

Theology vs. Science or Theology plus Science?

Appendix A: Theology vs. Science or Theology plus Science?

Note: This is one of two appendices for Steve Cable's article [Are We Significant in This Vast Universe?](#)

Are science and religion mortal enemies, or collaborating partners, or denizens of different realms with no common ground? Is the ultimate objective of science to unmask the fictitious myths behind all religions freeing mankind to pursue a rational utopia as espoused by Daniel Dennett^{1} and other atheist academics? Or should we subscribe to the prevailing Western view of a clear secular vs. sacred split, segregating out thoughts so that science and theology are not allowed to deal with any topics which intersect?^{2} Or will unbiased scientific inquiry lead us to a deeper appreciation and understanding of our Creator as espoused by early formulators of the modern scientific method, such as Isaac Newton, as well as many respected researchers, such as leading nanotechnologist, Dr. James Tour, who stated, "I stand in awe of God because of what he has done through his creation. Only a rookie who knows nothing about science would say science takes away from faith. If you really study science, it will bring you closer to God."^{3}

The current view promoted as dogma by many in academia is that acceptable, genuine science is based on a theological presupposition, namely, that any possibility of intervention by a transcendent Creator or other non-physical entity must be excluded from consideration in evaluating possible explanations for any phenomena observed in the physical world. It is ironic that Carl Sagan, one of the popular promoters of

this dogma, would take fundamental issue with his own dogma when he wrote,

A central lesson of science is that to understand complex issues (or even simple ones), we must try to free our minds of dogma and to guarantee the freedom to publish, to contradict, and to experiment. Arguments from authority are unacceptable. [\[4\]](#)

In a similar fashion, a common viewpoint promoted in some theological circles is that theology trumps science in any areas in which they have an intersecting interest, i.e. a viewpoint that looks only at the Bible without allowing its interpretation of Scripture to be informed by the findings of science. From this viewpoint, science is at best a limited field of study looking at only a small part of reality, and at worst is spending large amounts of resources studying an illusion masquerading as reality. It is assumed that science cannot provide insights to help deepen our understanding of theology.

I propose that both of these viewpoints share a common shortcoming of prejudging the result before examining the evidence. Both scientist and theologians should be free to follow the evidence where it leads, whether the evidence comes from observation of the physical aspects of our universe, or from philosophy and logic, or from divine revelation.

One area where this clash of viewpoints is reaching a fever pitch is in the field of Intelligent Design science. Researchers in this emerging field say, let us follow the evidence where it leads. If the makeup of the physical realm includes evidence of an intelligent designer, let's admit it and pass the information on to the theologians. If the physical makeup is more indicative of the handiwork of random variations and natural processes, let's cite it and pass that information along as well. As demonstrated in the 2008

documentary, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, these researchers are facing stiff opposition and even persecution from the defenders of the scientific establishment. Ironically, but not unexpectedly, the more we learn about the fine tuning required to support life, the history of our planet, and the complexity of living organisms, the more the evidence aligns with the presence of an intelligent designer rather than the results of random, undirected processes. As one scientist observed,

[0]n whatever volume scale researchers make their observations – the universe, galaxy cluster, galaxy, planetary system, planet, planetary surface, cell, atom, fundamental particle, or string – the evidence for extreme fine-tuning for life's sake, and in particular for humanity's benefit, persists.[\[5\]](#)

As Christians, we need not fear science. If the Bible is revelation from our actual Creator, it will not crumble in the presence of scientific studies into the nature of our universe. We do need to be concerned about agenda-driven science which is focused on manipulating scientific results and the popular public perception of those results to prove a predetermined theological point, whether it is atheism or a particular interpretation of the Bible.

If God is the Creator of the universe and the Bible is revelation directly from God, then accurate observation of the universe will ultimately prove to be consistent with His revelation. By combining the general revelation of science with the special revelation of the Bible, we should be rewarded with a greater understanding of the nature of our Creator and His intentions for mankind.

Notes

1. Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking Press, 2006).

2. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).
3. Candace Adams, "Leading Nanoscientist Builds Big Faith," *Baptist Standard*, March 15, 2000.
4. Carl Sagan, *Billions and Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium* (New York, Random House, 1997).
5. Hugh Ross, *Why The Universe Is The Way It Is* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 124.

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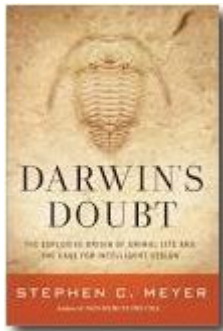
Darwin's Doubt

Dr. Ray Bohlin reviews Stephen Meyer's book Darwin's Doubt, showing that the sudden appearance of complex animal forms in the Cambrian cannot be explained by evolutionary mechanisms.

The Essence of the Cambrian Explosion



The fossil record of the Cambrian Period has been known as a problem for evolutionary theory since Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin was aware of the sudden appearance of complex animal forms in the Cambrian from his own collecting in northeastern Wales. Complex animal forms such as trilobites seemed to appear with geological suddenness with no apparent ancestors in older rocks below them.



In his 2013 book, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*^[1], Stephen Meyer quotes Darwin from the *Origin of Species*: “To the question of why we do not find rich fossiliferous [fossil-bearing] deposits belonging to these assumed earliest periods prior to the Cambrian system, I can give no satisfactory answer. . . . The case at present must remain inexplicable; and may truly be urged as a valid argument against the views here entertained.”^[2]

Meyer provides some of the historical context of this period and Darwin's disagreement with the eminent paleontologist of his day, Louis Agassiz of Harvard. Darwin's solution to his dilemma was to suggest that the fossil record is incomplete and that he fully expected that abundant fossils would be found to indicate the evolutionary origin of these Cambrian animals. However, in the intervening century and a half, the problem has not been resolved. If anything, as we have gained more knowledge of animal life and development and found numerous deposits of periods just prior to the Cambrian, the problem is worse than Darwin perceived.

