

The Effect of Origins on Society

Why Is the Subject of Origins Important?

Every worldview addresses the question, "Where did we come from?" The Christian worldview says that we are a special part of creation made in the image of God. A materialistic worldview says that we are the product of natural selection and random mutations acting on organisms. The Christian view of origins is called Creation; the materialistic view of origins is called Darwinism. The Christian worldview is based on faith in the creative work of God of the Bible. The materialistic worldview is based on faith in the creative power of natural selection acting on mutations.

There are evidences for and against these worldviews from scientific research being conducted in the areas of intelligent design, evolutionary biology, genetics, mathematics, astronomy, and many other fields. However, people will often confuse the worldview with the scientific evidence. Worldviews are a way of explaining the evidence. For example, we see that during a drought birds with longer beaks are selected over birds with shorter beaks. This is an observation. Saying that this is evidence for natural selection's creative ability to make totally new types of creatures is an extrapolation based on a worldview. Just as there is a right and a wrong interpretation for observations, there are right and wrong worldviews. And one way to test for a worldview is whether or not it is livable.

So does your view of origins affect other areas of life than just science? Yes, these two views of origins have a profound effect on how we value people and how we view personhood and personal responsibility. Using John West's book *Darwin Day in*

America as a resource, we will look at how the materialistic worldview has trickled down into areas of society that affect us every day.

West argues in his book that the logical end materialistic worldview leaves nothing for an ethical standard other than to survive. The materialistic worldview says that non-living chemicals came together to make genetic material which then made an organism and that organism evolved until we got human beings. This view claims that man is made from chemicals and is no more valuable than any other animal. The logical end to this perspective is that everything a man does is a result of his genes and his environment. He therefore has no choices or free will of his own. His actions are the result of natural selection acting on him. This has important consequences for how we deal with crime, personhood, the embryo, the infirmed, and education.

West says, "Darwin helped spark an intellectual revolution that sought to apply materialism to nearly every area of human endeavor. This new, thoroughly 'scientific' materialism affected the entire span of culture, from economics and politics to education and the arts".^[1] Darwin published *Origin of Species* one hundred fifty years ago, but it is in the mid-twentieth century that we begin to see how his theory has trickled down into society.

Crime and Responsibility

How does a materialistic worldview affect society? For one thing, a Darwinian view of man has changed our criminal justice system.

How are the courts and science related? In our culture, the scientists are the holders of truth and the courts are the arbiters of law. And while the idea that law coincides with truth is good and even biblical, the idea that scientists, and

only scientists, are the ones who dictate truth is a dangerous position. If the pervading worldview in science is materialism, then a materialistic view of man is reflected in the courts.

According to a materialistic worldview, man is the product of his genes and his environment with no real ability to act differently than what his genes and environment would have him do. If this is the case, then how can he be held responsible for his crimes? Why not just blame bad genes or a bad home life? Often this is what is argued in the courts.

West describes the crux of the problem. In order to provide protection and have an orderly society, the criminal justice system needs to punish wrong behavior. But from a materialistic worldview, there is no moral foundation for individual responsibility. A materialist perspective does not blame the individual but their genes or the way that they were raised (their environment). West outlines a history of criminals getting off in the name of very loose definitions of insanity, and other criminals undergoing treatment instead of punishment.^{2} And the treatment, at times, amounts to something closer to coercion or torture.^{3} Whether we are talking about being overly lenient by giving criminals excuses or coercing them to treatment, both diminish the value and dignity of the individual as a person.

The Christian view of man is that, although differences in our genetics or our environment may mean that we have different struggles or temptations than others, we are made in God's image. Therefore, just as God treats us with dignity by exacting punishment for our actions, so, too, do we treat people with inherent dignity by exacting punishment and allowing for atonement. The Darwinian view says that we are not responsible because we are a product of our genes, but it also says that we are not redeemable because we will remain flawed.

Our entire criminal justice system is based on the idea that man can be held accountable for his crimes, that he has a choice in what he does. Furthermore, it is based on the inherent dignity that every individual has, so that a wrong done to one individual must result in the wrong-doer being punished. This maintains equal dignity and value in both individuals.[\[4\]](#) However, this system crumbles under a materialistic worldview.

So man is a product of his genes and his environment, a view which, taken to its logical end, has conflicting and dangerous results for exacting justice in society. Now we turn to how this view of man affects how we treat others that are different from us and how we define "normal."

Personhood

At the beginning of the twentieth century, during the rise of the scientific revolution, the idea of atonement for a guilty crime changed to an idea of fixing a broken machine. Criminals were treated as if they were machines with broken parts, instead of individuals with value and free will, because scientists had supposedly found a materialistic cause for crime. Something in their genetic code went wrong, so many were subjected to some kind of institutionalization or treatment. As John West points out in *Darwin Day in America*, the idea is if science can explain the problem, then science can fix it.[\[5\]](#) One way that scientists attempted to fix this problem was to try to breed out the bad traits. Scientists in the '30s, '40s and '50s reasoned that bad behavior, stupidity, and emotional instability were passed down from parent to child just like physical traits, and the only way to cleanse our society of these ailments was to sterilize those who carry these traits.

It began with criminals being sterilized; then it turned to those who were mentally handicapped; then those who were

deemed less intelligent, poor, or unproductive in society were sterilized. In hindsight it is easy to see how this slippery slope happened. One group changes the standards by which we value other groups. No longer is the foundation in the Judeo-Christian concept that all individuals have inherent value, but in the Darwinian concept that some are less valuable than others and deemed less worthy of life than the more "fit" in society. This was the breeding ground for what would become the eugenics movement. [Editor's note: Eugenics is the idea that the human race can be improved by careful selection of those who mate and produce offspring. The word comes from the Greek word *eugenes*, "well-born, of good stock," from *eu*—"good" + *genos* "birth."]

We saw the logical end of the eugenics movement in Nazi Germany. Darwinism was not necessarily the cause for Nazi Germany, but eugenics was justified with a Darwinian view of man. This is an important picture of how one can promote one's worldview (and one's prejudices) in the name of science. Darwinism allows for race discrimination and even genocide. As West points out, "Historically speaking, the eugenics movement is important because it was one of the first—and most powerful—efforts to use science to expand the power of the state over social matters. Eugenists claimed that their superior scientific knowledge trumped the beliefs of nonscientists, and so they should be allowed to design a truly scientific welfare policy." [\[6\]](#)

Today this attitude is still seen when doctors, lawyers, and family members evaluate individuals based on their physical abilities and their cost to society. Oftentimes individuals are assessed based on their perceived "quality of life." Unfortunately, this usually reflects what the doctor, lawyer, or family member would hate to have happen to themselves than the actual desires of the individual in question. Judging others unworthy of life based on physical features or capabilities ignores the inherent value and dignity God has

given man as being made in His image.

The Beginning and End of Life

We have looked at how a society that promotes a materialistic worldview results in a degraded view of personhood. This degraded view includes basing a person's value on how well they physically function and how much they cost society. However, from a Christian view, humans were created with a purpose and in the image of God. They have inherent value beyond their physical bodies.

How does a Darwinian view of man's origin affect the way we look at the most vulnerable in society—the embryo and the aged or infirmed?

West traces a historical record of the legalization of abortion and demonstrates why we have the debate about embryonic stem cell research today.^{7} Darwinism is not the cause of the legalization of abortion and destruction of embryos, but it provided an ideology that allowed people to justify it. It began with a scientist named Haeckel who influenced Darwin. Haeckel discussed how all embryos go through stages of development and how the earliest stages look very similar to each other. In his famous drawings, he shows how a human embryo goes from a small fish-like creature that looks similar to other animal embryos, to a human-looking embryo. He said that the fetus goes through a mini version of evolutionary development.^{8}

What conclusions were drawn from this? If the fetus is no more than a fish, then it is as ethical to discard it as it would be to discard a fish. The only problem with this idea is that it is now well-documented that Haeckel's drawings were faked, and the similarities were more contrived than real. Despite this finding, people still latched on to the concept and refused to accept that the fetus does not go through

evolutionary stages. It is from this concept that many justify early stage abortion and embryonic stem cell research; the clump of cells or the mass does not look human.^[9] This is an example of basing a person's value on their physical appearance and function.

Today we not only see this idea played out in the unborn, but also in the elderly and the infirmed. Many family members and doctors elect to end someone's life because they have deemed them less valuable. Again, the basis of this is on how well they physically function. One group is putting value on another group.

Both of these examples demonstrate how our culture has bought into a materialistic worldview which devalues the person that does not have certain physical characteristics. As Christians we value human life and believe that the embryo, the aged, and the infirmed have inherent dignity despite how they might function or appear.

Education

We have been looking at how a Darwinian view of man led to a slow and steady dehumanization of man. Our view of origins affects other areas of life as well. In this section, we will address how a Darwinian view of man has influenced how we educate our children. A Darwinian view says that there is no absolute authority; there is merely survival of the fittest. In academics that means teaching based on what works, not on what is right.

One of the biggest influences on our educational system, both in public and private schools, has been John Dewey. As Nancy Pearcey points out in her book *Total Truth*, Dewey thought education should be like biological evolution where students construct their own answers based on what works best. Pearcey calls this "a kind of mental adaptation to the

environment.”[{10}](#) It is easy to see how this leads to moral relativism. Students are not taught character or values. Instead, they learn that an idea or a concept is deemed valuable if it works, not if it is right. Teachers are taught in certification classes to guide students along and help them to come up with their own moral code. Teachers are not allowed to punish students for wrongdoing, because they have no moral basis to do so, but are still expected to have an orderly classroom. In some cases teachers are not permitted to give a failing grade to a student who is genuinely failing. Also they are not permitted to give A’s to good students for fear that they may not continue putting forth effort. Students are stripped of the concept of an objective standard or absolute morals, and by the time they are high school seniors, they are more educated in how to play the system than in reading, writing, or arithmetic. This is the very fruit of Dewey’s pragmatism, and it continues through the university level. When students are stripped of any set of beliefs and a moral foundation, they are left empty and ready to be filled with the pervading worldview of academia. What we end up with is a fully indoctrinated student with a materialistic worldview.[{11}](#)

Contemporary materialism’s view of origins, known as Darwinism, has profound effects on our society. As Christians we need to be a light unto the world by showing that human beings are more than their genes and environment, that they have inherent value, and that there are moral foundations beyond survival of the fittest.

