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Darwin at 200 and the Challenge of Intelligent Design

Paul A. Zimmerman

Charles Darwin was born on February 12, 1809, in Shrewsbury, England, the same day Abraham Lincoln was born. Without a doubt each bicentennial will be observed and receive widespread attention. The July 7, 2008 issue of *Newsweek* already anticipated this celebration.¹ Even after many years, Darwin continues to command interest. Darwin is revered by many today as a "secular saint."² *The Origin of Species* has been called "the greatest scientific book of all time."³ No doubt his praises will be sung loud and long. It will be declared with great emphasis that evolution is a proven fact. The doctrine of creation will be described as simply a religious myth. In fact, both of the foregoing statements are themselves untrue. The purpose of this essay is to speak of Darwin and his theory of evolution with special emphasis on the status of Darwinism today. As we shall see, modern science has challenged Darwinian evolution and supported a concept known as "intelligent design."⁴

Darwin's father was a wealthy physician, and his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, wrote books often regarded as harbingers of his grandson's theory of evolution. In his early days, Darwin gave thought to the study of medicine. His father wanted him to prepare for the ministry. The young Darwin, however, was interested in the study of nature. He collected and studied beetles for years. The turning point in his life came when he was appointed to serve as a naturalist—without pay—on the scientific vessel, the *H. M. S. Beagle*. This ship explored the east and west coasts of South America from November 27, 1831, to October 2, 1836.

¹ Malcolm Jones, "Who Was More Important: Lincoln or Darwin?" *Newsweek*, July 7, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/143742>.

² For example, see Janet Browne, *Darwin's Origin of the Species: A Biography* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 116.

³ See, for example, Edward O. Wilson, introduction to *On the Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin, in *From So Simple a Beginning: Darwin's Four Great Books*, ed. Edward O. Wilson (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 437.

⁴ William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions about Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 147.

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A result of studying animal life during the long voyage was his five-volume work titled *The Zoology of the Voyage of H. M. S. Beagle* (1840-1843). The book that made him famous was *The Origin of Species*, published November 24, 1859. *The Origin of Species* was immensely popular. The theory of organic evolution was not new with Darwin but originated around 700 BC in Ionian Greece. In Darwin's day, several other scientists also published their ideas about evolution. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), an English philosopher, proposed a complete evolutionist theory just prior to Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species*. Spencer was the first to use the phrase "the survival of the fittest."⁵ Darwin's book, however, was the most popular. It reportedly sold out on the day of its publication.

Reaction to Darwin's book was divided. A clergyman labeled Darwin as the most dangerous man in England.⁶ Today things are different. Many theologians accept the theory of evolution without question.⁷ They simply say that evolution was God's method of creating. This surrender is based on the erroneous idea that evolution is a proven scientific fact. They fail to recognize the incompatibility of the naturalistic philosophy, which underlies evolution, with Holy Scripture. First, I shall let Darwin speak for himself; then we shall turn to the status of evolutionary theory today as it faces the challenge of intelligent design.

I. Darwin's Theory and Modern Science

Darwin believed that changed conditions in life produced variability in a given species. He had no idea what produced the changes but apparently believed that something in the environment or way of life produces an advantageous change in a given organism. This would result in the changed organism living and producing better than its previous form. This is the principle of the survival of the fittest. He theorized that as variations accumulated a new variety would be produced, then a new species, finally followed by the transformation of one major type of plant or animal life into another. Thus pure chance replaces the Creator.

⁵ Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864), 1:444.

⁶ This description is found in a letter of Roland Trimen, see Edward Bagnall Poulton, *Charles Darwin and The Origin of Species: Addresses, Etc., in America and England in the Year of the Two Anniversaries* (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), 214; see also, Charles Darwin, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 11, 1863, ed. Frederick Burkhardt and Sydney Smith (New York and Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 102-104, especially 104 n. 11.

⁷ See George L. Murphy, "A Theological Argument for Evolution," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 38 (1986): 19-26.

