



“I Am Convinced That Life Was Designed by God”

Brett Schenck is a retired environmental consultant in the United States. He studied the interdependency of plants, animals, and the environment. Why does he believe in a Creator? *Awake!* asked him about his science and his faith.

What is your background?

My father was a mechanical engineer. He often talked enthusiastically to me about math and science. As a boy, I was fascinated by the plants and animals in the creeks and pools near my home in New Paris, Ohio, U.S.A. So when I went to Purdue University, I chose to study ecology.

Did religion interest you?

Yes, it did. Dad encouraged me to study our Lutheran reli-

gion. I studied Koine (common) Greek, one of the languages in which the Bible was first written. I developed deep respect for the Bible.

How did you view the theory of evolution?

My church accepted it. My colleagues believed it. So I never questioned it. But I also believed in God. I had a foggy notion that the two beliefs were compatible. Although I respected the

Bible, I didn't think it came from God.

What made you change your view of the Bible?

Two of Jehovah's Witnesses, Steve and Sandy, visited my wife, Debbie, and me. They showed us that the Bible, though not a science textbook, is scientifically accurate. For example, it says of God: "There is One who is dwelling *above the circle of the earth.*" (Isaiah 40:22) It also says: "He is . . . hanging the earth *upon nothing.*" (Job 26:7) At that time, I was using satellite photographs to study ecology, so these scriptures impressed me. They were written long before anyone photographed the circle of

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the earth hanging on nothing. As my wife and I studied the Bible with Steve and Sandy, I learned of prophecies that had come true, advice that works, and explanations that satisfied me. Gradually, I became convinced that the Bible is the Word of God.

When did you change your mind about the origin of life?

Eventually, Steve showed me the Bible's clear statement: "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground." (Genesis 2:7) The first man has a documented life history. This raised the question: Is the Bible in harmony with scientific facts? Steve encouraged me to research the matter, so I did.

What did you learn about evolution?

Many things. To mention just one, the evolution theory attempts to explain the origin of species. Living things are made up of efficient organs, such as the heart, lungs, and eyes. Also, at the microscopic level, we see marvelously designed 'machines' within cells. Where do the designs for those come from? Evolutionists claim that the best mechanisms are automatically se-

lected because the living things that have them survive better. But that idea does not answer the question: Where do the mechanisms come from? I learned that many scientists do not believe that the evolution theory answers that question. A professor of zoology confided to me that he did not believe any of the theories of evolution. However, he did not air his views for fear of losing his job.

Does your knowledge of ecology strengthen your faith?

Yes, it does. My work involved studying how living things depend on each other. On earth, all living things depend on something else. Consider flowers and bees, for example. The color, fragrance, nectar, and structure of flowers are designed to attract bees and to sprinkle them with pollen. Bees are designed to extract nectar and to take one flower's pollen to another plant for fertilization. Clearly, the flowers and bees are designed to supply what the other needs.

In an ecosystem, we see interdependence on a vast scale. An ecosystem is an environment with a community of perhaps thousands of types of animals, plants, bacteria, and

fungi. All animals depend on plants for food and oxygen, and most flowering plants depend on animals. Although ecosystems are exceedingly complex and the organisms in them are fragile, they may continue surviving for millennia. Even after damage by pollution, once the source of pollution is gone, a complex ecosystem soon develops again. When I think about the resilience of the entire system of life on earth, I am convinced that life was designed by God.

Why did you become one of Jehovah's Witnesses?

I was deeply concerned about the way human society is ruining the environment. I knew that although ecosystems are resilient, they are not indestructible. I learned from Jehovah's Witnesses that, according to the Scriptures, God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) Those words were important to me. As I continued studying the Bible, I gradually realized that the hope that the Bible presents is sure.

I enjoy sharing my beliefs with others, and I have studied the Bible with some scientists. At age 55, I took early retirement to spend more time helping people to understand the Creator of life and his purpose for our magnificent earth. ■