Early in the 20th century, a rich Cambrian deposit was found in the Canadian Rockies, the Burgess Shale. Entirely new organisms were found exquisitely preserved, many with soft-body parts well preserved. Then in the mid-1980s, an even earlier Cambrian deposit was found in Chengjiang, China. This deposit revealed an even richer diversity of organisms than the Burgess Shale, and even finer soft-body preservation—even down to eyes, intestines, sensory organs and stomach contents.

Later work in different parts of the world had timed the Cambrian explosion to a roughly 5-10 million year time frame around 530 million years ago [with the Cambrian period itself beginning 543 million years ago] in the evolutionary time frame. Though that's a very long time, even for evolution, it's practically instantaneous when discussing the origin of

entirely new body plans. As Meyer faithfully recounts, Darwin's dream of an ever-increasing rise in complexity and diversity is shattered by the geologically abrupt appearance of both complexity and diversity.

What has been referred to as "Darwin's doubt" could be more aptly referred to as "Darwin's headache." In this article I will explore some of the additional problems this sudden explosion of animal body plans poses for evolution. While committed evolutionary materialists pretend to not be disturbed by these developments, those with open minds are questioning this long-held theory and giving new consideration to Intelligent Design.

Evolutionary Explanations of the Cambrian Explosion

Even Darwin recognized the Cambrian as a puzzle for his theory. Darwin hoped that further exploration of fossil-bearing strata would reveal the ancestors of the Cambrian animals.

In the early 20th century, Harvard paleontologist, Charles Walcott, found a new Cambrian deposit in the Canadian Rockies, the Burgess Shale. The Burgess Shale contained new creatures never seen before and was able to preserve some soft-body parts, also never seen before. This proposed an even greater problem than Darwin knew. Older deposits were still not revealing the ancestors of the Cambrian, but now there was even more diversity and novelty than anyone had imagined. The discovery of a predator, the up-to-meter-long *Anomalocaris*, demonstrated there was a well-defined ecosystem with plant producers, plant consumers and carnivores.

The origin of the Cambrian fauna seemed to turn Darwin's theory on its head. Darwin expected all animal life forms to be descended from a single common ancestor through a lengthy process of descent with ever-so-slight modification. But these

Cambrian novelties appeared quite suddenly with no ancestors. That is not evolution as Darwin envisioned it. Walcott suggested two reasons for the disparity. First, he suggested that the immediate Pre-Cambrian deposits containing the Cambrian ancestors were to be found on the ocean floor. Subsequent off-shore drilling for oil provided a unique opportunity to test this hypothesis. But most of the sea floor is much younger than the Cambrian. If there were Pre-Cambrian deposits, they no longer exist.

Walcott also tended to be a “lumper” in taxonomic terms. That means he fit fossils into already existing categories whether they fit well or not. This appeared to minimize the explosive part of the Cambrian. But additional field excavations in the Burgess Shale, as well as in different parts of the world, revealed that many of these Cambrian creatures were unique and that their descendants are not known today—they are extinct. The novelty of Cambrian forms is more pronounced than ever.

The late Stephen J. Gould of Harvard famously described the uniqueness of these Cambrian creatures when he said; “Imagine an organism built of a hundred basic features, with twenty possible forms per feature. The grab bag contains a hundred compartments, with twenty different tokens in each. To make a new Burgess creature, the Great Token-Stringer takes one token at random from each compartment and strings them together. Voila, the creature works—and you have nearly as many successful experiments as a musical scale can build catchy tunes.”[\[3\]](#)

Fossils have been found in sediments older or below the Cambrian but these fossils do not appear to be ancestors of the Cambrian creatures. They were also quite unique and most are now extinct. The mystery remains.

Libraries of New Genetic Information

Needed: Pronto!

All Darwin had to examine were the unique animals found in Cambrian deposits. He knew nothing of genetics and the need for new genetic information.

Paleontologist James Valentine has gone so far as to say that probably all the living animal phyla had their beginning in the Cambrian period, over 500 million years ago. We do find multi-celled animal fossils 20-30 million years before the Cambrian, but only sponges seem to resemble anything we find in these deposits.

A phylum is an upper level of classification. For instance, all vertebrates are in the same phylum. Insects, crustaceans, and spiders are also in the same phylum. The phylum represents organisms with a distinct body plan though there may be many variations on that theme. In order to have all these new body plans or phyla appear in the Cambrian in a geological instant, you need a lot of new genes or genetic information. Different types of cells are needed. New genes are needed to grow new body plans out of a single-celled fertilized egg. With different cell types come different kinds of functions and cell types each needing specific gene products to give them their unique functions.

When protein sequence and gene sequence comparisons were begun in the late 70s, there was an expectation that comparing gene sequences would solve relational puzzles among living organisms but that by comparing genes from different phyla, it could be determined how phyla were related. The Cambrian fossils offer no such clues since most animal phyla appear at nearly the same time. But several decades of gene sequence comparison studies have revealed no consistent evolutionary scheme. As Meyer summarizes, "Many other studies have thrown their own widely varying numbers into the ring, placing the common ancestor of animals anywhere between 100 million years and 1.5 billion years before the Cambrian explosion." [\[4\]](#)

Meyer does a great job of articulating why there would need to be an information explosion along with the Cambrian explosion. Accounting for all this new information, in a relatively short period of time, by known processes is a herculean task. If evolution solely depends on a Darwinian model, then mutation and natural selection must be able to account for the explosive rise of new genes and regulatory gene networks during the Cambrian. Meyer spends several chapters working this through. Achieving the extreme specificity of proteins through the slow, plodding, processes of mutation and natural selection appears impossible.

In the next section I address an even greater difficulty of the Cambrian explosion. Darwinism has always needed a slow gradual accumulation of genetic change. However, with the relatively quick appearance of very different forms of animals in the Cambrian, is Darwinism up to the task?

The Exasperating Problem of New Body Plans

Darwin understood nothing about how animal body plans are laid out and built in the early embryo.

Since Darwin's time we have learned a great deal. And none of what we have learned offers any help in deciphering how all these new body plans originated in such a short geological time period in the early Cambrian. The overall structure and shape of an organism is laid out early in embryonic development. Particular genes necessary for development are tightly controlled in when and how they are expressed. These genetic regulatory programs operate only in early development and they limit the possibilities of the final form of the organism.