Notes

1. John West, *Darwin Day in America* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2007), 41-42.
2. Ibid., 73.
3. Ibid., 79-101
4. For a good article on capital punishment and human dignity see Kerby Anderson, “Capital Punishment,” *Probe*, 1992,

www.probe.org/capital-punishment/.

5. West, *Darwin Day*, 80.

6. *Ibid.*, 162.

7 . *Ibid.*, 325-335.

8. See Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution* (Washington, DC: Regency Publishing, 2000), chap. 5.

9. *Ibid.*, 330.

10. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 239.

11. See Don Closson, "Humanist Psychology and Education" Probe, 1991, www.probe.org/humanistic-psychology-and-education/; Closson, "Grading America's Schools," Probe, 2002, www.probe.org/grading-americas-schools/; and Kerby Anderson, "Cultural Relativism," Probe, 2004, www.probe.org/cultural-relativism/.

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Is "Ida" a Missing Link?

On Tuesday, May 19, 2009, the very complete fossil of a small lemur-like animal, nicknamed Ida, was unveiled at the New York's American Museum of Natural History. The unveiling was accompanied by press releases touting a special to air on the History Channel on May 25th. Newspaper reports included headlines like, "Is 47 million year old fossil a missing link?" The History channel went even further in its hype:

Scientists have discovered the oldest and most complete fossil of a human ancestor.

An incredible 95 percent complete fossil of a 47-million-year-old human ancestor has been discovered and, after two

years of secret study, an international team of scientists has revealed it to the world. The fossil's remarkable state of preservation allows an unprecedented glimpse into early human evolution. Discovered in Messel Pit, Germany, it represents the moment before anthropoid primates—the group that would later evolve into humans, apes and monkeys—began to split from lemurs and other prosimian primates. This groundbreaking discovery fills in a critical gap in human and primate evolution.[\[1\]](#)

However, as is often the case, the facts behind the headlines and the advertising do not support all of the hyperbole. As reported in an AP story,

Experts not connected with the discovery said the finding was remarkably complete because of features like stomach contents. But they questioned the conclusions of Hurum (Jorn Hurum, of the University of Oslo Natural History Museum) and his colleagues about how closely it is related to ancestors of monkeys and humans.

“I actually don't think it's terribly close to the common ancestral line of monkeys, apes and people,” said K. Christopher Beard of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh.[\[2\]](#)

So let's review the facts behind the hype based on the journal article written by the scientists who studied the fossil.[\[3\]](#)

In the late 1970's and early 1980's an area of Messel, Germany was being mined for oil shale. In the process of mining, workers uncovered fossils that were relatively well-preserved within this sediment. In 1983, a private group uncovered the lemur-like fossil that has now been classified as *Darwinius masillae*. *Darwinius massillae*, or Ida, was split into two plates, one of which ended up in Wyoming and another was purchased by Hurum at the Oslo Natural History Museum in 2007.

With access to both plates, a group of paleontologists used advanced techniques to analyze this specimen. The results showed very detailed features including food in her stomach and an outline of her soft-body form, including her fur.

This is truly a remarkable find because so much of the fossil is intact and many details are preserved. Furthermore, this provides an opportunity to study a fossil that paleontologists date at 47 million years old. The final conclusion of the journal article is, "*Darwinius masillae* is important in being exceptionally well preserved and providing a much more complete understanding of the paleobiology of an Eocene primate than was available in the past." They also indicate that she is important for classification purposes because there are so few fossils from this particular era and location. They hope that she will allow other paleontologists to have specific features to aid in classifying other fossils.

This is the extent to which the journal article discusses the significance of Ida. However, the authors and the media are painting a far different picture. The claims that Ida is the "missing link" in human evolution, or a "Rosetta stone" for understanding early branches in the human evolutionary tree, or the "eighth wonder of the world," are not reported in the peer-reviewed scientific journal. However, the authors of this journal are now marketing their find as such. In addition to The History Channel documentary, they have a book that will be coming out soon.

Whether it is "the bones of Jesus," global warming, or the latest "missing link" fossil fad, we recommend much discernment and discretion when reading about something that makes such grandiose claims as changing the world or solving some ancient mystery. This is plain old sensationalism and marketing to get famous and make money. This is an excellent fossil find that any paleontologist would love to study, but this is not "proof" of evolution. Evolutionists have been engaging in a marketing blitz this year honoring Darwin's

200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species*. This fossil has been studied for two years. Just looking at the documentary, the book schedule, and the name, it is no coincidence that it came out this year at this time. The authors of the paper seem to be banking off of the Darwin hype.^{4}

For a great article on why Ida is not the missing link, go to Access Research Network's article "[Ida: The Holy Grail of Missing Links?](#)".

Another interesting article with excellent points by Jonathan Wells can be found at *World Net Daily's* article "[Media Blitz; 'We found missing link'](#)".

Slate has an article that discusses the media's overuse of the term "missing link": "[How Many Times Will Paleontologists Find the 'Missing Link'?](#)".

For a broader discussion of the relationship between fossils and the debate between Darwinian and creation-based models for the origins of life check out our [section on "Origins"](#) under the "Faith and Science" section of our website at www.probe.org .

Notes

1. www.history.com/content/the-link/about-the-link/the-link
2. Malcolm Ritter, The Associated Press, May 20, 2009.
3. For the entire journal article:
www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0005723
4. online.wsj.com/article/SB124235632936122739.html;
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/05/090519104643.htm;
www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/may/19/ida-fossil-missing-link/print

Darwin Day

February 12, 2009 is being promoted internationally as Darwin Day. Aside from being Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday it is also Charles Darwin's 200th birthday. It's not too difficult a guess to say that the emphasis on Darwin is due in large part to the continuing success of groups around the world arguing that Darwinism is not all that it has been made out to be.

In America 40% of the general public still does not accept that a purely naturalistic process is responsible for all we see in the living world. This drives the community of evolutionary biologists and all humanist and atheist groups positively bonkers. They all but blame the decreasing enrollments in science programs in this country on this continuing reticence to accept Darwin.

Some see the need, therefore, to increase education on all things Darwin on the occasion of Darwin's anniversary and all the contributions of the man and the idea. We will hear how Darwin revolutionized biology. The often repeated quote of Theodosius Dobzhansky, a mid-20th century evolutionist, that "nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution," will be repeated ad nauseum.

There is no doubt that Darwin made impressive contributions about the ubiquitous nature of small scale changes in biological populations over time. Not all things Darwin are to be considered suspect. But separating the good from the bad can be a daunting challenge at times.

The recent documentary film, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, received howls of protest at the accusation that Darwinism made a contribution to the Nazis' eugenics program and ideas of racial purity. Never mind that these connections

have been considered historical facts for decades. Richard Weikart's excellent book, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism*, makes the case in great detail from the German literature of the early decades of the twentieth century. But casting aspersions on Darwin in a very public setting just isn't tolerated. People might get the wrong idea, you see, that Darwin is anything less than THE saint of modern biology.

You should also pay no attention to the fact that when the great Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, finished his soldiering in the Civil War, he became a convinced Darwinist after all the suffering he witnessed and participated in. This led to his rethinking about law in general. He soon realized that since all things biological change over time, so should the law that we govern ourselves by. Holmes was the original activist judge, making law instead of interpreting law. He firmly believed that law was a product of evolving cultures and traditions.[{1}](#)

The innovator in moral philosophy of education John Dewey was decidedly Darwinian. The originator of the still popular Values Clarification moral approach believed that moral values evolve just like biological features, and students must be free therefore to arrive at their own values. We simply can't know if our values are better or preferable than another's. When given a choice, most parents prefer their children be taught a clear system of right and wrong but most teachers prefer to teach a values clarification approach.[{2}](#)

If we're going to be bombarded with Darwiniana this month and for the rest of the year (since 2009 is also the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*) let's appeal for some balance. Since even Abraham Lincoln is being reevaluated as perhaps not the great President many have idolized him to be, why not Darwin?

Check out [Probe's numerous articles](#) on the various problems

with Darwinian practice and thinking. Also stop by the Discovery Institute's website at www.discovery.org/csc to keep up with the latest news through articles, podcasts, and news briefs.

Let's teach more Darwin for sure. But let's try to tell the whole story and not just the laundered propaganda of the evolutionary elite.

Notes

1. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), p. 228-229, 237.
2. Ibid., 238-242.

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Darwinist Arguments Against Intelligent Design Illogical and Misleading

I recently attended a debate on "Intelligent Design (ID) and the Existence of God." One of the four debaters was Dr. Lawrence Krauss^{1} representing an atheistic, anti-ID position. I was looking forward to hearing what Dr. Krauss would say when speaking in the presence of other knowledgeable members of academia. Would he go beyond the tired, illogical talking points passed on without question by the mainstream media? Or would he present some thoughtful arguments *against* the validity of intelligent design concepts and/or *for* the current state of Darwinist explanations for life as we know it?

Since I believe there are some thoughtful, interesting arguments that could be raised against intelligent design, I was sorely disappointed to discover that Dr. Krauss did not deviate from the shallow arguments which consistently appear in media coverage of this topic. As one of the other debaters, Dr. David Berlinski [{2}](#), commented after Dr. Krauss' opening statement, "Everything you have said is either false or trivial."

However false and trivial they may be, these arguments are blindly accepted as reasonable by many people. As thinking Christians, we have a responsibility to be prepared to tear down these façades raised up against the knowledge of God. One way to do this is to be able to discuss with others the prevailing arguments in ways that reveal their weaknesses and inconsistencies. To help in that process, the remainder of this article will list several of the standard arguments offered up by Dr. Krauss and examine their reasonableness and validity.

Argument: Evolution is a proven fact. Scientific experiments and observation over the last 100 years have conclusively demonstrated that evolution is a fact.

