



# Austin Tx Reasons To Believe Chapter Newsletter

Dec. 6, 2011

Austin@reasons.org



Volume 3 Issue 9

## Do you have a soul?

By Bob Davis, RTB Austin

Is there more to you than your body? Is the mind distinct from the brain? Is there a “self” that exercises free will ...or... is our every movement merely the result of neurons firing and muscles contracting? Are thoughts, emotions, feelings, and pain real— but non-physical— entities?

If the philosophical and scientific efforts to answer these questions interest you, so too will our next meeting.

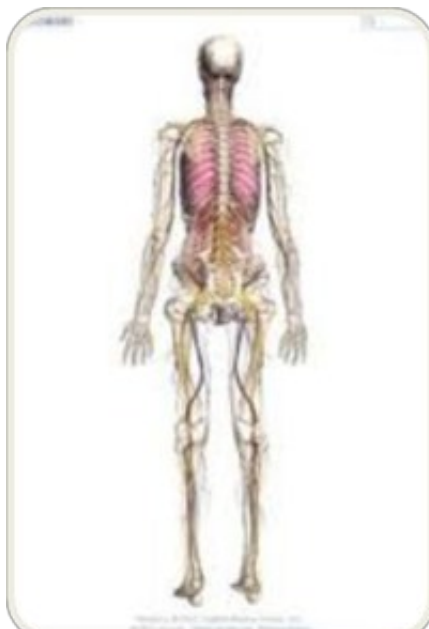
Typically, our presentations involve someone with some degree of expertise providing authoritative information on faith/science issues.

Saturday will be somewhat different since the presenter does not presume to have any expertise in the topic.

I will make a brief presentation “*Science of the Soul:*

*Dualism and Christian Apologetics*”, that will examine how the Bible treats the issue of a non-material soul. Next we will look at how various philosophers and scientists have weighed in on the issue,

Finally, we will look at some studies supporting the notion of life after death and the existence of a soul. Most of our time will be spent dealing with questions such as those presented on page 2 of this newsletter.



### RTB Monthly Meeting

**Date:**

Saturday morning Dec. 10, 2011

**Place:**

Hill Country Bible Church near the UT Campus. 405 W. 22nd Street. Corner of San Antonio and W. 22nd.

**Agenda and Times;**

9:00 am Chpt. Officers meet

9:30 Fellowship & coffee

10:00 Announcements

10:20 Presentation and group discussion: *Science of the Soul: Dualism and Christian Apologetics*

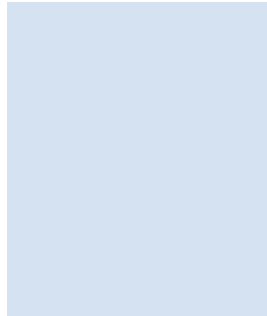
Noon: Adjourn

**Do you view yourself as a body?  
Or a “self” in a body?**

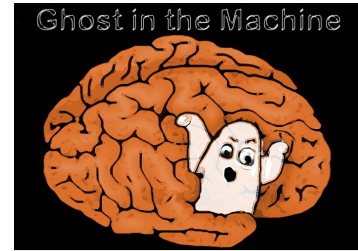
## Some of the questions to be discussed in our Saturday meeting:

### Part IV Discussion Items

1. Have you had—or know someone who has had—an out-of-body or near death experience with vivid memories of separation of body and soul?
2. Are thoughts, feelings, and emotions real entities, but without physical dimensions and attributes?



Is the soul a “ghost in the machine”



That operates “a computer made out of meat?”

### Discussion Items

3. How would “consciousness” be an emergent property from an evolving animal organ—the brain?
4. Can a “mind” emerge as a “brain state” just as steam emerges from a pot of water being boiled?
5. Could the neural activity detected in brains be a result of... rather than...a cause of an immaterial soul?

RTB Austin is a Chapter operating under Reasons to Believe national organization ([www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org)). Local officers are:

President—  
**John Weber**

Vice President—  
**Bob Davis**

SecTreasurer—**Steve Stock**

Promotion/Outreach—  
**Scott McBroom**

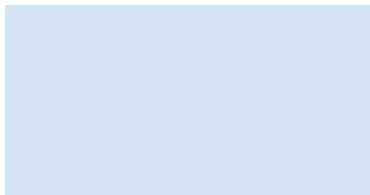
Promotion/Outreach—  
**John Murphy**

Promotion/Outreach—  
**Dr. Dennis Wilson**

Our website is found at <http://www.reasons.org/get-involved/chapters-and-networks/austin>

### Discussion Items

6. How would you defend the proposition that you make choices and are a free will agent rather than merely a collection of molecules acting in response to physical laws and forces?
7. Or...a puppet on a string operated by God as part of a divine plan?



### Discussion Items

If our actions are pre-determined by purely materialistic causes (i.e., no free will), how can we possibly justify a criminal justice system that punishes people for their actions?

9. If our senses and our ability to reason is nothing more than molecules in motion, how can we trust a line of reasoning that asserts that materialism is true?

### Discussion Items

10. If the difference between our brains and computers are based on sub-atomic neural activities in the synapses governed by quantum physics, is this a “loop hole” for the supernatural to affect the natural?
11. Does the placebo effect support the notion that our well being is derived from non-material causes?