Biologists use a classification term, phylum, to refer to the largest category of animals and plants. Humans belong to the Phylum Chordata, which includes all the vertebrates. Insects

are in the Phylum Arthropoda, which includes crustaceans and spiders. These two phyla possess very different body plans, and the genetic programs to build these plans are very different in the earliest stages, even in the first few divisions of the fertilized egg. The Cambrian demonstrates that these very different body plans arise in less than ten million years of time geologically. Is that possible? All Darwinism has to work with as the source of genetic variation, are mutations.

In 1977, French evolutionist Pierre Paul Grassé noted that mutations don't provide any real evolutionary change. Mutations only seem to provide only a slightly different variety of what already existed.[\[5\]](#) Twenty years later, a trio of developmental biologists noted that modern evolutionary theory explained well how the already fit survive and reproduce. But just how organisms came to be that way, the modern theory seemed silent.[\[6\]](#) Evolutionary biologist Wallace Arthur explained that modern textbooks told the same stories about how finch beaks and the color of moths changed to suit their environment, but nowhere was it discussed how the organism as a whole came to be so integrally functional.[\[7\]](#)

These problems have been further addressed in recent years but nothing seems to propose any clear answers as to how new body plans could have appeared in such a short span of evolutionary time.

Steve Meyer summarizes his review of these difficulties in the light of the Cambrian saying, "The Cambrian explosion itself illustrates a profound engineering problem the fossil data does not address—the problem of building a new form of animal life by gradually transforming one tightly integrated system of genetic components and their products into another."[\[8\]](#)

An Opportunity for Intelligent Design

I have documented how the sudden appearance of new forms in

the Cambrian creates mysteries in terms of the fossils, genetics and developmental biology.

In chapter 18, Meyer turns his attention from the observation that modern evolutionary theories do not explain the sudden appearance of all the major animal groups in a short burst of geologic time, to what can explain the Cambrian Explosion. He carefully argues that Intelligent Design has all the causal power to bring about what is needed in the Cambrian.

Initially he summarizes the conclusions of two important evolutionary students of the Cambrian, Douglas Erwin and Eric Davidson. Together these scientists have listed a few of the observations any evolutionary cause must explain. First, whatever the cause of the Cambrian Explosion, it must be able to generate what is referred to as a top-down pattern. That is, the broad general categories of animals appear before there is any refinement in these characters. Second, the cause must be capable of generating new biological forms relatively rapidly. Third, this cause must be capable of constructing, not just modifying, complex genetic regulatory circuits.

They also note, as Meyer reports, that no existing theory of evolutionary change can accomplish any of these necessary events.^{9} Davidson and Erwin are quite insistent that the processes operating in the early Cambrian were fundamentally different from anything operating in nature today. That's a tall order. But Meyer adds a few more prerequisites for a cause for the Cambrian Explosion. In addition to the need for rapid development of a top-down pattern, new body forms and creation of new genetic regulatory circuits, Meyer observes that this cause also needs to generate new digital information in the DNA and new structural information that cells use routinely. There also needs to be the development of new types of information that are precisely coordinated to specify brand new body plans.^{10}

A designing intelligence may be the only sufficient cause that

can accomplish all of these events within any time frame, let alone the 5-10 million years of the Cambrian Explosion. Meyer concludes the chapter by writing, "The features of the Cambrian event point decisively in another direction—not to some as-yet-undiscovered materialistic process that merely mimics the powers of a designing mind, but instead to an actual intelligent cause."[\[11\]](#)

Clearly when all the evidence is reviewed as Meyer does, the conclusion of Intelligent Design is nearly impossible to avoid. To ask how a designing intelligence did all this is to insist on a materialistic explanation for an immaterial cause. More is yet to be discovered, but if the pattern holds, Intelligent Design will become even more robust in the future.

Notes

1. Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013).
2. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Chapter X (pp. 235, 252-254), quoted in *Darwin's Doubt*.
3. Stephen J. Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), p. 217.
4. *Darwin's Doubt*, pp. 105-106.
5. Pierre-Paul Grassé, *Evolution of Living Organisms* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 87.
6. S. Gilbert, J. Optiz, and R. Raff, "Review—Resynthesizing Evolutionary and Developmental Biology," *Developmental Biology* 173 (1996): 361. "The Modern Synthesis (Neo-Darwinism) is a remarkable achievement. However, starting in the 1970's, many biologists began questioning its adequacy in explaining evolution . . . Microevolution looks at adaptations that concern only the survival of the fittest, not the arrival of

the fittest.”

7. Wallace Arthur, *Biased Embryos and Evolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 36. “Textbooks of evolutionary biology have for years trotted out the usual old stories about how birds’ beaks evolve to match their food items, or how moths’ colours evolve to match their background. But where are the equally detailed studies about the importance of one body part matching another.”

8. *Darwin’s Doubt*.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 355.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 381.

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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?

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 finding 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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"I'm Interested in Grad School in Intelligent Design"

Dear Dr. Bohlin,

Thank you for your reply to my earlier letter, and yes I am interested in graduate school. I am under a little pressure though, as I am an older student with a wife and two sons. At this time it seems I will have to pursue some type of professional or graduate school in order to use my degree to any extent. I am still trying to decide what I want to be when I "grow up." I am tired of school simply because of the continual attacks on my beliefs. I would very much like to pursue further schooling if I could find a school and professors that are a little more user friendly. I would like to hear more of what you have to say along the lines of Intelligent Design professors. As a matter of fact, I can't wait. I was ready to drop out this week, but between your letter and my counselor's advice I have managed to hit my last two exams in full stride and I feel renewed about school. Thank you again and I hope that you have more good input for me.

I'm glad to hear that a few things came together to encourage

you. If nothing else the list of professors below could better help direct you and fashion your goals. They may also have other suggestions for you.

Here are a few names to research for possible graduate school.