In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin wrote, "This principle of preservation of the survival of the fittest I have called Natural Selection. It leads to the improvement of each creature in relation of its organic and inorganic conditions of life, and consequently, in most cases what must be regarded as an advance in organization."⁸ All animals descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number. Darwin repeatedly stated that he had no use for a Creator in this process. Yet faced with the problem of the origin of life from non-living material, he did concede, "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one."⁹

Darwin's theory of evolutionary processes required vast periods of time to be effective. He was encouraged by the publication of Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* thirty years before *The Origin of Species* was written.¹⁰ Lyell's theory of great ages for the various rock strata provided Darwin with the time required for his theory. Nonetheless, a basic problem threatened Darwin's theory then and now. His theory postulated a truly enormous number of intermediate forms as change took place; however, these intermediate forms could not be found in the geological record. Darwin recognized the difficulty: "This is, perhaps, the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory. The explanation I believe is in the extreme imperfection of the geological record."¹¹ Today, a century and a half later, the intermediate forms are still missing.

Darwin's theory lacked crucial evidence. Its appeal to a naturalistic, materialistic philosophy of science made it hugely popular. Thomas Woodward, a proponent of Intelligent Design, recently wrote, "Darwin was the key figure in world history who cemented the transition to fully naturalistic science."¹² Woodward explains that natural law, or chance, are the only allowable types of explanations for living forms for the naturalist. A designer, or God, is arbitrarily ruled out, since it moves the question outside science. Richard Dawkins, a noted Oxford Darwinist, asserts, "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."¹³

⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: Modern Library, 1998), 168.

⁹ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 649.

¹⁰ Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1830-1833).

¹¹ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 406.

¹² Thomas Woodward, *Darwin Strikes Back: Defending the Science of Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 187.

¹³ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 6.

Microevolution versus Macroevolution

How then is it possible for biology textbooks to assert that evolution is a proven fact? The answer lies in the proper distinction between what is called microevolution and macroevolution. Taxonomists divide the realm of living organisms into groups. The most comprehensive groups are called phyla; the smallest groups are called species. Between species and phyla, the ascending order is species, genus, family, order, class, sub-phylum, and phylum. There is no dispute over the fact that species may adapt to their environment or even that there may be a change in gene structure brought about by mutations. Thus bacteria may develop a resistance to certain chemicals. This is called microevolution. There is evidence for this, but it remains unproven that all the phyla and sub-classes developed from one original life form. It is also important to note that Genesis refers to God creating various “kinds” of plants and animals. In each case it is recorded that he created them after their *kind*. “Kind” is a translation of the Hebrew noun *מין*, and it may also be translated as “division” or “class.” It is broader than the taxonomic term “species.” In Leviticus 11:13–19, ceremonially unclean birds are listed according to “kinds.” For example, the hawk is referred to as a “kind.” In modern science, however, the hawk is listed as a super-family that contains many species. The Bible does not say that no new species may arise. A great deal of the so-called evidence for evolution falls into this category. Microevolution is not in conflict with the biblical creation account.

The Impact of Modern Biochemistry

Biochemists have discovered that the cells which make up the bodies of living organisms are far from the simple structures that early researchers imagined. For example, consider the fertilized egg in a human embryo. Human life begins with an egg too small for the human eye to see. Yet it contains chemicals which direct the growth of the embryo so that it develops into a complete human being with a complex physical structure and a brain far more complicated than a computer. The principal director in this drama is a chemical commonly known as DNA, which stands for deoxyribonucleic acid. This chemical is among the largest and most complicated of all the biological macromolecules. Some DNA molecules comprise more than 100 billion nucleotides or units. In 1953, James Watson and Francis Crick used x-ray studies to determine that DNA consists of two strands that wrap around each other to produce a double helix. Segments of the DNA are called genes. DNA directs the cell's development and replication. When a part of the chain is damaged, a mutation is produced. This affects the cell, producing death, damage, or change in the organism. This is the agency for change in species. The huge challenge that

faces evolutionists, however, is how such an exquisite mechanism, far more complicated than any computer program, developed by chance from non-living material. It is not reasonable to think that it just happened; rather, it is rational to think that the complexity of nature points to a designer.

