



Creation Matters

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Grassroots Report from Kanawha Co., West Virginia

by Karl Priest, M.A.

It is evident from events in this local school district that God is more interested in availability than He is in ability. God has guided local events toward a December showdown of national significance in the creation-evolution battle. Following is a narrative of events that have transpired in the most populous West Virginia county (Kanawha) which is also the location of the state capital.

A discarded memo

In September of 1998, below the faculty mailboxes, I found a discarded memo regarding the upcoming state science curriculum adoption. My heart was quickened that this was the opportunity to carry the fight into the public school arena, but I was not sure what to do. During October I engaged in an email exchange with an assistant editor at the *Charleston Gazette* over what I called the *Gazette's* censorship. As a result I became inspired to present the Buckna/Laidlaw "Origins of Life" policy¹ for the Board's consideration.

In the first week of November I wrote to the county science supervisor and Board president. Neither responded, and in subsequent telephone conversations it became apparent that neither person would support the proposal. However, the president did invite me to present my request at a Board meeting. That month I spoke to our county Board of Education and was told to take the matter to the State Board. I did (by mail) and the buck was passed back to the local Board.

A teacher poll and new resolution

At another meeting, in March of 1999, I presented data taken from a poll which I had sent to all county science teachers (about 180 of them received the mailing). 81% of the respondents indicated that they wanted some type of policy which clarifies what they can do regarding this issue. The matter was referred to the Board's attorney. At this meeting I was surprised to find an ally in Board member Betty Jarvis. At

the June meeting the attorney used the county's policy on "The Teaching of Controversial Issues" and presented (with a word of recommendation) the policy detailed in Table 1.

A motion to approve was made and seconded, after which a Board member (who is also an attorney) said that teachers needed to have input and requested that the vote be delayed. After some discussion the motion was withdrawn and the superintendent assured the Board that the resolution would be placed on the September agenda. (This Board member later revealed her true intentions during a telephone conversation with me.) Prior to the September meeting I received word that the resolution had not been placed on the agenda due to a controversial meeting on consolidation. That controversy did not occur, and the two Board members who were likely to have voted against the resolution were both absent.

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All Forms of Science Designed for Discussion

by
Jonathan Wells,
Ph.D.

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An event of national significance took place Nov. 4 at Washburn University. Scientists, philosophers, lawyers and educators met to discuss one of the most controversial topics in America today -- how state-supported schools should teach Darwinian evolution.

The event was remarkable because — despite a highly charged atmosphere dominated by media misrepresentations and dire warnings from the academic community — opposing views in the controversy were given equal time in an academic forum. This was largely the

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Stall tactics

At the October 6 meeting I spoke at 7:20 pm and requested that the resolution be passed. At 11:00 pm, with only three people (one being me) left in the audience, the Board voted to postpone a decision until the December meeting! One “problem” expressed by a Board member was that the resolution contained a word that is not in the county policy. That word is “evolution.” The main excuse, however, was that only the teacher unions were sent a copy, and the Board now wanted Faculty Senates and Local School Improvement Councils to get a chance to offer input. I stood and told them, to no avail, that this was just a stalling tactic.

Media wars

The *Charleston Daily Mail* printed a reasonably objective news story on October 8. This sent the self-described “militant, atheist, evolutionist” *Gazette* editor into a tizzy, and the *Gazette* printed a stinging editorial, entitled “Evolve,” saying that my efforts were “just one more attempt to turn public schools into churches.” A former *Gazette* assistant editor, who is currently a co-host of a statewide radio talk program, ripped me on the program on the 14th. That morning the *Gazette* did an article with quotes from the ACLU, a Methodist minister, and a school counselor who said, “It scares me.” The

article quoted me in a semi-stupid statement although I was never interviewed. In this article, Betty Jarvis was quoted as making a comment about giving creationism the same treatment as evolution.

Her comments were subsequently used by the Associated Press to draw national attention to this issue as CNN and *USA Today* picked up the story. It is interesting that one small West Virginia paper carried more of the original AP article than most other newspapers. The part omitted in the other papers was that “opinions varied” among 1000 teachers at the West Virginia Science Teachers Association convention.

Letter writing

Interspersed with all this activity were dozens of letters appearing in both papers, the governor stating that “We need to look at all theories to decide the truth,” and well meaning conservatives attaching the issue to their own agendas. Fortunately, in our situation these people have been helpful. I only mention this to point out what others should be aware of. For example, school prayer, posting the Ten Commandments, anti-homosexual efforts, and political groups could potentially divert the debate from the central issue of origins teaching.

