

Salt & Light

Spring 2006

The Newsletter of the Social Concerns Ministry Team

You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world...

Educating and informing the church body in light of biblical principles

Mt. 5:13-14

Editorial Note:

This is the first of multiple issues of *Salt & Light* on the controversial topic of "intelligent design." At issue in the debate is whether or not science should be allowed to continue to foster, unchallenged, the idea that all of creation is merely the result of blind chance operating through evolution. Some say that claims about where the observable world ultimately comes from is a matter belonging to philosophy and religion and should be rigorously excluded from science. Others say that because so-called "evolutionary science" will inevitably continue to dismiss any intelligence behind the world we observe today, such dismissals need to be countered by serious consideration of the reasons why it makes sense to see intelligence at work in the universe.

The next issue of *Salt & Light* will consider how much of this debate belongs in public school science classrooms. But wherever this debate is engaged, it must indeed be engaged somewhere. To allow this denial of God to go unchallenged is an affront not only to good science, good philosophy, and good religion—but also, more importantly, to the Creator of the Universe.

What is Intelligent Design?

From: Julia Layton, www.howstuffworks.com; Mark Hartwig, www.family.org; and www.discovery.org

Intelligent design (ID) states that the universe and its inhabitants could not have evolved by the "blind chance" set forth in Darwinism. Its arguments are mostly concerned with what it considers to be holes in the theory of evolution, and it claims that these holes scientifically prove the presence of an "intelligent designer" in nature.

Unlike creationism, ID does not state that God is the intelligent designer. It only says that there is clear evidence in nature of intelligent design. The designer in ID could be God, but it could also be an extraterrestrial race or some other supernatural force. Also, ID does not draw its arguments directly from the Christian Bible.

But while it does acknowledge the possibility of slight evolutionary changes within a species, it does not recognize the possibility of one species evolving from another nor the chance of highly complex biological systems resulting from natural selection. ID proponents have stated that they aim to debunk Darwinism as the dominant origin theory and to remove naturalism—the belief that everything around us can be explained by natural causes—from both science and culture.... Although intelligent design is compatible with many "creationist" perspectives,

including scientific creationism, it is a distinct theoretical position. This can be seen by comparing the basic tenets of each view.

Legally, scientific creationism is defined by the following six tenets:

- The universe, energy and life were created from nothing.
 - Mutations and natural selection cannot bring about the development of all living things from a single organism.
 - "Created kinds" of plants and organisms can vary only within fixed limits.
 - Humans and apes have different ancestries.
 - Earth's geology can be explained by catastrophism, primarily a worldwide flood.
- The earth is young—in the range of 10,000 years or so.

Intelligent design, on the other hand, involves two basic assumptions:

- Intelligent causes exist.
- These causes can be empirically detected (by looking for specified complexity)....

The intellectual roots of intelligent design theory are varied. Plato and Aristotle both articulated early versions of design theory, as did virtually all of the founders of modern science. Indeed, most scientists until the latter part of the nineteenth century accepted some form of intelligent design.

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Prior issues of *Salt & Light*: www.wbc.org (Adult Ministries)

Is Evolution Truly a Science?

By: Peter Jaggard, MD

The metaphysical claims of Intelligent Design (ID) are not empirically verifiable. ID is not science in the strict sense. But Evolution, too, is not science in the strict sense. Strict science requires experimental observation, measurement, hypothesis formation, and reproducible experiments to verify hypotheses. Evolution fails to meet these criteria.

By Evolution, I am not referring to microevolution, the scientifically observable processes of genetic variation within a species by natural selection and random mutation. These processes are observable and testable.

What I challenge is macroevolution, the claim that new, more highly complex species with unique genomes, features and reproductive capacity can arise abruptly from lower species. This claim is not amenable to scientific research in the strict sense, especially at the primate level. The evolutionary process demands a time scale of millions of years.

Scientists conduct research in real time. Physicists study matter and energy in real time, observing processes, measuring and validating the laws of physics in as little time as microseconds or

less. Chemists study the properties and reactions of elements and compounds, observing processes, measuring and validating the laws of chemistry in minutes or hours. Biologists observe processes, measuring and validating variations of genotypic and phenotypic expression within populations of a particular species, over days, weeks or years.

race without intentional design is immune from empirical challenge or verification because it is unobservable in real time by humans. Thus macroevolution should not be granted scientific status. It is, like ID, a metanarrative, a grand story to account for the origins of complex species. But it is not science in the strict sense.

It is unfortunate that the palace guard of Darwinian thought cannot acknowledge these truths. No, Intelligent Design is not science in the strict sense. But those of us who are troubled by Evolution's claims to scientific certitude deserve an equal concession

During the last five years, the evolutionary connection between humans and Neanderthals has been severed. As startling as that information may be, astonishing advances in ancient-DNA analysis have provided remarkable insight into Neanderthal genetics, leading to the conclusion that this is indeed the case.

-Dr. Fazale Rana (www.CosmicFingerprints.com)

But where is the laboratory or scientist capable of observing, measuring and validating the process of macroevolution? Such "experiments" would take millions of years. And where are the fossils of intermediate forms supporting the incremental changes between known species? The fossil record is merely a static artifact, not an observable process. The dynamic process which purportedly produced the human

from Darwinists. Until then, we will continue to humbly challenge the conventional wisdom fed to our children by this scantily clad emperor.