William Dembski, a leader in the intelligent design movement, wrote, "According to the theory of intelligent design, the specified complexity exhibited in living forms convincingly demonstrates that blind natural forces could not by themselves have produced these forms but that their emergence also required the contribution of a designing intelligence."¹⁴

II. Intelligent Design's Challenge to Evolution

From the last decades of the twentieth century to the present, intelligent design has gained momentum.¹⁵ It is an origin theory that argues that biological structures of life are too complex to have arisen out of random mutation or natural selection and that this complexity suggests the influence of an intelligent cause. Supporters of intelligent design argue that complex organs such as the eyes or digestive systems could not have evolved piecemeal but require the entire system in order to function.

The modern push for intelligent design as an alternative to evolutionary theory began with the publication of *The Mystery of Life's Origin* in 1984.¹⁶ Among its arguments advanced was the problem of DNA. Since DNA depends upon proteins for its functioning and proteins depend upon DNA and RNA for their own assembly, there exists the ultimate chicken-and-egg question as to which came first. The authors also advanced arguments against a living cell being produced by chance in a prebiotic soup.

¹⁴ Dembski, *The Design Revolution*, 147.

¹⁵ The concept of intelligent design is not new. It has existed in one form or another since the days of the ancient Greek philosophers. The term "intelligent design" as an alternative to blind evolution has been credited to F. C. S. Schiller who used it as early as 1897; see Schiller, "Darwinism and Design," in *Humanism: Philosophical Essays*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912), 128 and 141. *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation*, written on the occasion of the centennial of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, devotes several pages to "Evidence of Design"; see Paul A. Zimmerman, "The Evidence for Creation," in *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation*, ed. Paul A. Zimmerman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 85-88.

¹⁶ Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen, *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1984). The authors were a materials scientist (Walter Bradley), a geochemist (Roger Olsen), and a chemist and historian (Charles Thaxton).

The next year, 1985, Michael Denton, an Australian-New Zealand expert in human molecular genetics, published *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*.¹⁷ He followed this with *Nature's Destiny: How the Laws of Biology Reveal Purpose in the Universe* in 1998.¹⁸ Denton argues against the logic of Richard Dawkins, one of the staunchest defenders of Darwinism today. Dawkins asserts, "Provided we postulate a sufficiently large series of sufficiently finely graded intermediates, we shall be able to derive anything from anything else."¹⁹ Denton called this argument "unrealistic not only because of the functional restraints problem, but also because there are several cases where there are biophysical barriers to particular transformations, and in such cases, no matter how many intermediates we might like to propose, there is simply no gradual route across."²⁰ Denton's argument is directed against Darwinian Theory as it exists today. He also describes the phenomenal complexity of the human brain, which contains one billion nerve cells. Each cell makes between ten thousand and one hundred thousand connections with other cells, which amounts to a total of one quadrillion connections for the whole brain. Such a marvelous mechanism surely points to design. It could not just come into being by chance!

Phillip Johnson, sometimes called the father of intelligent design,²¹ is a retired Berkeley law professor who wrote an analysis of Darwinism called *Darwin on Trial*.²² Johnson's thesis is that, judged from the point of view of logic and the accepted canons of scientific research, Darwinism is severely lacking in confirmatory evidence. He asks if Darwinism itself has become a kind of faith, a pseudoscience held by its devotees in spite of, rather than because of, the evidence. He also points to the fantastic complexity of living organisms. Johnson writes,

The simplest organism capable of independent life, the prokaryote bacterial cell, is a masterpiece of miniaturized complexity which makes a spaceship seem rather low tech. Even if one assumes something much

¹⁷ Michael J. Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1986).

¹⁸ Michael J. Denton, *Nature's Destiny: How the Laws of Biology Reveal Purpose in the Universe* (New York: Free Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Longman Scientific, 1986), 317-318.

²⁰ Denton, *Nature's Destiny*, 331.

²¹ For example, Robert B. Stewart, "Introduction: What Are We Talking About?" in *Intelligent Design: William A. Dembski and Michael Ruse in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 2.

²² Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1991).

simpler than a bacterial cell might suffice to start Darwinist evolution on its way—a DNA or RNA macromolecule, for example—the possibility that such a complex entity could assemble itself by chance is still fantastically unlikely, even if billions of years had been available.²³

The avalanche of books critical of evolution and supportive of intelligent design continued. Jonathan Wells—who has doctorates in molecular biology from the University of California at Berkeley and in theology from Yale—published *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?* in 2000.²⁴ He examines ten classical “proofs” or “icons” of evolution commonly found in biology textbooks. The icons include the 1953 Miller-Urey experiment, which attempted to demonstrate that lightning acting on gases in a primitive atmosphere could have produced the building blocks of living cells, the hypothetical evolutionary tree of life constructed from fossil and molecular evidence, and Archaeopteryx, a fossil bird claimed to be the missing link between reptiles and modern birds. Wells maintains that all these famous icons in one way or another misrepresent the truth. He states, “Some of these icons of evolution present assumptions or hypotheses as though they were observed facts. . . . Others conceal raging controversies among biologists that have far-reaching implications for evolutionary theory. Worst of all, some are directly contrary to well-established scientific evidence.”²⁵ Wells, along with other writers, also makes the following point: “The truth is that a surprising number of biologists quietly doubt or reject some of the grander claims of Darwin’s evolution. But—at least in America—they must keep their mouths shut or risk condemnation, marginalization, and eventual expulsion from the scientific community.”²⁶

One of the most influential proponents of intelligent design theory is Michael Behe, a biochemistry professor at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. His book *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* was published in 1996.²⁷ His second book, *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism*, appeared in 2007.²⁸ Both books mount a devastating attack on Darwinism in its original and modern

²³ Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, 103.

²⁴ Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth? Why Much of What We Teach about Evolution Is Wrong* (Washington, D. C.: Regnery, 2000).

²⁵ Wells, *Icons of Evolution*, 7.

²⁶ Wells, *Icons of Evolution*, 239.

²⁷ Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

²⁸ Michael J. Behe, *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism* (New York: Free Press, 2007).

forms. According to Behe, while it was once believed that the basis of life would be exceedingly simple, progress in understanding the chemistry of life has revealed that biological functions are fantastically complex. This complexity smashes the Darwinian dream of everything having developed from one simple cell by chance. Behe writes,

The simplicity that was once expected to be the foundation of life has proven to be a phantom; instead, systems of horrendous, irreducible complexity inhabit the cell. The resulting realization that life was designed by an intelligence is a shock to us in the twentieth century who have gotten used to thinking of life as the result of simple natural laws.²⁹

In *The Edge of Evolution*, Behe revisits his description of the flagellum that some bacteria use to swim about in the living cell. The tiny device has a propeller and a motor similar in many ways to the outboard motors that propel fishing boats across lakes. Unless all the parts of this complex living organ are there, it will not work. He described this remarkable entity in his first book, showing that chance mutations could never build such a complex device. This thesis was attacked, but in his second book Behe points out that the evolutionists have failed to destroy his logic. The facts point to design, not evolution.

The Cosmos and Intelligent Design

Cosmologists studying the universe are less and less certain about the hypothesis that the world evolved accidentally. For example, Fred Heeren's *Show Me God: What the Message from Space is Telling Us About God* sets forth information about our world and the universe that points strongly to intelligent design.³⁰ Heeren, a science journalist, spent seven years interviewing astronomers, NASA scientists, and astrophysicists. Unlike most intelligent design writers, he explicitly identifies God as the designer. He lists a number of physical constants or laws that, if any one of them was the tiniest bit different, would make this universe unsuitable for life. One of these is the relative strength of nature's four fundamental forces: gravity, electromagnetism, and the strong and weak nuclear forces. If any one of these had a slightly different value, life as we know it could not exist. Another constant is the balance between the expansion force of our universe and the needed gravitational force. There is enough gravity to allow for the formation of galaxies, yet enough expansion force so that the universe does not come crashing back in on itself. Heeren quotes George

²⁹ Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, 252.

³⁰ Fred Heeren, *Show Me God: What the Message from Space is Telling Us about God*, 2nd ed. (Olathe, KS: Day Star Publications, 2004).

Smoot, a member of the COBE satellite team, who described the discovery of cosmic microwave radiation as "the fingerprints from the Maker."³¹

All this cosmic evidence points to the universe as having been fine tuned by a designer to support life. This evidence, however, is a problem for the naturalist who insists everything must happen by itself. To accept the concept of a designer, or God, is contrary to their materialistic philosophy. To escape from the conclusion that the universe is designed, California Institute of Technology physicist Sean Carroll proposed the multiverse hypothesis.³² He suggests that infinite or near-infinite numbers of universes somewhere exist, each with its own set of physical laws. He believes that, given enough tries, one of the universes had to get it right and come up with laws and constants suitable for life. It is hard to take this idea seriously. It is simply an attempt to escape the facts pointing to intelligent design. Because this multiverse hypothesis cannot be falsified by scientific research, it does not qualify as science.

