransmitters will be released across the synapse with resulting action on postsynaptic structures. The result is a continuation of the nerve impulse along the next nerve fiber to its receptor target which could be a gland, muscle or sensory organ.^{20,21} Synaptic transmission is further amplified in power, complexity and specificity by the transmission of impulses through elaborate neural synaptic networks within multiple centers of the brain.²²

Encoded information that is transmitted is not derived from the physical components of the nervous system. Information has never been generated by that which is material^{23,24} and neither natural laws nor chance can give origin to information. A myth of modern evolutionary biology is that information can be generated without recourse to intelligence.²⁴ Information that is transmitted by a neural impulse is selected from a full array of informational entropy²⁵ and assigned specificity, or meaning, by an intelligent agent. The greatest amount of information in a transmitted impulse is associated with the least uncertainty and smallest probability, or meaning, and reflects the will or intention of the intelligent agent that assigns meaning to it (e.g. the location of a predator!). Only intelligent causation or a mental concept that transcends the natural causes of a biological system can generate information that is exogenous to a physical organism but is transmitted to and assimilated by it. Specificity, or meaning, is assigned by an intelligent agent,

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In the **NEWS...**

[Emergence of Bipedalism](#)

This Foxs News article discusses recent research that suggests bipedalism came first and knuckle-walking developed later. If true, this challenges the standard evolutionary model of human origins. Go to: <http://www.foxsnews.com/story/0,2933,300838,00.html?sPage=fnc.science/evolution>.

[When Pigs Fly and Monkeys Type](#)

To support the probability of a natural origin of life, evolutionists have claimed that given enough time, monkeys hammering away on typewriters could produce a Shakespeare sonnet. This *tothesource* article dismantles this false analogy. Go to http://www.tothesource.org/10_2_2007/10_2_2007.htm.

[Pope Benedict and Nature’s Genius](#)

This Discovery Institute article discusses Pope Benedict’s critique of what he calls “the modern self-limitation of reason.” Benedict argues scientific materialism is self-refuting and sets artificial limits on science. Go to: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=4242&program=CSC%20-Views%20and%20News>.

[Victims of Science Orthodoxy](#)

This Breakpoint article discusses Baylor University’s shunning of investigators who question the orthodoxy of Darwinism. The author concludes that although Baylor has a strong Christian mission, it seems more concerned about maintaining the respect of its secular peers. Go to: <http://breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=7117>.

[Testing the Claims of Astrology](#)

This RTB article by Ken Samples discusses the incompatibility of astrology with the teachings of Scripture and the fact astrology is unscientific and illogical. Samples identifies five problems with the belief and practice of astrology. Go to: <http://www.reasons.org?trntb/2007/10/16/testing-the-claims-of-astrology/>.

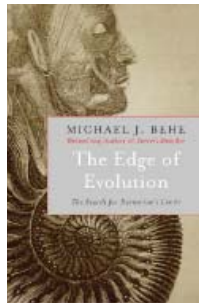
Book Reviews

The Edge of Evolution

Michael J. Behe
Free Press, 2007

Reviewer: Mike Brown

I highly recommend this book. Here are a couple of excerpts from the jacket cover:



“When Michael J. Behe’s first book, *Darwin’s Black Box*, was published in 1996, it launched the intelligent design movement. Critics howled, yet hundreds of thousands of readers—and growing number of scientists—were intrigued by Behe’s claim that Darwinism could not explain the complex machinery of the cell. ... Now, in his long-awaited follow-up, Behe presents far more than a challenge to Darwinism: He presents the evidence of the genetics revolution—the first direct evidence of nature’s mutational pathways—to radically redefine the debate about Darwinism.”

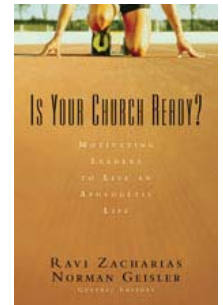
The genomes of many organisms have been sequenced, and the machinery of the cell has been analyzed in great detail. The evolutionary responses of microorganisms to antibiotics and humans to parasitic infections have been traced over tens of thousands of generations. As a result, for the first time, Darwin’s theory can be rigorously evaluated. The results are shocking. Although it can explain marginal changes in evolutionary history, random mutation and natural selection explain very little of the basic machinery of life.

Behe builds a powerful case against random mutations and natural selection being responsible for much of anything above the species level of life. He points out that: “Time is actually not the chief factor in evolution—population numbers are ...” He then shows the staggering population sizes and reproduction rates of certain microscopic malarial parasites compared to higher life forms, and how they have had only very minor evolutionary changes. He states: “...the number of malarial parasites produced in a single year is likely a hundred times greater than the number of all the mammals that have ever lived on earth in the past two hundred million years.” If they cannot produce any significant changes, he asks how can we expect major life-form changes by random mutation?

Is Your Church Ready?

Ravi Zacharias & Norman Geisler
Zondervan, 2003

Reviewer: Greg Moore



This book examines the role apologetics play in the life of a healthy church. It features articles by Zacharias and a number of other Christian authors. While the book is targeted at church leaders, the material is pertinent to lay apologetics as well.

According to Zacharias, many church leaders see apologetics as “an illegitimate child in the household of faith.” They fear apologetics exalt reason above faith and diminish the role of the Bible. As a result, many churches focus much more on reaching people’s hearts than their heads.