There is a more credible alternative: "I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself ... who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense" (Isaiah 44:24-25). †

Straight Talk About Evolution

Adapted From: Phillip E. Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*

An argument is said to "beg the question" if it assumes an answer to the very point that is in dispute. Here's a simple example:

Question: Why should I believe the Bible?

Answer: Because the Bible says so.

Arguments defending Darwinism often beg the question because they assume the point at issue, which is whether the scientific evidence really does support the

theory. Here's a typical example:

Question: What evidence proves that life evolved from nonliving molecules?

Answer: You're only asking that because you have a religious prejudice.

The answer assumes the very point in dispute—namely, that the evidence for the chemical evolution of life is so overwhelming that only a prejudiced person would doubt it.

Question-begging arguments typically assume that science and reason are on the side of Darwinism. Their purpose is to put you in the position of arguing against science and reason. If you let a question-beggar define the argument that way, you will lose before you make your first point. Insist on a level playing field.

Make sure people don't mislead you by using vague terms that can

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Why Such Reaction to Intelligent Design?

From: Gene Edward Veith, World Magazine 1/28/06

The overheated reaction—including purges of scientists who doubt Darwinism, censorship of dissident ideas, and legal action against promulgating Intelligent Design—is a textbook illustration of what the pioneering historian of science Thomas Kuhn describes in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

He shows how scientists develop “paradigms,” or explanatory models, the terms of which they use to organize their findings and interpret their research. For example, for centuries, the Ptolemaic model of the universe, the assumption that the moon, the sun, and the planets revolve around the earth, was adequate to account for nearly all astronomical observations.

But then someone discovered “anomalies,” facts that the model cannot easily explain. Galileo with his telescope observed that some other planets have moons revolving around them as earth has.

Typically, the old-paradigm scientists first defend the model by attacking the anomaly

detectors, often virulently, sometimes using the law and institutional power to silence the critics of the established model. Galileo was tried as a heretic, forced to recant, and put in prison.

Meanwhile, the scientists tinker with the model to try to make it fit the observations. The Ptolemaic system was modified with epicycles and complex new mathematical models. Eventually, though, as more and more

revolution.”

Intelligent Design has found anomalies that just cannot be explained in terms of Darwin’s random natural selection. As Michael Behe has shown, the most basic mechanisms of life—the structures within a cell, the chemistry of blood-clotting, the processing of oxygen—display “irreducible complexity” that could not have evolved randomly. If these already complex and finely tuned structures were not in place, life on any level could not exist.

Apologists for evolution often simply ignore these anomalies. They launch off on “evidence” for Darwinism, such as how bacteria develop strains that are resistant to antibiotics through natural selection. But no one denies that natural selection occurs.

Obviously, the fittest will survive. But Darwinism insists that the natural selection is what creates new species. And the evidence for that happening—for bacteria turning into another life form—is lacking. †

A man says he pulled letters blindly out of a well-shaken bag full of loose letters and, without re-ordering them, they spelled out the first sentence of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Would you believe him? Probably not. But why?

-Dr. William Dembski

anomalies are discovered, the old paradigm is abandoned and a new one that explains the anomalies takes its place—such as the Copernican model that the earth and planets revolve around the sun. This process is what Kuhn describes as a “scientific

Straight Talk About Evolution

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suddenly take on a new meaning. In the creation-evolution debate, the key terms to watch for are science and evolution. Everybody is in favor of science, and everybody also believes in evolution—when that term is defined broadly enough.

But science has more than one definition, and so does evolution. Beware of “bait and switch” tactics, which win you over with a harmless definition, and then change the meaning of the term.

Here’s an example of how you can be deceived: “You believe in dog breeding, don’t you? Well, did you know that dog breeding is

an example of evolution? Now that you know that, and have seen all those breeds of dogs for yourself, you realize that you actually do believe in evolution, don’t you? Good. That’s enough for today. Later on we’ll tell you more about what evolution means.” (It’s going to mean that all living things are the accidental products of a purposeless universe.)

This is not a “straw man” example, by the way. Selective breeding of animals is a process guided by intelligence, and it produces only variations within a species; yet Darwinists

continually cite it as a powerful example of “evolution.”

If somebody asks, “Do you believe in evolution?” don’t say “yes” or “no.” Ask them exactly what they mean by evolution. More than likely, the first definition you get will be so broad that it is indisputable – like, “change over time.” Later on, a much more precise and controversial definition will be substituted without notice.

That one word, evolution, can mean something so tiny it hardly matters, or so big it explains the entire history of the universe. †

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What is Intelligent Design?

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The scientific community largely rejected design in the early twentieth century through the unintelligent process of natural selection acting on random mutations. During the past decade, however, new research and discoveries in such fields as physics, cosmology, biochemistry, genetics, and paleontology have caused a growing number of scientists and science theorists to question neo-Darwinism and propose design as the best explanation for the existence of specified complexity in the natural world. More than 300 scientists have courageously stepped forward and signed onto a growing list of scientists of all disciplines voicing their skepticism over the central tenets of Darwin's theory

of evolution. The full statement signed by the biologists reads: "We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged." Such prominent biologists who have signed the list include evolutionary biologist and

textbook author Dr. Stanley Saithe, quantum chemist Henry Schaefer at the University of Georgia, and Giuseppe Sermonti the Editor of *Rivista di Biologia/Biology Forum*. The list of biologists also includes scientists from Princeton, Cornell, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Ohio State University, Purdue and University of Washington among others. †

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