- *Mike Behe is professor of Biological Sciences at Lehigh University.*
- *Scott Minnich is associate professor of microbiology at the University of Idaho.*
- *Dean Kenyon is professor of biology at San Francisco State University.*
- *Paul Chien is professor and Chairman of the Biology department at the University of San Francisco.*

Behe, Minnich, Kenyon, and Chien are fellows of the Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture. You can find a short bio for each at www.discovery.org/crsc/fellows/index.html.

I don't know anything about these guys need or desire for graduate students but I do know that Minnich has an active research program utilizing graduate students. Behe has cut back some of his research to focus on promoting intelligent design, so I'm not sure where he is at in being able to support graduate students. If you haven't read Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* you should do so ASAP.

I also understand your plight as an older graduate student with a wife and two kids. I started my Ph.D. program in 1983 when my boys were 1 and 3. It is difficult and you can't devote the lab time that other single students can but because I knew this was where God wanted me and my wife was fully supportive, God supplied our needs. I also made sure my boys received scheduled time with Dad that I protected almost at all costs. For years I took them out individually for breakfast on Saturday mornings which they loved. We rarely had

“important” conversations but time alone with Dad at least every other week helped let them know that they were important to me. In retrospect I could have scheduled a little more time. I also scheduled my nights in the lab. Everybody knew Dad wasn't home on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. This helped keep me from disappointing them with random evenings away from home. I could schedule long experiments on those days and keep disappointments to a minimum. I also stayed away from the lab on Sundays except for occasional quick trips for maintenance of ongoing experiments. It's tough but can be done. But total support from your wife is essential. The long term demands on your time put a big strain on her and she needs to believe this is what God wants for you and your family.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Josh McDowell on Using Redeeming Darwin With Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed

Over the last 50 years, those with a Christian worldview have been the focus of condescension and exclusion in the academic community. As has happened throughout history, these attitudes from the academic community have gradually permeated our mainstream culture. Today, evangelical-bashing is the accepted standard position for all forms of mass media from news reporting to books and movies. Over the last decade, this

trend has accelerated to the point that many people believe Christian principles and beliefs should not be recognized in our public policies and culture. We are all experiencing these efforts to relegate the Christian faith to an irrelevant sidelight of American culture.

One of the root causes of this trend is the teaching of naturalistic Darwinism as dogma within our public education system from grade school through our universities. The reasoning is that educated people know that science has proven there is no evidence for a creator. Therefore, there is no place for religion and moral authority in our public life. This attitude directly affects public policies on abortion, euthanasia, education, sexuality, etc.

Although Darwins theory of life originating and evolving to its current forms strictly through random events and natural selection may have seemed plausible 50 years ago, our current understanding of the nature of the universe and the complexity of even the simplest life forms bring up huge issues for which the current state of evolutionary theory has *no* answers. For example, over 700 scientists at our universities and research institutions have signed a statement expressing their doubt that Darwinism can adequately explain our current understanding of life in this universe (See dissentfromdarwin.org for the current list).

In a desperate attempt to protect the dogma upon which their naturalistic/humanistic worldview is based, the scientific/educational establishment is systematically and viciously attacking those who would dare to research alternative theories that may better explain the current evidence. They have mounted a public relations campaign to paint any scientific research or publications which expose the issues with Darwinism as not science, but rather religiously based dogmatism or creationism. What is absolutely amazing is that while aggressively pursuing their campaign of persecution and spin-doctoring, the Darwinist community steadfastly denies

that they are doing any such thing. Sadly, this campaign has been successful to date in keeping our public education system and most of our scientists captive to this worldview-motivated attempt to defend the dogma of Darwinism in the face of all evidence to the contrary.

[Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed](#) (starring Ben Stein) is a documentary scheduled to be released in April 2008. It exposes the blatant attempts to squelch academic freedom in defense of outdated Darwinist dogma. By chronicling the stories of well-qualified scientists who have dared to question Darwinism as a comprehensive explanation for life and interviewing people on both sides of these events, this documentary presents a strong case for restoring academic freedom allowing scientists to follow the evidence where it leads. Both the content and the involvement of Ben Stein (who is Jewish) make it clear that this documentary was not created to directly promote the teaching of creationism. This documentary calls Americans to stand up for academic freedom and integrity. It says that we should not allow the misguided notion that science and religion must be in conflict to keep scientists from exploring all reasonable hypotheses to explain the latest evidence.

The producers of *Expelled* are making a large financial investment to create a documentary targeted for wide release in thousands of movie theaters. They are taking this risk because they believe that the American public needs to understand what is really happening. It is only through public awareness and pressure that the current climate of repression and persecution can be changed. *Expelled* is intended to bring this issue to the forefront of public thought. Promoting an open public debate could well lead to unshackling scientific research in this area and opening the door for students to receive more in-depth education in evolutionary theory including those areas where evolutionary theory currently has no viable explanation.

The content of *Expelled* creates a natural opportunity for

Christians to discuss the evidence for a creator and the reasons for our faith in Jesus Christ as Creator and Savior. *Expelled* will draw wide public attention to these issues and will create media attention and controversy even among those who do not see it. It would be a shame for believers to miss this opportunity to promote this public discussion and to engage our friends, neighbors and co-workers in making a defense for our hope in Christ.

So how can we go about doing this?

1. Let me encourage you to take the time to review the excellent, cutting-edge materials available through RedeemingDarwin.com. Make the effort to equip your people with the information and encouragement they need to communicate that the scientific evidence points to a creator and to share the relationship they have with the Creator. Again, this foundational issue is critical and will get more intense in the days ahead. The Redeeming Darwin material from [Probe](#) and [EvanTell](#) is ideal for this purpose.

2. Make sure that they know that *Expelled* will bring this topic to the forefront in peoples conversation whether they have seen the documentary or not. We need to equip believers to look for opportunities to interact intelligently. You may want to make available the Viewers version of *Probes Discovering the Designer* DVD/booklet as a cost effective tool for your people to share with others (redeemingdarwin.com/products).

3. Encourage people to see this controversial documentary:

Expelled does not directly promote a Christian view. In fact, it does not even take the position that Intelligent Design has been shown to be a better theory than Darwinism. This helps establish a non-threatening, neutral starting point to engage in a thoughtful discussion. You are not asking people to watch a Christian film. You are

encouraging them to become informed on an important issue.