*Analysis: Faulty logic resulting in false conclusion. In the context of the debate, "evolution is a proven fact" is implied to mean that random mutation coupled with natural selection is the sole process through which life evolved on this planet. **This meaning of evolution is not a proven fact.** What has been demonstrated through observation and experimentation is that the frequency of certain characteristics in a species will vary over time through random mutations and natural selection. These results provide some support to the theory that these undirected natural causes could be responsible for the development of life as we know it, but they do not come close to proving it. In logical terms, we would say that what science has demonstrated is necessary for the premise to be true but not sufficient to*

prove that it is true. That would be like saying, "Since we can demonstrate that wind and water erosion can produce regular geometric patterns, this proves the Statue of Liberty is the result of undirected natural forces."

Argument: Origins science is the same as observational science. Both the study of origins (or other one-time events) and the study of ongoing natural processes are the same because they both look at data that was observed in the past. Therefore we can apply the same criteria to origins science as to observational science. Since observational science depends on repeatable experiments, we should reject out of hand any hypothesis (e.g. ID) that considers intervention by a designer because we cannot recreate it.

Analysis: False premise resulting in faulty conclusion. The study of origins is more akin to archaeology and forensic science than to observational science. In these fields, scientists look at the evidence left over by past events to help evaluate hypotheses on what caused the event to determine the ones that are most likely. As an example, consider the question, "Why does the earth have a large moon?" Scientists have a number of different theories on when and how our earth acquired a moon, but they would all agree that we can never be certain what actually happened (apart from the development of a time machine which would allow us to go back and observe the event). It is true that in observational science fields, scientists do look at results from experiments done in the past. But, they can choose to repeat those experiments in the future.

Regardless of whether one is considering the role of natural selection or the role of an intelligent designer, when you are developing hypotheses for the origins and development of life on earth the best that can be done is to assess which processes had the highest probability of contributing to the

end results. If you eliminate all options other than random variations in natural processes, you tie the hands of scientists in considering how the evidence best fits all hypotheses.

Argument: Some things that have the appearance of being designed are not. Therefore, we cannot detect the presence of design.

Analysis: Faulty logic resulting in false conclusion. Yes, there are things found in nature from the geodesic shapes of carbon structures to the results of erosion that mimic shapes designed by man. Yet, most of us seem to have no problem distinguishing between the remains of ancient civilizations and the results of undirected natural processes. If you search enough beaches and tidal pools, you can probably find every letter of the alphabet produced by the interaction of tides and currents. But, if you come across the words "John loves Mary" in the sand, you will be very confident that these were the result of intelligent intervention.

Argument: The theory of evolution is a foundation of modern science.

Analysis: Switching definitions results in false conclusion. Understanding the processes by which bacteria, viruses, species and societies change in response to changes in their environment are important concepts in modern science. However, whether one believes these processes are solely responsible for the origin and development of life on earth or not has little or no impact on one's ability to make advances in science. To date, I have not been made aware of a single positive advance in modern science or engineering that required the developer to fully believe in Darwin's view of the origins of the species in order to make that advance. One's beliefs on origins are foundational to answering the metaphysical questions of life, but don't preclude someone

from making contributions in science. Advances in science have been made by Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, atheists, etc.

Argument: Scientists understand how the bacterial flagellum evolved, disproving the concept of irreducible complexity.

Analysis: *False statement coupled with faulty logic. The bacterial flagellum is a complex device used to propel some types of bacteria. It is comprised of over 30 different proteins. Not only do these proteins perform different complementary functions, but they must be assembled in the bacteria in exactly the right sequence by other proteins. Since the flagellum will not function without all of these elements in place (i.e., it meets the definition of irreducible complexity established by Dr. Behe in his book Darwin's Black Box), the premise is that all of these parts would have to appear simultaneously in order for natural selection to favor carrying forward any of these mutations in the gene pool.*

Dr. Krauss stated that scientists have shown that the bacterial flagellum is not irreducibly complex. To the best of my knowledge, this is a gross overstatement. The arguments I have seen presented fall far short of developing a plausible explanation for how the flagellum could have evolved^[3]. If a plausible argument coupled with experimental evidence exists, I am very interested in having my understanding updated. However, even if such evidence did exist, it would not demonstrate that the concept of irreducible complexity was false or that this unknown plausible path was the way the flagellum came onto the scene.

Argument: **Intelligent Design can never be science because it is not falsifiable.** You must have ways to prove a scientific theory is false in order for it to be a valid theory. Any

observation that does not agree with the theory can be attributed to supernatural intervention.

Analysis: Arbitrary, inconsistent definition. Academics in the field of philosophy of science do not agree that the ability to falsify establishes a boundary on what is and is not science. Professor of philosophy and atheist Dr. Bradley Monton [\[4\]](#) pointed this out during the debate. He argued that we should not exclude a potentially valid hypothesis simply on the basis of a narrow definition of science. In addition, origins science cannot meet this standard. Proponents of neo-Darwinism have clearly demonstrated over the last few decades that it is not falsifiable either. Whenever the theory disagrees with the evidence, its proponents claim that natural selection found a way around the problem; we just don't know what it is yet. As Richard Dawkins stated, "Evolution is more clever than we are."

Hopefully, this summary will help you sort through the smokescreen of "conclusive" arguments offered up by the proponents of naturalistic Darwinism. Perhaps someday they will engage in a genuine discussion where both sides can state: 1) the reasons they believe their theory has merit and, 2) the observations that create problems for their theory. Such a discussion might actually prove helpful to someone trying to sort through the evidence to make an evidence-based faith decision.

Notes

1. Dr. Lawrence Krauss is the Foundation Professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration and the Physics Department, Co-Director of the Cosmology Initiative, and Inaugural Director of the Origins Initiative at Arizona State University.

2. Dr. David Berlinski is a lecturer, essayist and a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of

Science and Culture. Dr. Berlinski received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Princeton University and was a postdoctoral fellow in mathematics and molecular biology at Columbia University.

3. Additional information from the Reference Guide to Redeeming Darwin available at RedeemingDarwin.com.

Example of Darwinist argument: Since design cannot be considered as an explanation, evolutionists maintain that complex structures like flagellum evolved slowly over time from less complex structures performing other functions in the cell. Kenneth Miller states: "At first glance, the existence of the type III secretory system (TTSS), a...device that allows bacteria to inject these toxins through the cell membranes of its unsuspecting hosts, would seem to have little to do with the flagellum. However, molecular studies of proteins in the TTSS have revealed a surprising fact—the proteins of the TTSS are directly homologous to the proteins in the basal portion of the bacterial flagellum.... The existence of the TTSS in a wide variety of bacteria demonstrates that a small portion of the "irreducibly complex" flagellum can indeed carry out an important biological function. Since such a function is clearly favored by natural selection, the contention that the flagellum must be fully assembled before any of its component parts can be useful is obviously incorrect. What this means is that the argument for intelligent design of the flagellum has failed." Response to Darwinist argument: The flagellum is an excellent example of an irreducibly complex function in one of the simplest life forms. Different proteins and structures work together to create a swimming mechanism. This complex interaction cannot be adequately explained by evolutionary processes. Mutations creating only one piece of the flagellum in a life form without the other pieces would not create any value to be carried on to the subsequent generations. Miller's statement that "the argument for intelligent design has failed" misses the point of irreducible complexity. The fact

that one component of an irreducibly complex system may have another useful function does not remove the barrier that the irreducibly complex system requires the simultaneous appearance of multiple cooperating components to perform a function that has not been performed in that way before. In addition, William Dembski points out another problem with Miller's argument:

The best current molecular evidence, however, points to the TTSS as evolving from the flagellum and not vice versa... Miller has nothing more than the TTSS to point to as a possible evolutionary precursor. Behe and the ID community have therefore successfully shown that Darwinists don't have a clue how the bacterial flagellum might have arisen.

4. Dr. Bradley Monton is a philosophy professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder. His areas of specialization include the Philosophy of Science (especially Philosophy of Physics), Probabilistic Epistemology, Philosophy of Time and Philosophy of Religion. Previously he was on the faculty of the University of Kentucky, an Assistant Professor at The American University of Beirut and a Teaching Assistant at Princeton University. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Physics and Philosophy at Rice University and his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Princeton University.

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Only Science Addresses

Reality?

Dr. Ray Bohlin comments on the hubris of Drs. Coyne and Cobb in their op-ed in Nature, in which they claim that only science addresses reality. Religion, they say, must be silenced. This alarming sentiment has already met reality in California.

Would it surprise you to hear that churches may eventually be prohibited from teaching any ideas contrary to Darwinian evolution? “No way!” you say. “The Constitution guarantees freedom of speech! The first amendment guarantees that Congress can pass no law restricting or promoting any religious exercise!”

Well, yes the Constitution does that, but be patient with me and I’ll show why the answer to the opening question could be “yes.”

In the current issue of Nature, probably the most prestigious science journal in the world, a letter to the editor appeared in the August 28, 2008 issue on page 1049. Two well-known evolutionary biologists, University of Chicago’s Jerry Coyne and University of Manchester’s Matthew Cobb wrote the letter to complain about a previous editorial expressing hope that the Templeton Foundation, which funds research into the relationship between science and religion, might bring about some helpful resolutions.

Coyne and Cobb couldn’t disagree more:

We were perplexed by your Editorial on the work of the Templeton Foundation.... Surely science is about material explanations of the world—explanations that can inspire those spooky feelings of awe, wonder and reverence in the hyper-evolved human brain.

Religion, on the other hand, is about humans thinking that

awe, wonder and reverence are the clue to understanding a God-built Universe.... ***There is a fundamental conflict here, one that can never be reconciled until all religions cease making claims about the nature of reality*** (emphasis added).

The scientific study of religion is indeed full of big questions that need to be addressed, such as why belief in religion is negatively correlated with an acceptance of evolution. One could consider psychological studies of why humans are superstitious and believe impossible things....

...You suggest that science may bring about "advances in theological thinking." In reality, the only contribution that science can make to the ideas of religion is atheism (emphasis added).

Coyne and Cobb clearly state that religion has no authority to make claims about reality. If science is allowed to persist in this audacious distortion of religion and science, then any kind of teaching that is critical of any aspect of naturalistic evolution would be considered a negative influence on society as a whole. Religion is seen as crossing its constitutionally protected borders.