I wrote letters to both the NEA (National Education Association) and the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) state presidents, but neither replied. The county teacher association NEA-affiliated president was quoted, by the *Gazette*, as saying

we would open ourselves to national ridicule. She refused to return my phone calls. I spoke to each Board member by telephone. The attorney Board member (mentioned previously) immediately told me she would not support the resolution, no matter what I said, because “creationism is not a scientific theory.” When I told her that creationism is not the issue she said, “It’s in the resolution.” We had a lengthy cordial conversation during which she admitted the Supreme Court has not banned the teaching of creation science.

Demagoguery

On October 20 the *Gazette* ran a long editorial that cited the 1987 Supreme Court decision, and noting that 72 Nobel Prize winners had supported it, and that one of them had said that the creation movement arose from “forces of ignorance and superstition.” The editorial said, “[Board] President John Luoni wisely told [*Gazette* reporter]: ‘When in science class, we need to focus on science, not get off on other tangents.’” It also accused the Governor of being unaware of the Supreme Court decision which “outlawed” creation science. Again, the *Gazette* continued its efforts to persuade the Board to “trounce” the resolution.

Two anti-resolution speakers appeared at an October 21 Board meeting. One was a soft-spoken former parent who was afraid of religion in the schools. He pointed out that he was part of a religious group (unnamed) which had unusual be-

Table 1. Resolution Before the Kanawha County Board of Education

WHEREAS, the Kanawha County Board of Education believes that teachers should be afforded the opportunity to teach subjects and theories which are controversial in nature so long as such subjects and theories are relevant to the program of study and are presented in an appropriate, factual and unbiased manner and in a manner which promotes the understanding of all points of view, all as set forth in Board Policy 110; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Kanawha County Board of Education to make certain that all teachers know and understand that they are not restricted to teaching any one or more subjects and theories, just because certain subjects and theories are contained in the approved textbooks and materials, and other subjects and theories are not so contained in such materials.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE KANAWHA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, that all

teachers are hereby advised that they may teach any and all subjects and theories in their respective subject areas, including, but not limited to, theories for and against the theory of evolution, so long as the following criteria are observed:

- a. such subjects are relevant to state and county learning outcomes;
- b. the subject matter must be appropriate given the age and maturity of the students;
- c. there is adequate time available for satisfactory study of the material;
- d. the subject matter must be presented objectively and impartially; and
- e. any expression of the teacher’s opinion or belief must be identified as being his or her own.

liefs about healing, and that he had never tried to get his views into his sons' classes. The other speaker was a pulpit-pounding Unitarian minister, who happened to be the pastor of the church attended by the *Gazette* editor. He was loaded with legal case citations and went over his allotted speaking time despite being reminded by the Board president that his allotted time had expired.

In the meantime the Board sent the resolution to principals, Faculty Senate presidents, and Local School Improvement Councils. The memo called it a policy change and was attached to the Board policy which banned the teaching of creation science. My pleas for correction and clarification were unheeded. At my school's Senate meeting, the president (to whom I had not said a word on this subject) presented it as a policy change that allows the "teaching of creation science."

The *Gazette* continued its frenzied attacks by publishing a five-column article on November 10 by Dr. Karl Fezer, emeritus professor of biology at Concord College. Fezer, who once had the unfortu-

nate and embittering experience of debating Dr. Duane Gish, has been previously used by the *Gazette* to counter efforts by the local Kanawha Creation Science Group. He is now billed as the "West Virginia liaison for the National Center for Science Education." After assuring readers that he is "aware of a large number of creationists' arguments; all have been shown false by scientists...," Fezer warned that if the Board adopted the policy, it would be exposed to First Amendment lawsuits.

A worthy battle

This has been a battle of long hours, out-of-pocket expenses, and intense criticism. The most difficult part was when a prominent resident (non-parent) of my school community launched a movement to attack me professionally. Her efforts resulted in several anonymous phone calls to my principal (a former science teacher who adamantly opposes my efforts). An influential Jewish parent (who is a university professor of psychology) was contacted by this vigilante lady. I remain in a precarious situation because I am new to

my present school.

Through it all, thanks to prayer, my wife's support, and the counsel of friends (like those on CRSnet), I have persevered. The battle is the Lord's and, no matter the outcome, I pray that others throughout the USA will say, "Here am I Lord, send me."

Reference

1. Buckna, David and Denis Laidlaw. 1996. Should evolution be immune from critical analysis in the science Classroom? *ICR Impact* No. 282. This proposed policy states: "As no theory in science is immune from critical examination and evaluation, and recognizing that evolutionary theory is the only approved theory of origins that can be taught in the [province/state] science curriculum: whenever evolutionary theory is taught, students and teachers are encouraged to discuss the scientific information that supports and questions evolution and its underlying assumptions, in order to promote the development of critical thinking skills. This discussion would include only the scientific evidence/information for and against evolutionary theory, as it seeks to explain the origin of the universe and the diversity of life on our planet."