Expelled is a documentary. It is not for entertainment. It will require the audience to think about what they are watching. Although it includes some humor (how could Ben Stein keep from adding humor?), it is a very serious documentary. Be sure people understand that they are attending for the purpose of learning not for a night out at the movies.

After you view the movie, you may want to think about how you could use the DVD version when it is available. If you are showing Expelled in a small group or some other venue, you can better focus peoples expectations.

4. Plan to offer small group opportunities to learn more about this controversy and how it ultimately points us to Christ. Once again, the Redeeming Darwin material is an excellent resource for this purpose.

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“In Redeeming Darwin Are You Saying God Used Evolution?”

I read [the description of “Redeeming Darwin”](#) and [an email](#) supposedly explaining what you mean by “redeeming Darwin.” Neither explain exactly what you do in this program; are you

saying that God used evolution? If so, I find this extremely unbiblical. Or are you saying that Darwinism as it now stands (“molecules-to-man” – i.e., macro-evolution) is true but that it can somehow be used to evangelize? Or are you saying that Darwinism as I described above is NOT valid, but that an actual 6-day Creation by God is what IS true?

I apologize that our description is not clearer. We will take another look at it to see what we can do to increase the clarity.

At Probe Ministries we reject the Darwinian evolutionary mechanism proposed for the origin and diversity of life. The [Redeeming Darwin](#) curriculum explains a few of the problems with Darwinism and explores the alternative provided by the relatively new Intelligent Design Movement.

Since Intelligent Design principles are used by both young and old earth creationist perspectives we use scientists in the film from both ICR (John Morris) and Reasons to Believe (Fuz Rana) to explain what they like and don't like about ID.

As a ministry we do not take [a position on the age of the earth](#) question.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD

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There is a God

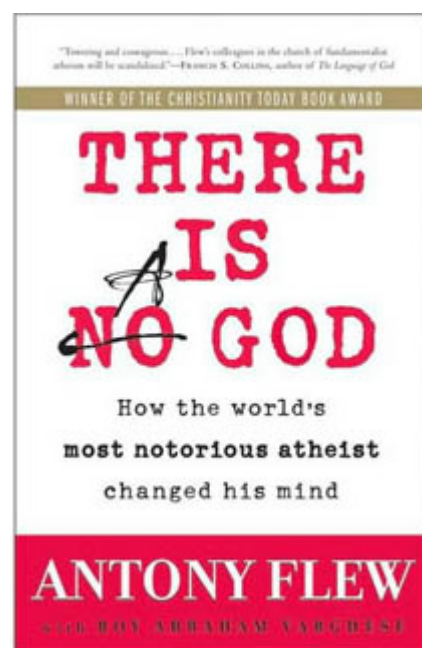
Note: Antony Flew died in April 2010, approximately two years after this article was written. To our knowledge, he never

entered into a saving faith in Jesus Christ. That is a point of great sorrow for us at Probe.

A Much-Maligned Convert

I remember how astonished I was when I first heard the news of his “conversion.” In 2004, longtime British atheist philosopher Antony Flew publicly announced that he now believed in God! I could hardly believe it. Professor Flew had been an atheist for the greater part of his life and, until 2004, his entire academic career. As the “author of over thirty professional philosophical works,” he “helped set the agenda for atheism for half a century.”^{1} But then, in 2004, at the age of eighty-one, he changed his mind!

As one might expect, the reaction to Flew’s announcement varied widely. Theists naturally welcomed the news that one of the most important atheistic philosophers of the past century had come to believe in God. Skeptics and atheists, on the other hand, made little effort to conceal their contempt. Richard Dawkins characterized Flew’s conversion as a kind of apostasy from the atheistic faith and implied that his “old age” likely had something to do with it.^{2} Others suggested that the elderly Flew was trying to hedge his bets, fearful of the negative reception he might have in the afterlife. And Mark Oppenheimer, in an article for *The New York Times*, argued that Flew had been exploited by Christians and that he hadn’t even written the recent book that tells the story of his “conversion.”^{3} That book, *There Is A God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, is the subject of this article.



By his own admission, the eighty-four-year-old Flew suffers

from “nominal aphasia” and has difficulty recalling names. Nevertheless, it’s quite unfair to insinuate that his belief in God is due to something like senility. He may have problems with his short-term memory, but he’s still capable of explaining what he believes and why. In the introduction to his book he responds to the charge that he now believes in God because of what might await him in the afterlife by pointing out that he doesn’t even believe in an afterlife! “I do not think of myself ‘surviving’ death,” he explains.^{4} The charge that Flew didn’t actually write his book is also misleading. While it’s true that he didn’t *physically* type the words, the *content* was based upon his previous writings, as well as personal correspondence and interviews with Mr. Varghese. In other words, the *ideas* in the book accurately represent the views of Professor Flew, even if he didn’t type the text. With that in mind, let’s now take a closer look at some of the arguments and evidence that led “the world’s most notorious atheist” to change his mind about God.

Did Something Come from Nothing?

In a chapter entitled “Did Something Come From Nothing?” Flew addresses issues surrounding the origin of the universe. Is the universe eternal, or did it have a beginning? And if it had a beginning, then how should we account for it?

Flew observes that in his book *The Presumption of Atheism*, which was written while he was still an atheist, he had argued that “we must take the universe itself and its most fundamental laws as themselves ultimate.”^{5} He simply didn’t see any reason to think that the universe pointed to some “transcendent reality” beyond itself.^{6} After all, if the universe has always existed, then there may simply be no point in looking for any explanation why.