Is Darwinism Indispensable for Science?

The claim is frequently made that Darwinism is the cornerstone of modern experimental biology. Theodosius Dobzhansky wrote that nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution,³³ but this claim has been recently challenged. For example, Phillip Skell, emeritus professor at Pennsylvania State University and a member of the National Academy of Science, stated:

My research with antibiotics during World War II received no guidance from insights provided by Darwinian evolution. Nor did Alexander Fleming's earlier discovery of bacterial inhibition by penicillin. Recently I asked more than 70 eminent researchers if they would have done their work differently if they'd thought Darwin was wrong. They all said no.³⁴

He added, "Modern experimental biology gains its strength from new instruments and methodologies, not from historical biology. . . . For

³¹ Heeren, *Show Me God*, 177.

³² John Johnson Jr., "Mysteries of Time, and the Multiverse," *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jun/28/science/sci-carroll28>.

³³ Theodosius Dobzhansky, "Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution," *The American Biology Teacher* 35 (March 1973): 125-129.

³⁴ Philip S. Skell, "Darwinism: Right, But Beside the Point?" *Philadelphia Daily News*, February 13, 2006. Under the title "Darwinism Is Beside the Point," the article is available on *The Discovery Institute - Center for Science and Culture Web site* (Seattle: The Discovery Institute), <http://www.discovery.org/a/3248> (accessed September 1, 2008).

students aspiring to benefit society through experimental biology, Darwinism is simply beside the point."³⁵

Is Theistic Evolution the Answer?

Many theologians, Protestant and Catholic alike, profess to see no problem with accepting Darwinism. They take for granted the claim that evolution is an established scientific fact and, therefore, think they must adjust their theology in accordance with evolutionary theory. Writing on the subject of theistic (God-directed) evolution, Keith Ward, a professor and ordained minister of the Church of England, writes, "As a theologian I renounce all rights to make any authoritative statements about matters of natural science. . . . I take it that it is an established fact of science that human beings have descended by a process of mutation and adaptation from other and simpler forms of organic life over millions of years."³⁶

In *Where Darwin Meets the Bible*, Larry Witham delineates what accepting evolution means. Evolutionists will accept only a material or natural basis of life and its development. The following propositions must be then accepted: first, there is or has been no supernatural intervention in nature; second, there can be no interruption in the regularity of natural law, that is, no miracles; third, there is no ultimate teleology, that is, design; fourth, there are no preordained "types" in biological life; and, fifth, one must either reject the idea of a God or see no role for him in the origin and development of life.³⁷ Theistic evolutionists usually do not understand these restrictions; they frequently hold that God is only a first cause who got the universe started. Of course, the pure evolutionist rejects even that.

The Roman Catholic Church is divided on the question. It is reported that some Roman Catholics are really Darwinists, others are theistic evolutionists, and still others are creationists. Pope Benedict XVI has long been a critic of materialism and, to the extent that Darwinism is materialism, he is reported to be against it. In 2006, Pope Benedict, echoing his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, stated, "At the origin of the Christian being—and therefore at the origin of our witness as believers—there is no

³⁵ Skell, "Darwinism Is Beside the Point," *The Discovery Institute Web site*.

³⁶ Keith Ward, "Theistic Evolution," in *Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA*, ed. William A. Dembski and Michael Ruse (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 261.

³⁷ Larry A. Witham, *Where Darwin Meets the Bible: Creationists and Evolutionists in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 44.

ethical decision or great idea, but the encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ."³⁸ Later in the same address he said that there is an implication

that the universe itself is structured in an intelligent manner, such that a profound correspondence exists between our subjective reason and the objective reason in nature. It then becomes inevitable to ask oneself if there might not be a single original intelligence that is the common font of them both. . . . The tendency to give irrationality, chance and necessity the primacy is overturned. . . .³⁹

For a Christian, the inspired word of the Holy Scriptures takes precedence over anything else. The late Raymond Surburg wrote,

The Biblical account of man's creation militates against the evolutionary theory which makes of man a primate, an animal, and nothing more. The philosophy of evolution seeks to rob man of his distinctive character by making him nothing more than a highly developed animal. Instead of regarding man as having been created in righteousness and holiness, with the capability of fellowship with God, evolution holds that man's moral nature evolved from the law of the jungle.⁴⁰

Under evolutionary philosophy there is no such thing as original sin, therefore there is no need of a Redeemer. This undercuts the essence of Christology; nothing is left.