Karl, who has a Master's degree in education administration, is a junior high math teacher in Kanawha County.

Book Review

Cradle of Life: the Discovery of Earth's Earliest Fossils

(Princeton University Press, 1999; ISBN 0691002304) by *J. William Schopf*.

336 pages, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Margaret Helder, Ph.D.

Within geology there are few fields of study more esoteric than the search for fossils in early Precambrian rock. Indeed as Dr. J. William Schopf shows in his 1999 book *Cradle of Life*, the number of major players in the field since 1960 have been few indeed. This is scarcely surprising, however, when we realize that suitable fossil beds are known only from northwestern Australia and South Africa near the border with Swaziland. Such microbial fossils were unknown until 1953 when economic geologist Stanley A. Tyler noticed strange circular formations in rocks on the shore of Lake Superior near the hamlet of Schreiber, Ontario. He and paleobotanist Dr. Elso S. Barghoorn published a brief report in *Science* in 1954, but after that no new

information appeared until 1964.

Birth of a discipline

Thus, this discipline really dates from the mid 1960's and Schopf (as a graduate student of Barghoorn in those early days) has seen it all. Indeed Schopf's own research has formed a substantial portion of the published works in this field. As far as the general public is concerned, he is best known as the scientist brought in by NASA to provide critical commentary on the supposed traces of life in the "Mars rock," (meteorite ALH84001). Altogether Schopf's book promised to be an interesting one. Thus when I saw it for sale at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, Alberta, I purchased a copy.

The backbone to any book of this sort is the account of events and personalities. Schopf does not disappoint us in this area. He describes some astonishing maneuvers undertaken to ensure that Barghoorn retained priority in this field. For the most part the personalities are depicted in a fun and sympathetic manner. The Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dali even comes into the action!

Stromatolites then

Naturally, stromatolites and their contained microorganisms are the central concern of the book. Stromatolites are made up of many thin layers of rock, laid down in concentric or eccentric patterns. These mounds of layered rock vary from 2-3 cm to more than one meter across.

Typically it is the activities of living microorganisms on the surface which cause mineral salts to precipitate out, thus forming each subsequent rock layer. Schopf provides criteria for identifying artifacts which were once living (p. 95) as well as criteria for establishing the taxonomic identity of the microorganisms. (pp. 96 and 97) These criteria are also relevant in connection with the question of traces of life in the “Mars rock.”

Prior to the listing of his criteria, Schopf also discusses methods for assigning ages to these rocks. Based on these criteria, Schopf found that the Early Archean Apex Basalt from northwestern Australia (dated at 3465 million years) contained several blue green algae (cyanobacteria) species. According to accepted chronology, this is the oldest known community, separated at most by only 400 million years from an origin of life event. As Schopf remarks: “But life as we know it could come into being only after 3900 Ma [million years] ago, and by a scant 400 Ma later it was flourishing and widespread. How did life advance so far so fast?” (p. 167)

Blue green algae

More amazing still is the discovery that blue green algae (cyanobacteria) are so prominent in this early community. As oxygen-producing photosynthesizers, their metabolism is highly complex, much more so than heterotrophs. On this issue Schopf confides: “All lines of evidence point to the conclusion that oxygen-based metabolism — and with it, the modern ecosystem — arose only a few hundred million years after life got started.” (p. 164) Fast initial development of complex cells is surprising enough, but Schopf has more news for us. After this fast start, the stromatolites and their contained organisms *stopped changing*. Indeed blue green algae are the same today as when they were trapped in these rocks! (pp. 201, 211-212, and 214-215). The upshot of all this, according to Schopf, is that evolution proceeded completely differently prior to the appearance of metazoans (many-celled animals). Thus, “the rules of Precambrian evolution differed decisively from those of the Phanerozoic. Evolution evolved!” (p. 271)

Schopf hints that these conclusions may appear dubious. He informs us that “privately, some would prefer I were mis-



Above — Schematic drawing of stromatolites.

Below — Photograph of living stromatolites.

Figures from Cyanobacterial Image Gallery

<http://www-cyanosite.bio.purdue.edu/images/images.html>



taken, since they (and I, too) would prefer a simpler evolution story, one that told us these oldest fossils were capable only of primitive ways of living and that advanced metabolic lifestyles evolved much later.” (p. 98) The fact that the blue green algae are unchanged since a frenetic beginning does not help his conclusions either. Perhaps his basic assumptions need revision. On page 270 he provides a table listing “what is known” and “unsolved problems.” In my opinion “what is known” should be revised to read “assumptions.” For example, the first item under “what is known” reads as follows: “life’s origin followed a simple path.” Clearly this is an assumption.