However, as the Big Bang model of the origin of the universe became increasingly well-established among contemporary

cosmologists, Flew began to reconsider the matter. That's because the Big Bang theory implies that the universe is not eternal, but that it rather had a beginning. And as Flew observes, "If the universe had a beginning, it became entirely sensible, almost inevitable, to ask what produced this beginning."[{7}](#)

Of course, many scientists and philosophers felt quite uncomfortable about what a universe with a beginning might imply about the existence of God. In order to avoid the absolute beginning of the universe, an event which seems to smack of some sort of supernatural creation, they proposed a variety of models that were consistent with the notion that the universe had existed forever. Unfortunately, all these models essentially suffer from the same problem. When carefully examined, it turns out that they can't avoid the absolute beginning of the universe. Thus, according to Stephen Hawking, "Almost everyone now believes that the universe, and *time itself*, had a beginning at the Big Bang."[{8}](#)

Reflecting upon his initial encounter with the Big Bang theory while he was still an atheist, Flew writes, "it seemed to me the theory made a big difference because it suggested that the universe had a beginning and that the first sentence in Genesis ('In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth') was related to an event in the universe."[{9}](#) He concludes his discussion by noting that "the universe is something that begs an explanation."[{10}](#) He now believes that the best explanation is to be found in a supernatural creative act of God. Interestingly enough, this view finds dramatic confirmation in the exquisite "fine-tuning" of our universe which allows for the existence of intelligent life.

Did the Universe Know We Were Coming?

Flew observes that "the laws of nature seem to have been crafted so as to move the universe toward the emergence and

sustenance of life.”{11} Just how carefully crafted are these laws? According to British physicist Paul Davies, even exceedingly small changes in either the gravitational or electromagnetic force “would have spelled disaster for stars like the sun, thereby precluding the existence of planets.”{12} Needless to say, without planets you and I wouldn’t be here to marvel at how incredibly fine-tuned these constants are. The existence of complex, intelligent life depends on these fundamental constants having been fine-tuned with a precision that virtually defies human comprehension.

So how is the observed fine-tuning to be explained? Flew notes that most scholars opt either for divine design or for what might be called the “multiverse” hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, our universe is just one of many others, “with the difference that ours happened to have the right conditions for life.”{13}

So which of these two theories best explains the amazing fine-tuning of our universe? Flew correctly observes that “there is currently no evidence in support of a multiverse. It remains a speculative idea.”{14} The fact that multiple universes are logically *possible* does absolutely nothing to prove that they *actually* exist. Indeed, the multiverse hypothesis appears to be at odds with the widely recognized principle of Ockham’s razor. This principle says that when we’re confronted with two explanations of the same thing, we “should prefer the one that is simpler, that is, the one that uses the fewest number of entities . . . to explain the thing in question.”{15}

Now clearly in the case before us, the theory of divine design, which posits only *one* entity to explain the observed fine-tuning of our universe, is much simpler than the multiverse hypothesis, which posits a potentially *infinite* number of entities to explain the same thing! The philosopher Richard Swinburne likely had Ockham’s razor in mind when he wrote, “It is crazy to postulate a trillion (causally unconnected) universes to explain the features of one

universe, when postulating one entity (God) will do the job.”[{16}](#)

The observed fine-tuning of our universe is one more reason why Antony Flew now believes there is a God. And as we’ll see next, the mystery of life’s origin is yet another.

How Did Life Go Live?

One of the reasons consistently cited by Flew for changing his mind about the existence of God has to do with the almost insuperable difficulties facing the various naturalistic theories of the origin of life. In particular, Flew observes, there is a fundamental philosophical question that has not been answered, namely, “How can a universe of mindless matter produce beings with intrinsic ends, self-replication capabilities, and ‘coded chemistry’?”[{17}](#)

When considering the origin of life from non-living matter, it’s crucially important to note a fundamental difference between the two. “Living matter possesses an inherent . . . end-centered organization that is nowhere present in the matter that preceded it.”[{18}](#) For example, lifeless rocks do not give evidence of goal-directed behavior, but living creatures do. Among the various goals one might list, living beings seek to preserve and reproduce themselves.

This leads naturally to the second difficulty, namely, providing a purely naturalistic account of the origin of organisms that are able to reproduce themselves. As philosopher David Conway points out, without this ability “it would not have been possible for different species to emerge through random mutation and natural selection.” Since different species can’t emerge from organisms that can’t reproduce themselves, one can’t claim that self-reproduction emerged through the evolutionary process. Conway concludes that such difficulties “provide us with reason for doubting

that it is possible to account for existent life-forms . . . without recourse to design.”[{19}](#)

The final difficulty Flew raises concerns a purely naturalistic origin of “coded chemistry.” Scientists have discovered that the genetic code functions exactly like a language. But as the mathematician David Berlinski asks, “Can the origins of a system of coded chemistry be explained in a way that makes no appeal whatever to the kinds of facts that we otherwise invoke to explain codes and languages?”[{20}](#) In other words, if every other code and language we’re aware of results from intelligence, then why think the genetic code is any different? As physicist Paul Davies muses, “The problem of how meaningful . . . information can emerge spontaneously from a collection of mindless molecules subject to blind and purposeless forces presents a deep conceptual challenge.”[{21}](#)

Ultimately, such challenges became too much for Flew. He concludes his discussion of these difficulties by noting, “The only satisfactory explanation for the origin of such ‘end-directed, self-replicating’ life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind.”[{22}](#)

The Self-Revelation of God in Human History

In a fascinating appendix to his book, Flew has a dialogue with prominent New Testament scholar N.T. Wright about Jesus. Although Flew is not a Christian and continues to be skeptical about the claims for Jesus’ bodily resurrection, he nonetheless asserts that this claim “is more impressive than any by the religious competition.”[{23}](#) But why is this? And what sort of evidence is there for the resurrection of Jesus? This is one of the questions to which N.T. Wright responds in his dialogue with Flew.

Although we can only scratch the surface of this discussion,

Wright makes two points that are especially worth mentioning: the historicity of the empty tomb and the post-mortem appearances of Jesus. But why think these events actually happened as the Gospels claim? Because, says Wright, if the tomb were empty, but there were no appearances, everyone would have concluded that the tomb had been robbed. "They would never have talked about resurrection, if all that had happened was an empty tomb."[\[24\]](#)

On the other hand, suppose the disciples saw appearances of Jesus after His crucifixion. Would this have convinced them of His resurrection if His tomb were not empty? No, says Wright. The disciples knew all about "hallucinations and ghosts and visions. Ancient literature—Jewish and pagan alike—is full of such things."[\[25\]](#) So long as Jesus' body was still in the tomb, the disciples would never have believed, much less publicly proclaimed, that He had been raised from the dead. This would have struck them as self-evidently absurd. For these and other reasons, Wright concludes that the empty tomb and appearances of Jesus are historical facts that need to be reckoned with. The question then becomes, "How does one account for these facts? What is the best explanation?"