Darwinists also insist that their naturalism does not allow for the possibility of miracles. They argue that a miracle is contrary to natural law and, therefore, cannot happen. Angus Menuge, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Concordia University Wisconsin, explains how this position conflicts with the very essence of Christianity: "Both the incarnation and resurrection are miracles that define the very essence of Christianity, and neither of these miracles can be understood without appeal to the supernatural."⁴¹ Concerning the resurrection of Christ, Menuge writes, "This miracle was the Father's attestation that Jesus had lived the perfect life and paid the penalty for all our sins. If it did not happen, then we have

³⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the Participants in the Fourth National Ecclesial Convention [Verona]," October 19, 2006, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20061019_convegno-verona_en.html.

³⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the Participants."

⁴⁰ Raymond F. Surburg, "In the Beginning God Created," in *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation*, ed. Paul A. Zimmerman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 73.

⁴¹ Angus J. L. Menuge, *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 203.

no basis for our salvation since Christ must have failed in his atoning work. As Paul says, 'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins' (1 Cor. 15:17)."⁴²

The extent of the animosity that naturalists bear toward Christianity is illustrated by John Maddox, the editor of *Nature*, who wrote in his journal that "it may not be long before the practice of religion must be regarded as anti-science."⁴³

The Darwinist Inquisition

While academic freedom is supposed to exist in colleges, universities, and science journals, there is evidence that those who in any way favor the concept of intelligent design are discriminated against. Authors with excellent credentials find it difficult and frequently impossible to have their articles accepted for publication in scientific journals. There are several cases of professors in universities being denied tenure once they have criticized Darwinian evolution or favored intelligent design. It has been reported that University of Idaho president Timothy White issued an edict proclaiming that it is now "inappropriate" for anyone to sponsor views that differ from evolution in "any life, earth, and physical science courses or curricula."⁴⁴ The National Center for Science Education sent out a letter urging all fifty state governors to restrict teaching the controversies concerning Darwinian evolution.⁴⁵ The reason generally given for all this persecution of adherents to intelligent design theory is that it is creationism in disguise and thus cannot be regarded as science. This approach used in defending Darwinism indicates clearly its own naturalistic philosophy. Proponents of intelligent design, however, actually base their thesis solely on scientific evidence. They make no attempt to identify the designer but simply point to the evidence of design. While intelligent design is surely compatible with creationism, it is unscientific to refuse to consider it because of this compatibility. Naturalism, the philosophy behind Darwinism, is also a religion.

⁴² Menuge, *Agents Under Fire*, 203.

⁴³ John Maddox, "Defending Science Against Anti-Science," *Nature* 368, no. 6468 (17 March 1994): 184.

⁴⁴ Timothy P. White, "Letter to University of Idaho Faculty, Staff and Student," October 4, 2005, *The University of Idaho Web site* (Moscow, ID: University of Idaho, 2007), <http://www.president.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=85947>.

⁴⁵ "Academic Freedom under Attack in NCSE Letter Seeking to Limit Teaching of Evolution," *The Discovery Institute – Center for Science and Culture Web site* (Seattle: The Discovery Institute), <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2904>.

A district court in Dover, Pennsylvania, heard a case regarding the legality of teaching intelligent design in public school classes. The trial ran from September 26 to October 11, 2005. The presiding judge ruled that the teaching of intelligent design in public school classes violated the First Amendment since he believed that it was not science because it was coupled with religious creationistic concepts. Michael Behe criticized the ruling, stating, "The Court has accepted the most tendentious and shopworn excuses for Darwinism with great charity and impatiently dismissed evidence-based arguments for design."⁴⁶ The 2005 *Kitzmiller vs Dover Area School District* case has not been appealed. It has been observed, however, that this case was based on a faulty description of intelligent design theory. Legal scholars have stated that it is clear from United States Supreme Court precedents that the U.S. Constitution permits both the teaching of evolution as well as the teaching of scientific criticisms of prevailing scientific theories.⁴⁷ It seems likely that the Dover decision will be challenged sometime in the future.