Biology teachers constantly complain now that what they teach about evolution is contradicted by the churches their students attend. This is obviously quite frustrating. If science is the only branch of knowledge that is allowed to make claims about reality, then religious teachings should not be allowed to interfere.

You may still be thinking that I'm taking this too far. Consider though that the California state university system already refuses to give credit for high school science courses that include anything beyond naturalistic evolution. Many Christian private school graduates in California are finding that their science courses are not accepted at state universities. Essentially that means you don't get in unless

you can make those credits up by taking junior college science courses that meet the evolution-only standard.

State governments may easily decide that they need to help these religious school graduates out by requiring that these religious schools not be allowed to teach religious material that contradicts state-mandated standards. It's a violation of the separation of church and state, after all!

If you ever questioned the importance of the evolution/Intelligent Design controversy, I hope you see the point now. Unless we can convince a sufficient minority in the science community that science is limited and the subject of origins is one of those limitations, we may not be able to legally teach students anything about creation or Intelligent Design.

While Coyne and Cobb certainly don't represent all scientists, they are not alone! Trust me. I watched a video recently of Jerry Coyne making a presentation at a scientific meeting where he basically made the very same claim. NO one objected. He was applauded enthusiastically. Watch it for yourself [here](#). While the whole lecture is worth watching, the last eight minutes when he presents a slide with just the word "Religion" is the key segment.

Coyne and others are trying to establish what Nancy Pearcey called the fact/value split in her book *Total Truth*. To Coyne science is based on fact. Only material explanations are allowed in science since religion is based on personal values and have nothing to do with facts. Therefore if you try to inject your personal values (Creation, Intelligent Design) into the world of facts (science) this is a violation of the rules of science. It's not allowed.

According to Jerry Coyne speaking in the video, the only way to increase the acceptance of evolution is to reduce or eliminate the influence of religion. The two are incompatible!

Coyne is unable to see that he also has a worldview, materialism, which influences how he interprets the data of science. He erroneously believes he is being objective about his interpretation.

This is a cultural battle as well as a scientific battle. For more information and resources from Probe to help you educate yourself and others about evolution and Intelligent Design see browse our articles at www.probe.org. If we don't "tear down strongholds" like this, we may find ourselves behind impenetrable, silent walls.

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Origin Science

There is a fundamental distinction between operation science and origin science. The founders of modern science had a Christian view of creation.

Origin Science versus Operation Science

Recently Probe produced a DVD based small group curriculum entitled *Redeeming Darwin: The Intelligent Design Controversy*. It has been a great way to inform Christians about Intelligent Design and show them how to use a conversation about this topic to share the gospel.

This year also marks the twentieth anniversary of a book Norman Geisler and I published entitled *Origin Science*.^{1} In light of the current controversy concerning intelligent design, I want to revisit some of the points we made in this book because they help us better understand some of the key elements in the debate about origins.

The foundational concept in the book was that there is a fundamental difference between operation science and origin science. Operation science is what most of us think of when we talk about science. It deals with regularities. In other words, there are regular recurring patterns that we can observe, and we can do experiments on those patterns. Observation and repeatability are two foundational tools of operation science.

Origin science differs from operation science because it does not deal with present regularities. Instead it focuses on a singular action in the past. As we say in the book, “The great events of origin were singularities. The origin of the universe is not recurring. Nor is the origin of life, or the origin of major new forms of life.”[\[2\]](#)

We argued that “a science which deals with origin events does not fall within the category of empirical science, which deals with observed regularities in the present. Rather, it is more like forensic science.”[\[3\]](#) In many ways, origin science is more like the scientific investigations done by crime scene investigators. The crime was a singular event and often there was no observer. But CSI investigators can use the available evidence to reconstruct the crime.

Likewise, research into origin science must use the available evidence (the bones and the stones) to try to reconstruct a past event. We therefore concluded that:

In origin science it is necessary to find analogies in the present to these events in the past. Thus, for example, if evidence is forthcoming that life can now be synthesized from chemicals (without intelligent manipulation) under conditions similar to those reasonably assumed to have once existed on the primitive earth, then a naturalistic (secondary-cause) explanation of the origin of life is plausible. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that the kind of complex information found in a living cell is

similar to that which can be regularly produced by an intelligent (primary) cause, then it can be plausibly argued that there was an intelligent cause of the first living organism.[{4}](#)

Rise of Modern Science

When we discuss the differences between origin science and operation science, it is important to point out that evolutionists and creationist differ in what they believe caused the origin of the universe, the origin of life, and the origin of major life forms. “Evolutionists posit a secondary natural cause for them; creationists argue for a supernatural primary cause.”[{5}](#)

Evolutionists argue that a naturalistic explanation is all that is necessary to explain these origin events. There is no need for the supernatural. Julian Huxley, speaking at the Darwin centennial celebration in Chicago, declared: “In the evolutionary pattern of thought there is no longer need or room for the supernatural. The earth was not created; it evolved. So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul as well as brain and body. So did religion.”[{6}](#)

Although most scientists today make no room for the supernatural, that was not always the case. In fact, it can be argued that it was a Christian view of reality that essentially gave rise to modern science.

In a landmark article on this topic M.B. Foster asked: “What is the source of the un-Greek elements which were imported into philosophy by the post-Reformation philosophers, and which constitute the modernity of modern philosophy? And . . . what is the source of those un-Greek elements in the modern theory of nature by which the peculiar character of the modern science of nature was to be determined?” These are two

important questions. He said: “The answer to the first question is: The Christian revelation, and the answer to the second: The Christian doctrine of creation.”[{7}](#)

Foster argued that modern empirical science did not emerge from a Greek view of nature. Instead it arose because the founders of modern science had a Christian view of nature. They “were the first to take seriously in their science the Christian doctrine that nature is created.”[{8}](#)

Foster argued that only when the Greek concept of necessary forms in nature had given way to the Judeo-Christian idea of a contingent creation did it become necessary to take an empirical route to finding scientific truth. Once these scientists came to view nature as contingent creation it became necessary to use observation and experimentation to understand it. From there, modern science arose.

Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon’s belief in the concept of creation is well known. Bacon even confessed that his motivation to observe and experiment was based on the creation mandate in which God said to man: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over [it].” (Gen. 1:28).

Of this mandate to subdue creation Bacon wrote, “Only let the human race recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest, and let power be given it; the exercise thereof will be governed by sound reason and true religion.”[{9}](#)

Speaking of the natural world, Bacon declared, “The beginning is from God: for the business which is at hand, having the character of good so strongly impressed upon it, appears manifestly to proceed from God who is the author of good, and Father of Lights.”[{10}](#)

Bacon believed that a careful observer of nature could discover certain “fixed laws” which he could use in subduing the world and have dominion over creation. In fact, he believed that nature (like the Bible) is the revelation of God. So Christians need not fear that any discovery in God’s world (science) will destroy their faith in God’s Word (Scripture). For “if the matter be truly considered, natural philosophy is, after the word of God, at once the surest medicine against superstition and the most approved nourishment for faith, and therefore she is rightly given to religion as her most faithful handmaid, since the one displays the will of God, the other his power.”[{11}](#)

Bacon believed he could discover the orderly laws by which God established in the creation. He described three approaches:

The men of experiment are like the ant, they only collect and use; the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course; it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and of the field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own.[{12}](#)

Therefore the modern scientist is neither a scholastic spider nor an empirical ant but a Baconian bee who extracts from nature what is available for transformation.

Bacon’s understanding of Scripture was shaped by the writings of John Calvin. Both Calvin and Bacon were trained in the methods of Renaissance law. Calvin had applied this new method to Scripture, the book of God’s Word. Bacon adopted this legal method of inquiry and applied it to the book of God’s world.[{13}](#)

Kepler and Galileo

Johannes Kepler’s astronomical views were also bedded deeply in his theistic beliefs about creation and the Creator. He

stated that we “will realize that God, who founded everything in the world according to the norm of quantity, also has endowed man with a mind which can comprehend these norms.”[{14}](#)

Kepler viewed the universe as a great mathematical machine created by God. Thus he wrote,

My aim in this is to show that the celestial machine is to be likened not to a divine organism but rather to a clockwork . . . insofar as nearly all the manifold movements are carried out by means of a single, quite simple magnetic force, as in the case of a clockwork all motions [are caused] by a simple weight. Moreover I show how this physical conception is to be presented through calculation and geometry.[{15}](#)

Kepler assumed (as the Pythagoreans did) that the universe was mathematically analyzable. But unlike the Greeks, Kepler believed that since the observable physical world was a creation of God, one could come to know God’s thoughts by studying the physical laws of the universe.

Another great astronomer was Galileo. He believed “the Holy Scriptures and Nature are both produced by the Word of God; the former is the results of the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and the latter is the most obedient agent of the ordinances of God.” Galileo also added: “I do not believe the same God who gave us our senses, our reason, and our intellect intended that we should neglect these gifts and the information they give us about nature, or that we should deny what our senses and our reason have observed by experiment or logical demonstration.”[{16}](#)

Galileo believed that the observable laws of nature operate with unalterable regularity. Therefore scientific theories must fit nature. Nature cannot be changed to fit our scientific theories. God works in regular ways in the operation of his universe. He added that mere ignorance of

natural causes of the operation of the world is not a sufficient justification for positing a supernatural cause.[{17}](#)

The supernatural is the source of the natural world, but the natural is the proper domain of science. Science deals with “natural phenomena” which supernatural realm is not subject to such test.[{18}](#) Thus, mere ignorance of natural causes of the operation of the world is not a sufficient justification for positing a supernatural cause.

By this distinction Galileo hoped to secure the domain of operation science from unjustified intrusions by religious dogma while retaining nonetheless his belief in a supernatural origin of the natural world.