Stromatolites now

One interesting feature of stromatolites is that there are specimens living today (for example, in Shark Bay on the northwest coast of Australia). Interestingly, they bear an uncanny resemblance to Precambrian specimens. (p. 193) It is generally claimed that stromatolites declined in number as grazing animals became numerous. Indeed, Schopf remarks: “To some organisms, cyanobacteria are a food of choice — snails especially seem to find them tasty.” (p. 195)

It has been my impression as a limnologist (freshwater biologist), however,

that invertebrates avoid filamentous blue greens and that crustaceans inadvertently ingest planktonic blue green (cyanobacterial) colonies, but that these pass through the gut undigested, clumped into fecal pellets. Perhaps some studies of marine invertebrate eating habits and the nutritional value of filamentous blue green algae (*Oscillatoria* and relatives) would shed light on this question.

Too simple?

In the final analysis Schopf terms this book “a greatly simplified overview” (p. 269), and so it is — indeed, unnecessarily so, in my opinion. Schopf’s reading audience is unlikely to require definitions of cells, enzymes, etc. (p. 101 ff.) The author might better have used this space to discuss two interesting topics which he barely mentions. Firstly, he suggests that blue green algae are metabolically more sophisticated than eucaryotic algae. On p. 258 he remarks: “This suggests an explanation for the late Precambrian demise of large-celled microalgae — CO₂ dropped, oxygen rose, and the key enzyme of photosynthesis was switched off. RUBISCO-containing cyanobacteria sailed through unscathed because they pump CO₂ into their cells by mechanisms that microalgae do not have.” Does Schopf mean that blue green algae possess the same extra-sophisticated C₄ photosynthesis of certain flowering plants? More light on this issue would be interesting to many readers, I am sure.

In addition, on p. 322 Schopf refers to *Kakabekia*, a fossil microorganism which, he says, is “not obviously related to microbes living today.” He should certainly defend this statement more fully in view of Barbara Z. Siegel’s discussion of living cultures of *Kakabekia barghoorniana*, named after *Kakabekia umbellata* of Gunflint Formation fame. (Kakabeka Falls at Thunder Bay, Ontario is famous for its beauty and its Precambrian rocks.) Dr. Siegel’s discussion appeared on pp. 143-154 in *Chemical Evolution of the Early Precambrian* (1977, edited by C. Ponnampertuma, Academic Press), a volume to which Schopf also contributed a chapter.

A last point which struck this reader is the author’s seeming antipathy to Christians. He singles out Sir William Dawson

(1820-1899), a well-known Presbyterian, for particularly negative comment and he includes two (in my view) gratuitous examples of early paleontologists (Christians) who were wrong. Their areas of study had nothing to do with stromatolites — but Schopf includes them anyway. In my opinion these examples contribute nothing to this discussion. The analysis of the “Mars rock” data, on the other hand, I did enjoy.

Schopf’s new book, then, demonstrates strengths and weaknesses. However, it was for the most part an enjoyable book. Anyone interested in origin of life studies will certainly want to read it.

Dr. Helder’s doctorate degree is in aquatic mycology / limnology. She is Vice President of the Creation Science Association of Alberta, Canada.

The CRS does not distribute this book.

Testimony from a European Member

I would like to give a small testimony about my CRS membership, and its fruits.

Two years ago I conducted three seminars at a Christian family camp in the UK. I gave the organisers the rights over the tapes made, and have been thrilled to discover that over 800 sets of tapes have been sold.

Each year when I go back to the camp, someone is telling me that his church has adopted the tapes as church teaching, usually because no-one ever thought that the Creation issue was something they should address, or they just never thought about it. The majority of contacts have been from teachers, who have the very unenviable task of confronting this issue, usually unarmed.

Without the *CRS Quarterly* journals and CRSnet, I couldn’t have put together my package of notes. They don’t necessarily have major answers, but they do show that evolution is not a fact, which is just what many Christians need.

Anyway thanks for the resources you share with your European brothers and sisters.

— Graham J. Kettle
Luxembourg

Book Review

Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution
(New York: Touchstone Books, 1998; ISBN 0-684-83493-6) by *Michael J. Behe*. 307 pages.

Reviewed by Dan Schobert

Ever since 1859 when Charles Darwin wrote his *Origin of Species*, there has been a growing desire to move away from “In the Beginning God created,” (Genesis 1:10) toward the idea that everything came about through natural processes. This pressure brought with it the need to deny the idea that anything in nature had been designed. This, because to do so would imply a designer. However this idea is now being challenged.

One of the latest to ask serious questions about the validity of Darwinism is Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. In *Darwin’s Black Box*, Behe brings a sensibility and open-mindedness back to the study of origins. Behe takes his readers into his world of biochemistry. In an easy-to-read fashion he shows that at the basic level of life there is “irreducible complexity” which can only speak of a designer.