Wright concludes that, as a historian, the best explanation is that "Jesus really was raised from the dead," just as the disciples proclaimed. This is clearly a *sufficient* explanation of Jesus' empty tomb and post-mortem appearances. But Wright goes even further. "Having examined all the other possible hypotheses," he writes, "I think it's also a *necessary* explanation."[\[26\]](#)

How does Flew respond to this claim? Asking whether divine revelation in history is really possible, he notes that "you cannot limit the possibilities of omnipotence except to produce the logically impossible. Everything else is open to omnipotence."[\[27\]](#) Flew has indeed come a long way from his former atheist views. For those of us who are Christians, we can pray that he might come further still.

Notes

1. Roy Abraham Varghese, preface to Antony Flew, *There Is A God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), vii.
2. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006), 82; cited in Varghese, preface to *There Is A God*, xviii-xix.
3. Mark Oppenheimer, "The Turning of an Atheist," *The New York Times*, November 4, 2007, <http://tinyurl.com/2lvkaj>.
4. Flew, *There Is A God*, 2.
5. Ibid., 134.
6. Ibid., 135.
7. Ibid., 136.
8. Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, *The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 20; cited in William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 478.
9. Flew, *There Is A God*, 136.
10. Ibid., 145.
11. Ibid., 114.
12. Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 483.
13. Flew, *There Is a God*, 115.
14. Ibid., 119.
15. Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 244.
16. Richard Swinburne, "Design Defended," *Think* (Spring 2004),

- 17; cited in Flew, *There Is A God*, 119.
17. Flew, *There Is A God*, 124.
18. Ibid.
19. David Conway, *The Rediscovery of Wisdom* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 125; cited in Flew, *There Is A God*, 126.
20. David Berlinski, "On the Origins of Life," *Commentary* (February 2006): 30-31; cited in Flew, *There Is A God*, 127.
21. Paul Davies, "The Origin of Life II: How Did It Begin?" tinyurl.com/yq4geu; cited in Flew, *There Is A God*, 129.
22. Flew, *There Is A God*, 132.
23. Ibid., 187.
24. N.T. Wright, "The Self-Revelation of God in Human History: A Dialogue on Jesus with N.T. Wright," in Flew, *There Is A God*, 210.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 212-13.
27. Flew, *There Is A God*, 213.

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A Meaningful World

The Poison of Meaninglessness

We have been drinking a poison that first infects our heads,

then slowly moves to our hearts. It is the poison of meaninglessness. Many people assume that science says the universe is without purpose and everything is a result of random, meaningless events. A recently released book, *A Meaningful World* by Benjamin Wiker and Jonathan Witt,[\[1\]](#) seeks to be the antidote to this poison by looking at science and how certain features of the universe do not fit within the materialistic worldview. This book will be our guide as we consider the question, How does science reveal meaning in the universe? But first, we need to understand the poison before we can discuss its antidote.

Within the scientific community, the assumption of meaninglessness is a result of its members' worldview. Most scientists hold to a materialistic worldview where everything is explained by physical or material causes, which are purposeless, random, natural events. Furthermore, a materialist reduces everything to its basic parts and claims that ultimate meaning lies in these parts. For example, when people say that we are a product of our genes, they are reducing humans to their chemical parts. By this definition, people do not have a soul, and the illusion of human genius or creativity is explained as neurons firing in the brain or animal instinct.

So if that is the poison, what is the antidote? The antidote comes from Christians who break the materialist spell by showing that the world is full of meaning and purpose because it has a Creator. This can be done by looking at scientific evidence for a meaningful world.

A good place to begin is with the idea of genius. Why study genius? Because the most poisonous effect of materialism is the way it skews our self-understanding or our worldview. In a materialistic world without a purpose, there would be no signs of creativity and genius in nature. Before Darwin's time, the evidences of creativity and beautiful design in nature were some of the best arguments against materialism. However, the

theory of evolution through random, natural causes denied the masterful work of design.

First, we will learn how to recognize some common elements found in a work of genius by looking at one of the most well-known geniuses of all time, William Shakespeare. Then, we will see if those same elements show up in nature.

How Do We Know It's Genius? The Example of Shakespeare

A Meaningful World describes four elements that will show up in a work of genius: depth, clarity, harmony, and elegance. If the world is designed by an ingenious designer, then we should see these four elements of genius in nature.

How do we detect genius in nature? Let's take a look at the work of a well-known playwright, William Shakespeare, as our model for describing the elements of genius.

Consider the situation in *Hamlet* where we get the famous and often misused line, "Methinks it is like a weasel."² The surface reading is that Hamlet and Polonius are looking at clouds and Hamlet observes that one looks like a weasel. As we delve deeper and consider the context, we find that Hamlet is actually exposing Polonius as a weasel himself.

The deeper meaning in Shakespeare's work has intrigued academics for years. And it points us to our first character of genius, *depth* or depth of meaning.

However, depth is nothing if it cannot be detected. So here we come to our next element of genius, *clarity*. Shakespeare did not write the scene with Hamlet and Polonius for his own whimsy, but so that the reader would detect the double meaning in Hamlet's weasel comment. Ingenious works have depth and meaning that beg to be discovered. Hence, they have clarity.

The last two elements of genius go hand in hand: *harmony* and *elegance*. Harmony would describe how various parts—or in Shakespeare’s case, how various scenes—are interrelated. In all of Shakespeare’s plays, the characters and scenes are related to each other; no scene is random or contradictory to the rest of the play. They are in harmony with each other.

The last element, elegance, is not about parts but about the unifying whole. When all of the parts have come together and operate harmoniously, then we have a new element, in this case a play. No one scene stands alone, but is within a context of the whole. One cannot understand the line “Methinks it is like a weasel” without setting up the context of the play itself.