Isaac Newton

Isaac Newton believed that God created the solar system. He held that the entire solar system was formed from a “common chaos” which is described in Genesis 1:2. From this chaos the “spirit of God,” by means of gravitational attraction, formed the separate planets.” In a letter to Thomas Burnet he insisted that “where natural causes are at hand God uses them as instruments in his works, but I do not think them alone sufficient for ye creation.”[{19}](#)

For Newton, “this Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all, and on account of his dominion he is wont to be called Lord God or Universal Ruler.” For “Deity is the dominion of God not over his own body, as those imagine who fancy God to be the soul of the world, but over servants. The Supreme God is a Being eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect.”[{20}](#)

Newton believed that God had dominion over all His creation:

And from his true dominion it follows that the true God is a

living, intelligent, and powerful Being; and, from his other perfections, that he is supreme, or most perfect. He is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient; that is, his duration reaches from eternity to eternity; his presence from infinity to infinity; he governs all things, and knows all things that are or can be done.[{21}](#)

This Christian concept of God was at the very center of Newton's cosmology. It was the very foundation of his scientific investigation. According to Newton, the universe was God's great machine, and scientists could discover the laws by which this machine operates because these are the laws of God.[{22}](#) Thus for Newton, God is the primary cause of the universe and natural laws are the secondary causes by which God operates in the natural world.

Sadly there is a bitter irony in all of this for creationists. The scientific method we employ today was built on the belief in a Creator and His creation. Now, a few centuries later, the science has been used to replace creationist beliefs about origins.

These early scientists shifted their emphasis from a primary cause (God) to secondary causes (natural laws) through which He operates in the natural world. Over time, the subsequent preoccupation with these secondary causes caused scientists to reject the legitimacy of positing a primary cause for these origin events. "In short, natural science came to bite the supernatural hand that fed it."[{23}](#)

Notes

1. Norman Geisler and Kerby Anderson, *Origin Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987).
2. Ibid., 15.
3. Ibid., 14.
4. Ibid., 16.
5. Ibid., 15.

6. Ibid., 19.
7. Ibid., 37.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 40.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 41.
12. Ibid., 42.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 44.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 46.
17. Ibid., 49.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 50.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., 51.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

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Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed

Dr. Bohlin explores the key points from this documentary from a Christian perspective. He looks at three of the scientists featured on the film who were persecuted for their willingness to consider intelligent design as an option. The film may become dated but the issue of an intelligent creator versus an impersonal, random cause of creation will continue on for many years.

A film was released in April 2008 starring Ben Stein. Titled

EXPELLED: No Intelligence Allowed, [\[1\]](#) this film documents the dark underside of academia in America and around the world, exposing what happens when someone questions a ruling orthodoxy. In this case, that orthodoxy is Darwinian evolution.

Evolution is routinely trumpeted as the cornerstone of modern biology, indispensable even to modern medical research. Therefore, if someone questions Darwinian evolution and its reliance on unpredictable mutation and natural selection, you are questioning science itself. At least that's how the gatekeepers of science explain it.

Never mind that over seven hundred PhD trained scientists from around the world have openly signed a statement questioning the ability of Darwinism to account for the complexity of life. You'll find my name among them (www.dissentfromdarwin.org). We are usually dismissed as being misguided, uninformed or religiously motivated. We couldn't possibly have legitimate scientific objections to Darwinian evolution.

Many have refrained from signing that list because of the possible repercussions to their career. But isn't there academic freedom in this country? Doesn't science progress by always questioning and leaving even cherished theories open to reinterpretation? Isn't science all about following the evidence wherever it leads? Well, in theory, yes. Practically, scientists are human, too, and often don't like it when favorite ideas are reexamined.

The film *EXPELLED* explores the reality of what happens when evolutionary orthodoxy is questioned by vulnerable scientists who have yet to secure tenure.

In what follows, I will take a detailed look at just three of the scientists featured in the film. In each case I will reveal greater detail than the film is able to explore and

provide resources for you to inquire further. Hopefully this will inspire you to learn more about this important issue and attend the film when it opens.

Let me briefly introduce the three scientists.

Richard Sternberg has a double PhD in evolutionary biology. As editor of a scientific journal, he oversaw the publication of an article promoting Intelligent Design and critical of evolution. As a result, he was harassed and falsely accused of improper peer review. He has been blacklisted.

Caroline Crocker taught introductory biology and made the mistake of including questions about evolution contained in science journals. She was accused of teaching creationism and eventually lost her job, and has been unable to find work ever since.

Finally, Guillermo Gonzalez, a well published astronomer, has been denied tenure because he supports Intelligent Design. Trust me, you'll find it hard to believe what you read.

Richard von Sternberg

Richard von Sternberg was the managing editor of the biological journal, *The Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, or *PBSW*. Sternberg was employed by the National Institutes of Health in their National Center for Biotechnology Information. He was also a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History when he served as the journal's managing editor.

Sternberg was considered a rising scientist and theorist. His multiple appointments demonstrated great confidence in his research ability. By 2004 he had accumulated thirty scientific publications in peer-reviewed science journals and books.

His fall from grace was not for something he said or did, but

for what he didn't do. As managing editor for *PBSW*, he did not reject outright an article submitted for publication that supported Intelligent Design as "perhaps the most causally adequate explanation" for the explosion of new, complex life forms during the Cambrian period. He "*mistakenly*" sent the paper out for peer review, and went along with reviewers recommendations for publication after extensive revisions were made.

When the article appeared in the journal's August 2004 edition, the journal and Sternberg were assailed for allowing the publication of this heresy. He was accused of not following proper peer-review procedure. If he had, certainly the paper would have been rejected. He was accused of acting as the editor himself when normal procedure was for the paper to be referred to an associate editor. If he had, surely the article would have been rejected. He was accused of choosing reviewers predisposed to support the ID perspective of the article. If he had chosen true scientists, surely they would have rejected the article.

I think you get the point. Any scientist worth their salt would have rejected the article out of hand; Sternberg didn't and therefore was guilty of academic sin. Eventually, Sternberg claimed he was harassed by the Smithsonian where he currently worked. He claimed his office was changed, that he was denied access to museum specimens and collections, that his key was confiscated, and that he was subjected to a hostile work environment, all intended to get him to leave.[{2}](#)

The White House Office of Special Counsel was eventually called in to investigate, and although they eventually did not take the case because Sternberg was not actually a Smithsonian employee, they did issue a preliminary report documenting the inaccuracy of the charges against him and the accuracy of Sternberg's accusations.[{3}](#) He followed very standard and proper peer-review procedures and even got approval for the article from a member of the society's ruling council. You can

bet that the editors of other journals were paying attention.

Caroline Crocker

Caroline Crocker, a PhD with degrees in pharmacology and microbiology, is a research scientist and former lecturer at George Mason University.[{4}](#)

As Crocker tells her story, she was an instructor at George Mason University, teaching introductory biology. One lecture was devoted to evolution, and she decided it was important for students to hear not just the evidence favoring evolution but published research that questioned certain elements of evolutionary theory. Crocker had come to this conviction not from any religious motivation but from her own research and convictions as a scientist.

The lecture was received very well with spirited discussion and she considered it a success. Days later she was called to her supervisor's office who accused her of teaching creationism. She denied this and claimed she never even used the word and encouraged her supervisor to look up the lecture herself which was online, as were all her lecture notes. Later she was demoted to only teaching laboratories and eventually dismissed altogether.

Upon getting another teaching job at a local community college, she eventually learned she was targeted for dismissal again and left on her own. Eventually, she applied for other teaching positions and, though initially offered the job at one interview, she was later called and told there was no money for the position. Someone at the National Institutes of Health eventually told her to stop looking because she was blacklisted.[{5}](#)

A young lawyer at a local law firm eventually volunteered to take her case *pro bono* [without charge]. His firm agreed with his decision and filed an initial complaint with George Mason

University. The complaint was later dropped and the lawyer mysteriously asked to clean out his office. He too has struggled since, trying to find employment.

George Mason denies any wrongdoing, of course, and maintains that academic freedom is honored at their university, but they offer few specifics on just why Crocker was terminated.

Crocker always received high marks from her students and was qualified and effective wherever she went. Suddenly after questioning Darwinism, her scientific career is over. There is another viewpoint, of course. P. Z. Meyer's, for example, defends the decision to let Crocker go at the end of her contract because questioning evolution shows she was incompetent. [\[6\]](#)

Guillermo Gonzalez

Guillermo Gonzalez is a planetary astronomer and associate professor at Iowa State University. Gonzalez has done research and taught at Iowa State for five years and has accumulated an impressive record. He has accumulated over sixty peer-reviewed publications in various science and astronomy journals. In addition, he has presented over twenty papers at scientific conferences, and his work has been featured in such respected publications as *Science*, *Nature*, and *Scientific American*. [\[7\]](#)

Ordinarily, to become a tenured professor at a research institution there are specific requirements that must be met. The Astronomy Department at Iowa State requires a minimum of fifteen research papers. Gonzalez should have felt quite secure since he published nearly five times that many papers. He also co-authored an astronomy textbook through Cambridge University Press that he and others used at Iowa State. But his initial application for tenure was denied. The faculty senate indicated his application was denied because he didn't meet certain necessary requirements.

However, many suspected he was denied tenure for his support for Intelligent Design through his popular book and film *The Privileged Planet*. While having nothing to do with biological evolution, Gonzalez and his co-author Jay Richards maintain that our earth is not only uniquely suited for complex life but is also amazingly well-suited for intelligent life to observe the cosmos. This dual purpose seems to suggest design.

In denying Gonzalez's initial appeal, the university president specifically stated the denial had nothing to do with Intelligent Design. Gonzalez further appealed to the University Board of Regents. In the meantime, the Discovery Institute obtained internal university emails clearly indicating that the sole reason Gonzalez was denied tenure was due to his support of ID, despite the university's public denials. These emails also indicated that some of these university professors knew what they were doing was wrong and conspired to keep their deliberations secret.

Amazingly, the ISU Board of Regents refused to see this information or provide Gonzalez an opportunity to defend himself before they voted. Not surprisingly, Gonzalez's final appeal was denied in early February 2008.

Be Prepared for *EXPULSED*

Probe Ministries highly recommends the film *EXPULSED: No Intelligence Allowed* as it highlights the harassment and persecution of PhD scientists at the highest levels of academia and exposes signs of ugly things to come in the culture at large.[\[8\]](#) Usually the scientific establishment tries to cover up these activities, but when exposed, they usually resort to saying that this level of harassment is deserved since a fundamental tenet of science is being challenged, and therefore these scientists don't deserve their positions. Academic freedom apparently only applies to disagreeing with details about evolution but not evolution itself.