Black boxes and design

When Behe uses the term “black box,” he refers to any device that does something, but whose inner workings are mysterious, perhaps in much the same way most of us wonder about the internal things of a computer. Darwin and many others seemed to have viewed life this way. Perhaps some even felt that a living cell was about as complicated as a ping-pong ball. Little did early scientists realize the biochemical machinery at work in something alive.

Behe does not leave his readers in the dark by what he means by design:

...[D]esign is evident when a number of separate, interacting components are ordered in such a way as to accomplish a function beyond the individual components. The greater specificity of the interacting components required to produce the function,

the greater is our confidence in the conclusion of design. (p. 194)

Behe’s readers are exposed to worlds seldom entered by laymen. For example he explains the process of blood clotting and how it works. Afterward he says, “The fact is, *no one on earth has the vaguest idea how the coagulation cascade came to be.*” (p. 97; emphasis by Behe) Then he adds:

Blood coagulation is a paradigm of the staggering complexity that underlies even apparently simple bodily processes. Faced with such complexity beneath even simple phenomena, Darwinian theory falls short. (p. 97)

This is not the only place that Behe, though an evolutionary scientist, takes a shot at evolution theory. He looks at the immune system, and concludes: “The scientific literature has no answers to the

question of the origin of the immune system.” (p. 138) Wherever we turn, he says:

... a gradualistic account of the immune system is blocked by multiple interwoven requirements. As scientists we yearn to understand how this magnificent mechanism came to be, but the complexity of the system dooms all Darwinian explanations to frustration. (p. 139)

Behe, though, is not ready to abandon the idea of evolution entirely. He holds that, once started, life forms changed over time. He has, however, been forced by the evidence seen in his research to conclude that life, at its basic core, speaks of design. But he takes this position with some caution. “The conclusion that something was designed,” he says, “can be made quite independently of knowledge of the designer. ... The inference to design can be held with all the firmness that is possible in this world, without knowing anything about the designer.” (p. 197)

Not based on scientific authority

Like any good scientist, Behe knows that science proceeds on the basis of experimentation. Even when a scientist doesn't repeat a particular experiment, he relies on the work of others and trusts their findings.

However, “Molecular evolution is not based on scientific authority,” he charges, adding:

There is no publication in the scientific literature ... that describes how molecular evolution of any real, complex, biochemical system either did occur or even might have occurred. There are assertions that such evolution occurred, but absolutely none are supported by pertinent experiments or calculations. Since no one knows molecular evolution by direct experience, and since there is no authority on which to base claims of knowledge, ... the assertion of Darwinian molecular evolution is merely bluster. (pp. 185-186)

Behe believes that in the “publish or perish” world of academia, “the theory of Darwinian molecular evolution has [in effect] not published, and so it should perish.” (p. 186)

There are difficult-to-understand portions of this book, especially for the lay reader. Behe recognizes this and steers such persons past the tough, technical parts so that the truly sincere reader can grasp what needs to be understood without having to be trained in biochemistry.

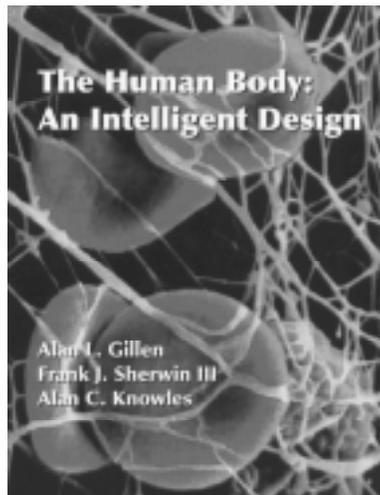
Embracing intelligent design

Behe is not the only scientist today suggesting a theory of intelligent design in nature. It appears to be a growing movement. Much of the reluctance to embrace this idea is, however, “based on philosophical considerations,” something seldom mentioned in today's American classrooms. “Many people, including many well-respected scientists,” says Behe, “just don't want there to be anything beyond nature. In other words, like young-earth creationists, they bring an a priori philosophical commitment to their science that restricts what kinds of explanations they will accept about the physical world.” (p. 243)

It seems, therefore, that what a person believes prior to looking at any evidence will affect how that person views that evidence, regardless of what it actually says. Darwin's Black Box is a must read by anyone interested in life's origin.

Darwin's Black Box is available from CRS Books for \$13 plus \$3 for postage and handling.