Intelligent Design Theory Makes Progress

There is evidence that intelligent design is gaining support globally. The Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington, a non-profit public policy center that studies various subjects involving science and technology, announced in 2006 that over six hundred doctoral scientists from around the world have signed a statement publicly expressing their skepticism about the contemporary theory of Darwinian evolution. The Discovery Institute does not suggest that school districts or state boards of education require that intelligent design be taught. Rather, it believes that students

⁴⁶ Michael Behe, *Whether Intelligent Design Is Science: A Response to the Court in Kitzmiller vs Dover Area School District* (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Center for Science & Culture, 2006), 11, <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/filesDB-download.php?command=download&id=697>.

⁴⁷ David K. DeWolf and Seth L. Cooper write, "It is important to note that legal scholars and groups with differing views about evolution have conceded the constitutionality of presenting scientific criticisms of evolutionary theory. In 1995 a broad range of legal, religious and non-religious organizations (including the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Anti-Defamation League) signed a statement called 'Religion in the Public Schools: A Joint declaration of Current Law.' The joint statement of over 30 organizations agreed that 'any genuinely scientific evidence for or against any explanation of life may be taught.'" See *Teaching About Evolution in the Public Schools: A Short Summary of the Law* (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Center for Science & Culture, 2006), <http://www.discovery.org/a/2543>.

should have the opportunity to learn of the strengths and weaknesses of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Various school boards across the country have been interested in this concept as a necessary part of academic freedom.

III. Conclusion

Intelligent design per se is not the same as creationism. As previously noted, the theory stands on the basis of scientific evidence; yet it is exactly what a believer in the Genesis account of creation would expect. Alvin Barry, during his presidency of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, issued a pamphlet titled *What About Creation and Evolution* in which he wrote, “More and more scientists are reaching the conclusion that living organisms, even the most simple, show clear evidence of a creator because of their incredible complexity even at the most fundamental levels.”⁴⁸

As Christians, we realize that acceptance of the doctrine of creation is a matter of faith. Hebrews 11:1-3 plainly states, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.” At the same time, there is also the natural revelation of God. In his *Christian Dogmatics*, John Mueller writes that a part of this natural revelation is that there is a “Divine Being who has created this world and still preserves and rules all things.”⁴⁹ It is worth noting that Mueller speaks of the “teleological proof of God which argues from the design and purpose which are everywhere evident in nature.”⁵⁰ Unfortunately, sinful mankind has habitually rejected this natural revelation of God (Rom 1:18-32).⁵¹

A number of Scripture passages speak of this natural revelation of God. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:20, “Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” Paul told the people of Lystra that God “did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains

⁴⁸ A. L. Barry, *What About Creation and Evolution?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/wa_creation-evolution.pdf

⁴⁹ John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics: A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 143.

⁵⁰ Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, 143.

⁵¹ See “Religious Pluralism and Knowledge of the True God: Fraternal Reflection and Discussion,” *CTQ* 66 (2002): 295-305.

and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). Many of the Psalms speak of the magnificent creative acts of God; they speak clearly against Darwinist naturalism. For instance, Psalm 90 looks back to the beginning of creation when it declares, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Ps 90:1-2). The Psalms also take us to the present as they speak of the embryo in its mother's womb: "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them" (Ps 139:16). This sounds a lot like God directing the DNA as the child develops from the fertilized egg. An attitude of humility and reverence as we study nature is mandated by the words that the Lord addressed to Job and us: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know!" (Job 38:4-5).

Finally, a vital aspect of our concern for the biblical teaching of creation is its relationship to Jesus Christ and the teaching of redemption. The testimony of the Scriptures to God's redemptive actions throughout history that climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are grounded in the narrative of God's creation and man's fall found in Genesis 1-3. If we allow the triune God to be disconnected from the origin of the universe and creation to be dismissed, it will ultimately impact our proclamation of Christ as both creator and restorer of creation.