These three stories are just the tip of the iceberg. These scenes are being played out around the world, and publicity is an important step in seeing justice done.

Now, let's be clear about something. Just because a few scientists and scientific institutions have behaved badly on behalf of evolutionary orthodoxy doesn't mean that evolution itself is suspect. But as I stated earlier, over seven hundred scientists have now signed a statement declaring their skepticism about Darwinian evolution as a comprehensive explanation of the complexity of life and the list is growing. The scientific underpinnings of Darwinian evolution have been unraveling for over fifty years. I've been personally involved in this revolution for over thirty years, long before Intelligent Design was even a recognized movement.

The *EXPELLED* documentary will certainly raise the visibility of this debate even further in the general public and hopefully within the church. But I have been quite surprised how many in the church are really unfamiliar with the Intelligent Design movement and are even suspicious of the motives and beliefs of those involved.

In that light, Probe Ministries and EvanTell unveiled last summer, before *EXPELLED* was announced, a small group DVD based curriculum about the Intelligent Design movement, called *Redeeming Darwin*. Check out this material at [Redeeming Darwin](#).^{9} There are small group leader kits, self-study kits, and very inexpensive outreach kits meant to be handed out to people wanting to see for themselves. We are thrilled to have Josh McDowell's endorsement, and our curriculum is being recommended to church youth leaders by those promoting *EXPELLED*.

This spring and through the summer the rhetoric will be escalating, and many just won't understand what all the fuss is about. First, make plans to attend *EXPELLED* in a few weeks and take some skeptical friends with you. Then give your

friends a copy of our *Discovering the Designer* DVD and invite them to join your small group in studying Redeeming Darwin to help answer the inevitable questions about ID and evolution. In addition, Redeeming Darwin will show you how to take a conversation about ID and evolution and use it to share the gospel. That's how you can "redeem Darwin."

Notes

1. streamingmoviesright.com/us/movie/expelled-no-intelligence-allowed/.
2. www.rsternberg.net/ (last accessed 2/12/08).
3. www.rsternberg.net/OSC_ltr.htm (last accessed 2/12/08). Sternberg used well-qualified reviewers for this paper and has steadfastly refused to identify them, which is normal protocol despite repeated attempts by evolutionists to find out who they were. None of them were "creationists" as has been suggested.
4. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/03/AR2006020300822.html (last accessed 5/18/20).
5. www.christianpost.com/news/expelled-exposes-plaint-of-darwin-doubters-30277 (last accessed 5/18/20).
6. scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2006/02/05/heck-yeahcaroline-crocker-shou (last accessed 5/18/20). Also be advised that PZ Meyers is not shy about using vulgar language.
7. To view a full list of online and print articles and to view Gonzalez's academic record, visit the Discovery Institute's section on Gonzalez at www.discovery.org/a/2939 (last accessed 5/18/20). See also post-darwinist.blogspot.com
8. streamingmoviesright.com/us/movie/expelled-no-intelligence-allowed/.
9. Also see www.probe.org and streamingmoviesright.com/us/movie/expelled-no-intelligence-allowed/.

Life on Another Planet-Just Around the Corner?

In late April [2007], a group of European scientists made an announcement that created quite a stir in the mainstream media. For the first time, a planet which could potentially support life has been discovered outside of our solar system. One newspaper headline read “Scientists find potentially habitable planet–Discovery a big step in search for life in universe”[\[1\]](#). Such an announcement raises important questions:

Is this newly discovered planet really a likely host for life?

Does this discovery imply that the earth is not unique in its ability to support complex life as promoted by most proponents of Intelligent Design?

If this planet does (or did) host life, would that detract from or support our belief in a transcendent creator?

By considering these questions, we realize that this discovery provides more support for the theory of Intelligent Design than for Darwinism.

A Potentially Habitable Planet?

This planet orbits the red dwarf star, Gliese 581 and has been designated as 581 c. It cannot be seen from earth. It was

detected by examining the effect its gravity had on the light emanating from its star. Based on that data, these scientists projected that this planet may have temperatures between 32 and 104 degrees. With this temperature range and at 1.5 to 2 times the diameter of earth, it might be able to hold liquid water. In addition, its red dwarf star appears to be quite old and stable, suggesting that its planets may have been around for billions of years. Thus, some of the characteristics necessary for a naturalistic explanation of life may be associated with this planet.

However, a habitable planet requires much more than “just add water”[{2}](#) plus time. Further analysis of Gliese 581 c indicates that it probably has many characteristics unfavorable to life. Examples include:

It does not rotate around its axis, meaning one side is always in the sun while the other side remains in constant darkness. Some scientists are now suggesting that its surface temperatures will be much hotter than the original estimates.

Since it orbits a red star with lower levels of electromagnetic radiation than our sun, this greatly limits the effectiveness of photosynthetic reactions.

Uniqueness of Earth

On the [Reasons To Believe](#) Web site[{3}](#), astrophysicist Hugh Ross has posted several articles identifying characteristics of our galaxy and earth that are necessary for life. In one paper[{4}](#), he estimates the probability of the universe having a planet like earth exhibiting all 322 characteristics identified as critical for life. A high level analysis of the list in his paper indicates that Gliese 581 c may satisfy 112 of these characteristics (primarily because it exists in the same universe and galaxy as earth). Gliese 581 c is the first out of 220 planets identified outside our solar system that

exists in the habitable temperature zone.[{5}](#) That leaves at least 210 questions unanswered such as:

Does it have a large enough moon to create tidal patterns?

Does it have just the right size, protecting planets to reduce the number of asteroid hits?

Does it have the right thickness of crust?

Does it have the right atmosphere?

Does it have the right mixture of minerals?

Using the probability estimates for each remaining characteristic, a conservative estimate for the probability that this planet could support life is 1 in 10^{199} (1 with 199 zeros after it). Please remember that this extremely low probability (essentially zero) is simply to have a planet that is habitable. It does not include the similarly minuscule probability of even the simplest life forms arising from inorganic matter. As renowned astrophysicist Stephen Hawking stated, "I expect there will be planets like Earth, but whether they have life is another question. We haven't been visited by little green men yet."[{6}](#) Since we can be virtually certain that this planet does not support any life, we may not want to spend the effort to travel to it—especially, when with current technology, it would take over 400,000 years to reach this planet.

Life on another planet—What would it mean?

Would finding life on another planet be a victory for Darwinism and proponents of naturalistic evolution as the sole force behind life as we know it? Quite the contrary! Given the extremely small probability of finding another habitable planet in our universe, multiplied by the equally small

probability of life generating spontaneously on a habitable planet, finding life on another planet would have to be considered a miracle.

In other words, finding even the simplest life forms on another planet would greatly increase the scientific evidence for intelligent design. Only a transcendent intelligent designer would be able to overcome those long odds to create life in multiple places in the universe. The theological implications of such a discovery would depend upon the nature of the life forms and will be left for future ponderings.

Bottom Line

The discovery of Gliese 581 c is an interesting event in astronomy which, if anything, further supports our view that the earth is very likely unique in its ability to support complex life. If life is ever discovered on another planet, it will further strengthen the position of intelligent design as the best theory to explain the evidence.

Notes

1. *Dallas Morning News*, April 24, 2007.
2. Jay Richards, Acton Institute, formerly with The Discovery Institute, the institutional home of the Intelligent Design movement.
3. www.reasons.org
4. Hugh Ross, "Probability for Life on Earth, 2004 April Update", *Reasons to Believe*, 2004.
5. It is interesting to note that Ross's paper allocated a probability of 1 in 1,000 to that same factor, which is the same order of magnitude as 1 out of 220. So if we used 1 out of 220 instead, the calculated probability would be less than 1 in 10¹⁹⁸.

6. *Dallas Morning News*, April 24, 2007.

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Redeeming Darwin: The Intelligent Design Controversy

Dr. Bohlin, as a Christian scientist, looks at the unwarranted opposition to intelligent design and sees a group of neo-Darwinists struggling to maintain the orthodoxy of their position as the evidence stacks up against them. In this article, he summarizes what's happening in academia and the lack of sound scientific basis for their attacks against intelligent design proponents.

What's All the Fuss?

There's a strange phenomenon popping up around the country. Scientists are stepping out of their laboratories and speaking to the media about something that has them quite concerned. It's not the threat of a new flu pandemic; it's not the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation, or even the possible threat of global warming. It's something called Intelligent Design.

In this article we will explore what has so many people upset about Intelligent Design. To do that we will need to establish just what ID is and what the major complaints are about evolution that may be answered by a theory like ID. We will take a closer look at some of the most common examples of ID from astronomy and biology. Then we will take a closer look at the cultural confusion and reaction to this rather simple

hypothesis.

So what are scientists and journalists saying? A *Baltimore Sun* reporter put it this way: “In the border war between science and faith, the doctrine of ‘intelligent design’ is a sly subterfuge—a marzipan confection of an idea presented in the shape of something more substantial.”[{1}](#)

In other words, Intelligent Design is little more than a sugar cookie promising more than it can deliver.

A science journal editorial said this: “The attack on Darwinism by supporters of Intelligent Design is a straightforward attack on science itself. Intelligent Design is not science because it proposes a supernatural designer as explanation for evolutionary change.”[{2}](#)

Uh-oh! Science and the supernatural indeed rarely go well together, at least over the last 150 years. But is that what ID actually says? We’ll explore that a little later but for now let’s find out what’s really at stake in this debate over evolution and Intelligent Design.

One college textbook said this: “Evolution is a scientific fact. That is, the descent of all species, with modification, from common ancestors is a hypothesis that in the last 150 years or so has been supported by so much evidence, and has so successfully resisted all challenges, that it has become a fact.”[{3}](#)

Let’s look at a few reasons why some scientists are skeptical of the confidence shown by so many other scientists about Darwinian evolution.[{4}](#)

Is There Scientific Proof for Evolution?

Evolution is always portrayed as a slow gradual process. Organisms are portrayed as so well adapted to their environment that they could only afford to change very slowly.