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St. Joseph, MO 64508-8263



Now Available from CRS Books

The Human Body: An Intelligent Design

by Alan L. Gillen, Frank J. Sherwin, and Alan C. Knowles
1999. Creation Research Society Books
155 pages (8.5 x 11 format)

Most popular books on the human body, as well as most anatomy and physiology texts, assume an evolutionary origin of man. This book is unusual in that, while it is built around widely accepted physiological themes, it provides a distinct creationist approach to the study of the human body. It challenges the reader to evaluate whether the creation or evolution model makes more sense. For the teacher or serious student of biology, it will help to develop an appreciation of the Creator's design principles and plan for the human body. The various body systems are discussed in the context of these design themes. It teaches about the biological basis for blood clotting, the immune response, recent research on split-brain studies, the physiology of flight, the body's adaptation to high altitudes, and much more. The monograph is recommended for the senior high to adult audience.

\$17.00 plus \$3 postage and handling

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achievement of Washburn University President Jerry Farley, Topeka trial lawyer Pedro Luis Irigonegaray and Washburn University staff member Bob Stoller, all of whom are committed to free speech under the First Amendment. Most people might be surprised to learn that open discussions on this topic are rare in American educational institutions. On Nov. 4, Washburn University showed how it can be done.

Scientific positions

The roundtable discussion was hard-hitting, but civil. One party maintained that evolution is so well-established that it may be called a scientific fact, and that its critics are biblical fundamentalists who want to replace empirical science with religious dogma. Another party maintained that Darwin's theory is really an anti-religious philosophy masquerading as science, and that the evidence is more consistent with the scientific theory of intelligent design.

The defenders of Darwinian evolution argued that their view is the consensus of the scientific community, and claimed that there is no substantial evidence against it. They criticized the Kansas State Board of Education for ignoring the recommendation of its own 27-member committee by adopting science standards that did not include macroevolution — the theory that all living things originated through the Darwinian process of random variations and natural selection. They also maintained that intelligent design is a religious “Trojan horse” that would open the door to all sorts of bizarre beliefs.

The advocates of intelligent design countered that the biological evidence presents serious problems for macroevolution. For example, all the major types of animals appeared at the same time in the fossil record, with no evidence of common ancestry — a pattern inconsistent with Darwin's theory.

They also argued that complex organs that cannot function without all their parts provide evidence for intelligent design.

Speculations about the nature of the designer, however, go beyond the realm of science, and defenders of intelligent design insisted they are not proposing to teach religion in the science classroom.

Finally, Darwin's theory has religious implications. The textbook used to teach evolutionary biology at the University of Kansas claims that “biological phenomena, including those seemingly designed, can be explained by purely material causes, rather than by divine creation.” Since Darwin's theory has as many religious implications as the theory of intelligent design, it is not possible to demarcate the two on the grounds that one is science and the other is religion.

Since Darwin's theory has as many religious implications as the theory of intelligent design, it is not possible to demarcate the two on the grounds that one is science and the other is religion.

First Amendment

Everyone agreed that the First Amendment prohibits the state from establishing one religious viewpoint to the exclusion of others, and that it guarantees freedom of speech.

The Darwinians argued that the “establishment clause” rules out intelligent design as an alternative theory of origins because of its religious implications. But the intelligent design advocates argued that the privileged status of Darwinism in state-supported schools, together with its anti-religious implications, make it an established religion. Furthermore, since both Darwinism and intelligent design have religious implications, the “free speech clause” makes the exclusion of intelligent design a form of unconstitutional “viewpoint discrimination.” The only proper course is to “teach the controversy” by exposing students to both sides.

By the end of the evening, it was clear

that the controversy was not about defending empirical science from biblical fundamentalism. Scientifically, what little evidence was presented challenged Darwinian evolution and favored intelligent design; philosophically, Darwinian evolution was shown to have as many implications for religion as intelligent design; and legally, teaching Darwinism while excluding other views in state-supported schools could not be justified on First Amendment grounds.

A consensus of biologists?

Ignoring these considerations, a panelist who had the last word concluded that Darwinian evolution deserves its privileged status because it is the consensus of biologists. This struck many people in the audience as odd, because I was the only biologist on the panel, and I had argued that the evidence does not support Darwin's theory. (The scientist on the pro-Darwin side was a psychologist.)

I later learned that Washburn University biologists had been invited to participate, but declined because they didn't want to provide a platform for creationism. They thereby reflected a nationwide tendency among Darwinians to demonize their critics rather than deal with the issues.

They also made it clear that a “consensus” exists only because Darwinians refuse to tolerate any dissent.

Unanswered questions

As the Washburn roundtable discussion showed, however, the strategy of sweeping the controversy under the rug is not working. The public clearly saw that there are important unanswered questions here. First, is the biological evidence more consistent with Darwinian evolution or intelligent design? If the latter, is it proper for Darwinians to decide the matter in their favor by redefining “science” to exclude design? Second, does Darwinian evolution have religious implications? If so, are state-supported institutions acting unconstitutionally when they teach Darwinism to the exclusion of other views? These are serious questions for empirical

science and constitutional government. Pretending they do not exist will not make them go away.