Zacharias argues this is wrong. Churches need apologetics to equip believers with an effective understanding of their faith so they can evangelize effectively to unbelievers. Apologetics play a key role in clarifying the Christian truth claims, removing intellectual barriers to the Gospel and ministering to people with different worldviews.

This can be seen in the early church. When the Holy Spirit filled the early Christians, He not only moved them to teach the Word of God and perform miracles, but also to engage boldly with unbelievers by arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God (Acts 19). Nowhere is the role of apologetics more evident than in Paul’s ministry. Paul tried to reach listeners where they were in their thinking, expose the flaws in their beliefs and reason with them.

According to the authors, there is a desperate need for apologetics in today’s church. Over the past several decades, the church has drifted towards emotionalism. The result is there an intellectual and spiritual famine in the church. People today can not only digest strong thought provoking messages but are hungry for it. A spirit-filled church presents compelling evidence for the truth of the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ.

The book is very readable and presents a number of thought-provoking commentaries on apologetics. It will help you help your church become one that is equipped to engage in a reasoned defense of Christianity.

whether that is a human being or God, the divine Logos (John 1:1-2)²⁶ and the ultimate Source of all information.

Information is information, neither matter nor energy. No materialism that fails to take account of this can survive the present day. – Norbert Weiner, MIT Mathematician and Father of Cybernetics

Similarly, the intellectual capacity of the human mind that includes will, intention and attention is not generated by the material brain. Mortimer J. Adler²⁷ states that although the material brain is necessary for thinking, it is not sufficient. We cannot think conceptually without our brains, but we do not think conceptually with them. The brain is not the organ of thought. An immaterial intellect is required, and the difference between human and animal cognition is a difference in kind. The immateriality of the intellect in its cognitive dimension makes conceptual thought and freedom of will possible. According to Adler:

Acts of the will are not uncaused acts, but the kind of causality that governs acts of the will, not being physical, permits them to be both caused and free.

Mind and matter interaction has been documented by the clinical studies of patients with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Jeffrey M. Schwartz²⁸ found that OCD is treatable by a plan utilizing focused attention to change the disordered neural synaptic transmission pathways by virtue of their plasticity. No physical basis for these changes was observed. Focused cognitive activity willfully initiated by the patient was found to be responsible. This activity transcended the material brain but was observed to cause physical change within its synaptic networks. Thus, mind and matter interact, but are ontologically distinct. Mindful attention was observed by Schwartz to permanently alter patterns of brain activity in his patients to their benefit. It was exactly what should be expected if mind transcends the brain and is capable of physical effects within it.²⁹ Schwartz cited William James, who said long ago about human will:

...the brain is an instrument of possibilities [stochastic], not certainties, [and] ... will, if endowed by causal efficacy, reinforce the favorable possibilities....

This notion contradicted the materialistic perspective of his time.³⁰

Along with matter and energy, information transmitted by human will is a third fundamental quantity, but is not materially derived. Its transmission involves five levels of activity—statistics (probabilities), structure (syntax), meaning (semantics), purpose and action. The stochastic transmission of linguistic neural codes addresses the statistical level of transmission. Will, attention or intention of an intelligent agent generates and receives information instantiated into meaningful codes. The agent also ascribes purpose, whether to move an arm or to express a spoken word, thus giving action to the information transmitted. The syntactic configuration of information according to codes is termed language. Information is transmitted by

means of language through the physical synaptic networks with causal effects.³¹

It is in the speech centers of the brain that humans communicate in send-and-receive fashion by the transmission of coded information as language. The intellectual capacity that is unique to human beings interacts with, but transcends, the physical synaptic networks of the brain. Without this noetic (intellectual) capacity communication would only be instinctive or reflexive. It would not be creative.

The neural synaptic model which is being presented can also be applied to interactive communication by humans with the Holy Spirit. Christian theology affirms that the Holy Spirit is personal, has noetic capacity and communicates with us by language—whether by words, visions, intuition or dreams. It is a two-way interaction enabled by the gift of language that reflects the *imago Dei*.³²

*Since every mind is lighted by the Logos or Reason of God, thought stands behind language. . . . Man's ability to think and to speak [is] God-given for certain essential purposes—for receiving a verbal revelation, for approaching God in prayer. . . . The gift of human speech and language . . . presupposes the imago Dei. . . .*³³

*God can . . . reveal truth about Himself through words. Thought exists behind language as its necessary condition. Communication is possible because the human creatures using language are enlightened by the divine Logos. . . .*³⁴

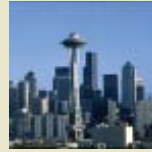
In summary, God created human beings to communicate personally with Him, as well as with each other, through language transmitted by sophisticated synaptic networks. Adam talked directly with God. And though his fall into sin destroyed spiritual communication and life, they were restored to human beings by God's atoning grace through Jesus Christ. A restored human spirit and the gift of language make interactive communication with the Holy Spirit so easy we "moderns" can do it.

Stan Lennard, is a retired general surgeon, with a subspecialty in surgical infectious disease. He is a trained RTB apologist and is currently serving as an instructor for Reasons Institute, RTB's online distant learning program.

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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 that 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 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. 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. You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.