But one of the most dramatic events in earth history is something called the Cambrian explosion. The Cambrian is a period of earth history that many earth scientists and paleontologists estimate to have begun over 540 million years ago. {5}

Instead of slow steady evolutionary change, we see a sudden burst of change. The subtitle to a *Time* magazine article put it this way: “New discoveries show that life as we know it began in an amazing biological frenzy that changed the planet almost overnight.” {6}

For most of the previous 3 billion years of earth history only single-celled organisms were found. “For billions of years, simple creatures like plankton, bacteria and algae ruled the earth. Then, suddenly, life got very complicated.” {7}

So the appearance of most of the major categories of animals happened in a very short period of time, some say less than five million years, when it should have taken tens and maybe even hundreds of millions of years. One geologist who helped pinpoint the very short time frame of the Cambrian explosion expressed this challenge: “We now know how fast fast is. And what I like to ask my biologist friends is, how fast can evolution get before they start feeling uncomfortable?” {8}

The evolutionary process that biologists study in nature today is far slower than what is found in the Cambrian explosion. This is evidence that doesn't fit the theory. Yet the Cambrian explosion is left out of most textbooks.

Another problem for evolution is its dependence on mutations to bring about major changes in organisms. But for all our studies of mutations we haven't seen much change. The late French evolutionist, Pierre Paul Grasse, said, “What is the use of their unceasing mutations? . . . a swing to the right, a swing to the left, but no final evolutionary effect.” {9}

Mutations only produce alternate forms of what already exists.

New functions don't suddenly arise by mutations.

Evidence for Intelligent Design, Part One

Intelligent Design is an intellectual movement that challenges Darwinism and its dependence on random/chaotic processes coupled with selection. If people are not alerted to the fact that Darwinism is less than sufficient, then other theories are wasting their time. They will never get a fair hearing.

Intelligent Design is also a scientific research program that investigates the effects of intelligent causes, which are effects of high specificity coupled with extremely small probabilities.

Now that was a mouthful. What do I mean by high specificity coupled with small probability? Think of the lottery. Someone always wins the lottery despite the long odds. So improbable things do indeed happen.

But let's make this specific. Let's say your sister wins the lottery. Now that is someone you specifically know; but again someone always wins the lottery so the fact that it's your sister doesn't warrant any special attention.

Now let's make things a bit *less* probable and much *more* specific. Let's say your sister wins the lottery not once but three weeks in a row. Now what are you thinking? Like most people you're thinking something is not right. The same person doesn't win the lottery three weeks in a row.

You suspect cheating. You suspect Intelligent Design. Someone with a clever mind is somehow manipulating the lottery.

In astronomy, it has been assumed for several decades that our earth is not likely to be very special. As huge as the universe is, with billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars, surely there are thousands if not millions of planets like ours that are suitable for life.

But lately, more and more planetary astronomers, astrophysicists, cosmologists, and philosophers are realizing that earth is actually quite unique. The recipe for earth is more than just a planet plus mild temperatures plus water.

Our earth is 93,000,000 miles from the sun. Five percent closer and we would be a hothouse like Venus with no chance for life. If we were twenty percent farther away, we would be a frozen wasteland like Mars. We're just right. Liquid water is necessary for life and our earth has an abundance all year long.

Evidence for Intelligent Design, Part Two

It's really quite amazing to realize that biologists universally recognize the design of living things. Oxford biologist and atheist Richard Dawkins said on page one of his book *The Blind Watchmaker*: "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose."[10](#)

Now notice he said, "give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." Living things certainly look designed, but according to Dawkins, it's an illusion. He spends the rest of his book trying to show how mutation and natural selection, the "blind watchmaker," has created this illusion.

But he does admit things look designed. Well, if it looks designed, maybe it is.

Michael Behe introduced the concept of irreducible complexity in his book *Darwin's Black Box*. Something is irreducibly complex if it is composed of two or more *necessary* parts. Remove one part and function is not just impaired but destroyed. His well-known example is a mousetrap.

A mousetrap is composed of five integral parts: the platform to which everything is attached, the hammer which does the

dirty work, the spring which provides the force, the holding bar to keep the hammer in tension, and finally the catch to keep the holding bar in tenuous position. Remove any one of these parts and the mousetrap is not just less efficient; it ceases to function at all. All five parts are necessary. You can't build a mousetrap by natural selection by adding one piece at a time because it has no function to select until all five parts are together.

Behe showed that the cell, Darwin's "Black Box," is filled with irreducibly complex molecular machines that could not be built by natural selection. In Darwin's time, scientists could only see the cell under very low power microscopes that told little about what was going on inside. It was a black box. Over the last fifty to sixty years, the cell has been revealing its secrets. We have discovered a maze of complexity and information.

If it looks designed, maybe it is!

ID, Science, Education, and Creation

The legitimacy of Intelligent Design as science was at the heart of a recent federal court case, pitting a group of parents and students against the school board from Dover, Pennsylvania. The Dover School Board adopted a policy that mandated a statement be read before all biology classes, indicating that evolution was a theory that needed critical evaluation and that intelligent design was a rival theory that students could seek information about from the library.

Judge Jones not only struck down the policy as unconstitutional, he went further to declare that ID is not science and was motivated purely by religion since it was just a repackaged creationism. His written opinion was scathing. This of course delighted proponents of evolution and many have declared that ID now is dead.

Judge Jones claimed that ID simply is not science and is religiously motivated; therefore it should not even be mentioned in a high school science classroom.

The first question that should occur to you is, Why does a federal judge with no training in science use his courtroom as a means of determining what is and is not science? This problem has been referred to as the demarcation problem. How do we demarcate science from non-science? People putting down ID often refer to it as “pseudo-science” or simply “unscientific.” But philosopher of science Larry Laudan writes, “If we would stand up and be counted on the side of reason, we ought to drop terms like ‘pseudo-science’ and ‘unscientific’ from our vocabulary; they are just hollow phrases which do only emotive work for us.”[\[11\]](#)

Judge Jones claims that ID has been refuted by mainstream scientists. He cites the work of Kenneth Miller in particular. This is rather strange indeed. For ID to be refuted means that it has been tested by science and found wanting. If it is testable scientifically to the degree that it can be refuted, then it is science after all. This logical contradiction does not seem to occur to Judge Jones.

ID uses empirical data to demonstrate the plausibility of a design inference. It's as scientific as Darwinism.

Notes

1. *Baltimore Sun*, August 13, 2006.
2. *Cell*, January 13, 2006.
3. Douglas Futuyma, *Evolution* (Sinauer Assoc., Sunderland, Mass., 2005), xv.
4. To learn more about Intelligent Design and Evolution visit our website, probe.org, or call us at 1-800-899-PROB, for information about our new DVD based small group curriculum, “Redeeming Darwin: The Intelligent Design Controversy.” Once again we have teamed up with EvanTell to produce a small group

curriculum designed to inform the church about Intelligent Design and how to use a conversation about this controversial topic to share the gospel.

5. Meyer, Stephen C., Marcus Ross, Paul Nelson and Paul Chien, 2003, *The Cambrian explosion: Biology's Big Bang in Darwinism, Design, and Public Education*, John Angus Campbell and Stephen C. Meyer, eds., East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, pp. 323-402.

6. *Time*, December 4, 1995 (cover).

7. *Ibid.*, 67.

8. Samuel Bowring, *Time*, 1995, 70.

9. Pierre-Paul Grassé quoted in *The Natural Limits to Biological Change*, Lane P. Lester and Raymond G. Bohlin, Richardson, Texas: Probe Books 1984., p. 88.

10. Dawkins, Richard, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design*, New York, New York: Norton, 1986.

11. Larry Laudan, (1983) "The demise of the demarcation problem," in Michael Ruse (ed.) *But Is It Science?*, Amherst, Prometheus, 337-350.

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Darwinism and Truth

Darwinism and the Fact/Value Split

Nancy Pearcey writes in her book *Total Truth* that Christians must counter the effects of our secular culture and mindset by developing a consistent and comprehensive biblical worldview.[\[1\]](#) In the middle chapters of her book, she demonstrates how Christians should do this with the question of origins.

Earlier in her book she notes that our society has divided truth into two categories. She calls this the sacred /secular split or the private/public split or the fact/value split. They are different ways of saying the same thing. Religion and moral values are subjective and shoved into the upper story where private opinions and values reside. And in the lower story are hard, verifiable facts and scientific knowledge.

There is another key point to this split. The two spheres should not intersect. In other words, it would be bad manners and a violation of logic to allow your personal and private choices and values to intersect with your public life. As the popular saying goes, that would be “shoving your religion down someone’s throat.”

Ray Bohlin’s [review](#) of Pearcey’s book provides further explanation for how this idea plays out in society.[{2}](#)

Darwinists accept this split and have even tried to convince Christians that in this way religion is safe from the claims and conclusions of Darwinian evolution. But a brief glance at the best seller list shows that evolutionists regularly invade this upper story of values with their harsh criticism.

In *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins says that religious belief is psychotic, and arguments for the existence of God are nonsense. Sam Harris echoes that sentiment in his bestselling book, *Letter to a Christian Nation*. Daniel Dennett, in his book *Breaking the Spell*, believes that religion must be subjected to scientific evaluation.

Nancy Pearcey shows that Darwinism leads to naturalism. And this is a naturalistic view of knowledge where “theological dogmas and philosophical absolutes were at worst totally fraudulent and at best merely symbolic of deep human aspirations.”[{3}](#) In other words, if Darwinian evolution is true, then religion and philosophical absolutes are not true. Truth, honesty, integrity, morality are not true but actually

fraudulent concepts and ideas. If we hold to them at all, they were merely symbolic but not really true in any sense.

Daniel Dennett, in his book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, says that Darwinism is a "universal acid" which is his allusion to a children's riddle about an acid that is so corrosive that it eats through everything including the flask that holds it. In other words, Darwinism is too corrosive to be contained. It eats through every academic field of study and destroys ethics, morality, truth, and absolutes. When it is finished, Darwinism "eats through just about every traditional concept and leaves in its wake a revolutionized world-view."[\[4\]](#)

Darwinism and Naturalism

Pearcey writes that "Darwinism functions as the scientific support for an overarching naturalistic worldview."[\[5\]](#) Today scientists usually assume that scientific investigation requires naturalism. But that was not always the case.