The Washburn University roundtable discussion can serve as an example for all American high schools and colleges. Students should be taught the controversy and encouraged to discuss the issues. No dogma, scientific or religious, belongs in a science classroom. Instead of being indoctrinated in Darwinism, as they are now, students should be provided with the resources to think critically about it. The result will be better scientists and better citizens.

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The Intelligent Design Movement: An Ally?

by Ashby L. Camp,
J.D., M.Div.

The intelligent design (ID) movement is an eclectic mix of philosophers, theologians, scientists, miscellaneous academicians, and laymen that is held together by a common belief that science has been blinded by a philosophical commitment to naturalism. The immediate goal of the movement is to legitimize, within the larger culture, debate on the subject of origins. They are challenging the assumption that the story of origins has essentially been solved within a naturalistic framework. If they succeed, it will be nothing short of a cultural revolution.

Cultural paradigm

The method of attack has nothing to do with Scripture (at a formal level), because at this point in our culture science is considered the ultimate path to truth. Its pre-

eminent position can only be shaken by demonstrating that its putative triumph over religion, in explaining origins exclusively in terms of physical processes, was actually a piece of public relations. If the science establishment can be forced to acknowledge the scientific case for intelligent design, theism will become part of the "post-Christian" cultural air. In that philosophical environment, a new set of options will open for people, one of which will be biblical creation.

In my opinion, the cultural elites at present fear the ID movement more than they fear biblical creationists. We (biblical creationists) have been neutralized in the eyes of a significant portion of the population because we have argued in the face of the prevailing cultural philosophy. Our strategy is less suited for overthrowing that philosophy because we rely to some extent on a belief in the supernatural (the inspiration of Scripture), something that is deemed illegitimate from the start. We therefore cannot get a comparable toehold. If ID is successful in changing the culture, the presumption against the supernatural will be eliminated.

A concern

So I definitely see the ID movement as an ally. My concern with the movement is that, in the process of seeking to legitimize its critique of science, it may distance itself so far from recent (i.e., young-earth) creationists that, when the dust settles, we will still be a relatively tarnished option. Those leading the movement at present are firm in their resolve not to allow this to happen. They want to avoid for now the development of any specific origins scenario. As you can imagine, there is not unanimity within the group on this question.

The Future

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For some people the fact that God revealed through Scripture that this is the case is sufficient. For others, it is important to compare this creation model to the available evidence. For many of us in the latter group, we see no reason to abandon a balanced presentation of *all* the evidence, nor to embrace as fellow advocates those who may deny essential doctrines of the faith, or who may pervert and misrepresent the scientific evidence.

A back seat?

I was happy to see such an interest in this subject. Dr. Craig Hazen of Biola University deserves high praise for his work in raising interest in apologetics among the laity. Under his leadership the apologetics program has grown rapidly. Through events like this, many people are becoming acquainted with a wide variety of Christian arguments in defense of the faith.

My only concern is with an apparent willingness to let the Gospel of Christ take a back seat to the origins debate. While I applaud their goal of defeating naturalism and materialism, I am not sure that we should so easily set aside the Gospel as our central message. In fairness to the ID proponents and Dr. Hazen, I do not believe that any of them actually believe that they are diminishing the importance of the Gospel, but rather that they are simply employing a tactic which they think is beneficial to the cause of Christ.

Speaking of Science

"Downloading Darwin"

The myth of artificial evolution has gone too far. Theorists claim they are mimicking natural selection. *Science News* (9/4/99 pp. 156-158) carried a feature story on this.

A Stanford professor "simply specified a set of commands... then let artificial evolution take over." It still sounds to me like they had to use intelligent design to get anything to happen at all. They use terms like "evolvable hardware." Experimenters even suggest that the algorithms could exploit features of chips about which we humans know nothing. This is a clearly fanciful anthropomorphism.

If there's one thing effectively tugging at Darwinists' coattails now, it's the Intelligent Design folks. Their persistent question, "But, where did the information come from?" is still unanswered by the best illusions of the Darwinists. Keep that thought.

— Sam Fox

Intelligent Design: The Future of the Creation/Evolution Debate?

by Bill Donahue

Teleological arguments for the existence of a creator are not new. There are a few men in the origins debate that are urging all those who acknowledge the existence of a creator to postpone the current disputes and unite under the banner of intelligent design (ID). Notable scholars including Dr. William A. Dembski, Dr. J. P. Moreland, Dr. John Mark Reynolds, Dr. Paul Nelson, and law professor Phillip Johnson are among the growing number of these ID advocates.