So from Shakespeare we have identified four important elements to genius: depth, clarity, harmony, and elegance. Let’s see if we can find these same elements in nature.

Genius in the Periodic Table of Elements

When we turn to chemistry to see if we find a conspiracy of ingenious design, we will find that, just like a cleverly crafted puzzle that was meant to be solved, when you arrange the elements according to weight, the periodic table makes a stunning natural jigsaw puzzle.

Now that scientists have solved the jigsaw puzzle, they find that it gives us amazing information about atomic properties. This insight has allowed us to make everything from pharmaceuticals to cosmetics to weapons to particle accelerators. So is it just coincidence, or does the periodic table display the properties of ingenious design?

Let’s consider how the periodic table works. When you line the main elements up in groups of eight, the periodic table functions much like a Sudoku puzzle. Elements going across a row, or period, are related in their structure, while elements going down a column are related in their properties. Sudoku

puzzles are designed by the puzzle maker with just the right amount of clues for the puzzle to be solved. If you look at the history of chemistry, you will find that the periodic table was first put together because there just happened to be the right amount of clues to give us a reason to be suspicious of design.

Remember those four elements of Shakespeare's work: depth, clarity, harmony, and elegance? It turns out that when we consider the periodic table, these properties across rows and columns display a *depth* of meaning beyond the obvious weight of elements. Secondly, its properties are clear enough for us to discover them, so it has *clarity*. The jigsaw puzzle of the elements arranged in this way display a *harmony* that sings sweetly to chemists' ears; for example it turns out that elements on the right of the table generally combine with elements on the left of the table. Third, the periodic table of elements is *elegant* in how it operates as a functioning whole. We could not know the characteristics of many of the elements without having other elements to compare them to. In this sense, the table reads like a play in which each element is a character whose personality is only really seen in light of the entire cast of characters.

Although a materialist would say that we are nothing but chance chemical reactions, it seems that our chemistry is not so random after all, but that it was designed with us in mind. Next we will find mathematics and physics also have the properties of ingenious design.

Genius in Mathematics and Physics

The worldview of many scientists would have us believe that the universe is meaningless because it is the result of chance random processes. In mathematics, a language of the universe, do we find the handiwork of genius designer?

In the book *A Meaningful World*, the authors emphasized the *clarity* of mathematics because the ability of the human mind to discern mathematical principles is quite remarkable. The universe seems to follow certain mathematical laws: the pattern of the multiplication table, musical scales, and the beauty of symmetry. These mathematical laws, however, are not elusive. Since ancient times man has been able describe truths about nature in terms of numbers, counting, and patterns.

We can easily find the *harmony* and *elegance* in the language of nature by looking at mathematics and physics. Math has harmony because, starting with basic arithmetic, you can build all the way up to complex principles like calculus and trigonometry. The elegance of mathematics is really seen when applied to physical phenomena. After many years of experiments, we have discovered that the complicated idea of gravity can be described by one simple equation. This is natural elegance.

The *depth* of mathematics is more difficult to grasp because we are so accustomed to using math. After Newton's time, mathematics seemed to be the end all, be all, of the universe. This was stretched to the point that some worshipped mathematics over God. But soon mathematicians and scientists found that we did not actually have the whole picture. With Einstein's theory of general relativity and quantum mechanics, mathematics grew as a field and continues to grow and refine.

Although mathematics is an abstract idea, it is the language of the physical world. As we have seen, mathematics and the way it describes physical phenomena displays clarity, depth, harmony, and elegance. Math is the language that God invented. And it is one of the ways that He speaks to us of His existence.

Genius in Biology

Since Darwin's day, biology has been infused with the idea

that everything from bacteria to human beings has sprung from the result of random, purposeless, natural causes. But nature seems to show the fingerprints of the creative genius of our creator, God.

Can we see those signs in biology? *A Meaningful World* describes harmony within biology at length. Let's take a look at the cell.

The cell contains many parts: the mitochondria, the nucleus, and DNA. Each of these parts has its particular job to do. And, in addition, each part has a job that is related to all of the other parts of the cell. Think of the cell like a car engine and mitochondria as the carburetor. A carburetor has a specific job in the engine. You cannot talk about what a carburetor is without explaining how it works within the engine. Its job is related to all of the other parts. This is *harmony*, one of our elements of genius.

But what about elegance, depth, and clarity? It seems that these are also apparent in biology. The *elegance* of the cell is how it functions as one intricate machine, like our car engine. The cell is a biological engine; actually it is a very efficient, self-sustaining, self-replicating engine.

What about depth in biology? Let's go back to the cell. Cells get their energy through metabolism. We used to think that this was a simple path with many useless byproducts. Upon closer inspection, one sees that those byproducts have functions within the cell that are necessary for its survival. As we continue to study the cell, we find more and more *depth* to its function.

Finally, how does biology demonstrate *clarity*? Were we meant to find the handiwork of a designer? Most biologists would agree that biology is the study of things that have the appearance of design. If it appears designed perhaps it was, and perhaps we were meant to discover that. The genius behind

biology is clear enough that God says that we are without excuse.[{3}](#)

Hopefully, you can see that creation is a masterful work of a divine genius. As the book *A Meaningful World* has shown us, nature bears the hallmark of design that has us, its students, in mind.

Notes

1. Benjamin Wiker and Jonathan Witt, *A Meaningful World: How the Arts and Sciences Reveal the Genies of Nature* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006).
2. Hamlet Act 3, Scene 2
3. [Romans 1:19,20](#) (ESV)

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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 *EXPULSED: 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 *EXPULSED* 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 *EXPELLED*

Probe Ministries highly recommends the film *EXPELLED: 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. www.getexpelled.com.
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. tinyurl.com/daeq8 (last accessed 2/12/08).
5. tinyurl.com/yph66u (last accessed 2/12/08).
6. tinyurl.com/2k59lu (last accessed 2/12/08). 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 2/13/08). See also post-darwinist.blogspot.com
8. www.expelledthemovie.com.
9. Also see www.probe.org and www.GetExpelled.com.