When the scientific revolution began (and for the next three hundred years), science and Christianity were considered to be compatible with one another. In fact, most scientists had some form of Christian faith, and they perceived the world of diversity and complexity through a theistic framework. Pearcey points out that Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and others sought to understand the world and use their gifts to honor God and serve humanity.

By the nineteenth century, secular trends began to change their perspective. This culminated with the publication of *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin. His theory of evolution provided the needed foundation for naturalism to explain the world without God. From that point on, social commentators began to talk about the "war between science and religion."

By the twentieth century, G. K. Chesterton was warning that Darwinian evolution and naturalism was becoming the dominant

“creed” in education and the other public arenas of Western culture. He said it “began with Evolution and has ended in Eugenics.” Ultimately, it “is really our established Church.”[{6}](#)

Today, it is easy to see how scientists believe that naturalism and science are essentially the same thing. They often slip from physics to metaphysics. In other words, they leave the boundaries of science and begin to make philosophical statements about the nature of the universe. While scientists can tell us how the universe operates, they cannot tell us if there is anything outside of the universe.

But that didn’t stop astronomer Carl Sagan in the PBS program “Cosmos.” The first words you hear from him are: “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”[{7}](#) In other words, the universe (or Cosmos) is all there is: no God, no heaven.

Now, Carl Sagan’s comment is not a scientific statement. It’s a philosophical statement. And it set the ground rules for the rest of the program. Nature is all there is. In many ways it sounds like a creed. It is as if Carl Sagan was attempting to modify the *Gloria Patri*: “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever will be.”

Do those ideas end up in our children’s books? Nancy Pearcey tells the story of picking up a science book for her son, *The Bears’ Nature Guide*, which featured the Berenstain Bears. The Bear family goes on a nature walk. Turn a few pages in the book and you will see a sunrise with these words in capital letters: “Nature . . . is all that IS, or WAS, or EVER WILL BE!”[{8}](#) Sounds like a heavy dose of Carl Sagan’s naturalism packaged for young children courtesy of the Berenstain Bears.

If you are looking for a resource to counter this Darwinian and naturalistic indoctrination, let me recommend Probe’s DVD series on “Redeeming Darwin.” It will give you the

intellectual ammunition you need.

In *Total Truth*, Nancy Pearcey discusses many of the so-called “icons of evolution” that Jonathan Wells documents in his book by that title.[{9}](#) These examples show up in nearly every high school and college biology textbook. But these examples which are used to “prove” evolution are either fraudulent or fail to prove evolution.

Let’s start with a piece of evidence for evolution that was found where Charles Darwin first got his inspiration for his theory of evolution: the [Galapagos Islands](#). The islands can be found off the coast of South America. On those islands are finches, which have come to be known as Darwin’s finches. It’s hard to find a biology textbook that doesn’t tell the story of these finches.

One study found that during a period of drought, the average beak size of these finches increased slightly. The reason cited for this is that during these dry periods, the most available seeds are larger and tougher to crack than at other times. So birds with larger beaks do better in conditions of drought.

I spent an afternoon looking at specimens of Darwin’s finches when I was in graduate school at Yale University and should point out that the changes in beak thickness is minimal and thus measured in tens of millimeters (thickness of a thumbnail). Moreover, the changes seem to be cyclical. When the rains returns, the original size seeds appear and the average beak size returns to normal.

This is not evolution. It is an interesting cyclical pattern in natural history. But it’s not evolution. Nevertheless, one science writer enthusiastically proclaimed that this is evolution happening “before [our] very eyes.”[{10}](#)

If this is evolution occurring then we should be seeing macro changes that would allow these finches to evolve into another

species. But this cyclical pattern shows just the opposite. These minor changes in beak size and thickness actually allow them to remain finches under changing environmental conditions. It does not show them evolving into another species.

So what has been the response from the scientific establishment? The National Academy of Sciences put out a booklet on evolution for teachers. The booklet did not even mention that the average beak size returned to normal after drought. Instead the booklet makes unwarranted speculation about what might happen if these changes were to continue indefinitely for a few hundred years. "If droughts occur about once every ten years on the islands, a new species of finch might arise in only 200 years."[{11}](#)

Is this an accurate conclusion based upon the facts of natural history? It seems to be a clear example of misleading teachers (who in turn will unintentionally mislead their students). The booklet teaches that the beak sizes in Darwin's finches are directional and evolutionary rather than cyclical and reversible.

A column in the *Wall Street Journal* made this point. "When our leading scientists have to resort to the sort of distortion that would land a stock promoter in jail," Phillip Johnson said, "you know they are in trouble."[{12}](#)

Ray Bohlin's [review](#) of Jonathan Well's book, *Icons of Evolution*, provides further detail on some of these examples.[{13}](#)

Peppered Moths

One example that appears in most biology textbooks is the story of the peppered moths in England. The moths appear in two forms: dark gray and light gray. During the Industrial Revolution, the factories produced pollution that darkened the

tree trunks. This made it easier for birds to catch and eat the lighter colored moths. Later, when pollution was cleaned up, the tree trunks were lighter and it made it easier for the birds to catch the darker colored moths.

On its face, all this example proves is that the ratio of dark colored and light colored moths changed over time. In many ways, this is nothing more than another example of cyclical changes that we just discussed concerning Darwin's finches.

But there is much more to the story. Peppered moths don't actually perch on tree trunks. Actually they are quite torpid during the daylight hours and rest in the upper canopy of the trees.

If you have ever been in a biology class you have seen pictures of these moths on the tree trunks. You might even have seen a film that was made decades ago of birds landing on the trees and catching moths. It turns out that in order to create the photos and the film scientists put the moths in a freezer to immobilize them and then glued them to the tree trunks.

How did this example become such an enduring icon of evolution? Scientists accepted it for many years uncritically because they wanted to believe it and needed a visual example to show evolution. The peppered moth story fit the bill and quickly became "an irrefutable article of faith."[\[14\]](#)

Now there are journal articles, and even books, that document the scientific scandal surrounding the story of the peppered moths. One leading evolutionist noted that the story was a "prize horse in our stable of examples." He goes on to say that when he learned the truth, it was like learning "that it was my father and not Santa Claus who brought the presents on Christmas Eve."[\[15\]](#)

But what is so amazing is that this example still shows up with regularity in biology textbooks, even though most

scientists and textbook writers know the story is untrue. One reporter even interviewed a textbook writer who admitted that he knew the photos were faked but used them in the biology textbook anyway. "The advantage of this example," he argued, "is that it is extremely visual." He went on to add that "we want to get across the idea of selective adaptation. Later on, they can look at the work critically."[\[16\]](#)

The examples of the falsified "icons of evolution" demonstrate the extremes to which many Darwinists will go to "prove" the theory of evolution. They keep an incorrect example in the textbooks simply because it is visual and supports the theory of evolution and worldview of naturalism.

Fraudulent Embryos

Nearly every textbook has pictures of developing vertebrate embryos lined up across the page to demonstrate an evolutionary history being replayed in the womb. These pictures are placed there to show common ancestry and thus prove evolution. During this day, Charles Darwin called the similarity of vertebrate embryos "by far the strongest single class of facts in favor of" his theory of evolution.[\[17\]](#)

In biology class many of us learned the phrase "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny." That means that these developing embryos go through similar stages that replay the stages of evolution. So this supposedly was embryological proof of evolution.

But it turns out that the pictures were and are an elaborate hoax. German scientist Ernst Haeckel drew them in order to prove evolution. He deliberately drew the embryos more similar than they really are.

What is so incredible about this hoax is that it was known more than a century ago. Scientists knew the drawings were incorrect, and his colleagues accused him of fraud. An

embryologist, writing in the journal *Science*, called Haeckel's drawings "one of the most famous fakes in biology."[{18}](#)

Now you would think that a hoax uncovered more than a hundred years ago would certainly not make it into high school and college biology textbooks. But if you assumed that, you would be wrong. Many textbooks continue to reprint drawings labeled as a hoax a century ago.

So why do Darwinists continue to believe in the theory of evolution and even use examples to "prove" evolution that are not true. It may be due to a bias in their worldview. The only theories that they believe are acceptable are those that are developed within a naturalistic framework.

Richard Dawkins noted: "*Even if there were no actual evidence in favor of the Darwinian theory . . . we would still be justified in preferring it over rival theories.*"[{19}](#) Think about that statement for a moment. Even if there were no evidence for evolution, Darwinists would still believe it because it is naturalistic.

Another professor made an even more incredible statement. He said: "Even if all the data point to an intelligent designer, such an hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic."[{20}](#) Now think about that. Even if the evidence points to intelligent design rather than to evolution, it is excluded from consideration because it is not naturalistic.

As you can see from these two quotes (as well as from some of the other material presented here), the commitment to evolution is more philosophical than scientific. Nancy Pearcey concludes that "the issue is not fundamentally a matter of evidence at all, but of a prior philosophical commitment."[{21}](#)

Again, let me also recommend Probe's DVD series on "Redeeming Darwin" that is available through Probe's website www.probe.org.

Notes

1. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004).
2. Raymond Bohlin, "Total Truth," Probe, 2005, www.probe.org/total-truth/.
3. Edward Purcell, *The Crisis of Democracy* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1973), 8.
4. Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 63.
5. Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 207.
6. G. K. Chesterton, *Eugenics and Other Evils* (NY: Dodd, Mead, 1927), 98.
7. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (NY: Random House, 1980), 4.
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9. Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2000).
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12. Phillip Johnson, "The Church of Darwin," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 August 1999.
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15. Jerry Coyne, "Not black and white," book review of: *Melanism: Evolution in Action*, *Nature* 396(5 November 1998), 35.
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18. Michael Richardson, quoted in Pennisi, "Haeckel's Embryos:

Fraud rediscovered," *Science* 277 (5 September 1997), 1435.

19. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (NY: Norton, 1986), 287, emphasis in original.

20. S.C. Todd, "A view from Kansas on that evolution debate," *Nature*, 30 September 1999, 423.

21. Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 169.

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