On December 1, 1999 I attended the latest of the "Intelligent Design Conferences" held at Biola University. Having attended a number of conferences and seminars at Biola on a variety of subjects, I have to say that this was by far the best attended of any in my experience. Not only was Sutherland Hall filled to capacity, but also there were about 1,000 people in the gymnasium watching on a closed circuit broadcast. The speakers were Phillip Johnson, Paul Nelson, J.P. Moreland, and John Mark Reynolds. Craig Hazen, who heads the MA program in apologetics at Biola, hosted the event.

Divide and conquer

Johnson started the discussion by trying to explain the purpose of framing the argument around design. He claims that by starting with the design argument we can establish John 1:1 ("In the beginning was the Word...") as true. While admittedly that doesn't get us to John 1:14 ("And the Word became flesh..."), it is justified as a first step by the ID proponents.

Johnson was clear that this argument isn't meant to get us to a Christ-centered apologetic, except as part of a cumulative case type argument with this being but one small portion of that case. By speaking of an undefined Designer they believe that we can "*unite the divided*" (virtually all monotheists). By posing the question to evolutionists in the format of "Are you interpreting the data through your philosophy or letting the data speak for itself?", he feels that we can "*divide the united*" (all people committed to naturalism and materialism).

It is an interesting proposition which went a long way in explaining, to me, why many OEC's (old-earth creationists) appear to be overlooking some serious doctrinal questions among some of their colleagues, as long as they are design enthusiasts. I'm not sure that we should be locking arms with some design enthusiasts with whom we might have serious doctrinal differences, but I do have a better understanding of the thinking of those who believe that is the correct course of action. I am not claiming that any participant on this panel holds to any problematic doctrine. Rather, I am simply pointing out that they have had no problem endorsing the ministries of others, whose doctrines appear to me to be outside the bounds of orthodoxy, as long as there is a shared belief in a creator. These proponents apparently believe that it is strategically advantageous to unite all design enthusiasts into a common front with which to defeat naturalism and materialism as they relate to the question of our origins.

Data conflict

Nelson, the next speaker, had two main subjects. First, he spoke of the conflict between the data and the evolutionary hypothesis concerning the appearance of new life forms or body parts. His charts were dramatic in that one showed the fairly gradual increase in species predicted by Darwinism and diagrammed by him in his fractal drawing of the tree of life. The next slide showed the actual numbers of species and where they first appear in the fossil record. The contrast couldn't have been clearer. Darwinism just doesn't match the data on this point (as well as many others).

The second major subject in Nelson's presentation concerned cell division and cell specialization. He noted that the information for when and how a cell divides is problematic for evolution theory. Nelson's presentation was quite scientific and very effective, but it did not differ significantly from arguments used by creationists in the past.

J.P. Moreland was the next to speak, and he discussed the problems that the existence of the mind and objective values

pose for a naturalistic explanation. This argument is detailed in his book *Love Your God With All Your Mind*. Basically, Moreland argued that man is demonstrably both material and non-material. Even if we assume momentarily that evolution is true, he asserts that it only offers an explanation for the material and therefore fails to explain the observed phenomenon of man.

The final speaker was John Mark Reynolds. He discussed the need to develop a clear positive apologetic for the creation model rather than simply destroying each successive naturalistic model. He also spoke extensively on the history of the origins debate, urging the audience to study so that they could define and defend the argument from design. While I wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Reynolds' position, I fail to see how focusing on a single aspect of the evidence for creation (teleological evidences) helps that case. It appears to me that making an overall case for creation is better than simply concentrating on a single aspect.

Present all the evidence?

As a proponent of the creation model, I feel free to present *all* the evidence for creation, attempt to rebut the stated objections of the opposition, and present my own objections to the various naturalistic models. Since the presentations by the intelligent design enthusiasts at this conference not only argued for creation but also attacked evolution, I'm not sure what they gained by concentrating only on the design argument.

I still have serious questions about what may be lost. In assembling a larger group of creationists, who are united only in the idea that some greater force or being was an active agent in creation, they may be damaging their greater apologetic. It seems to me that a smaller group, united behind the historical Gospel and dedicated to seeking the Truth, would be more effective. The unity of this group is not connected through the proposition that some intelligence was an active agent in our origins, but rather that the one and only God created everything from nothing.

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Merry Christmas

from the editors of the
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Creation Calendar

Note: Items in "Creation Calendar" are for information only; the listing of an event does not necessarily imply endorsement by the Creation Research Society.

2000

March 4-5

Creation Talks by Dr. Don DeYoung
Bethel Brethren Church, Berne, IN
Contact: Pastor Joseph Nass (219)589-3381

April 28-30

Creation Talks by Dr. Don DeYoung
Grace Brethren Church, Martinsburg, PA
Contact: Pastor Jim Laird (814)793-2513

May 19-20

Creation Research Society Annual Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

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