

Intelligent Design: Strengths, Weaknesses, and the Differences

by John D. Morris

William Paley, a predecessor of Darwin, championed the concept of intelligent design. With surprising precision he elevated the intuitive truth that “design demands a designer” to a defensible position. It almost goes without saying that if you discover a functioning watch, with all its interworking parts, each showing purpose and contributing to the purpose of the whole, that it could not be the result of impersonal, unthinking, natural causes. There must be a thinking mind behind the design we observe.

Darwin argued that as it relates to life, the natural process of natural selection could create design. To him, imperceptibly tiny steps, each conferring some slight advantage, could accumulate the high level of design we see in living organisms. Darwin’s naturalistic mindset is continued by Richard Dawkins: “Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.” (*The Blind Watchmaker*, 1987, p. 1.) The author asserts atheism, but it is hard to imagine a more religious book. This religion, his worldview, is naturalism.

Everyone sees the design. It is impossible to miss. No one could claim that life’s processes and structures are

completely random. The difference lies in the stories told about the origin of the design. Naturalists ascribe the design to the work of random mutation acted upon by natural selection. Biblical creationists insist the design is purposeful and due to the intelligent actions of the Creator God of the Bible.

For decades, creationists have taught the concept intelligent design, ascribing the observed design to God. But recently a new player has entered the fray, the Intelligent Design Movement or IDM. Housed primarily at the Discovery Institute, a secular think tank in Seattle, its advocates espouse two main planks. First, that the exquisite design we see all around us, especially in living systems, is far beyond the reach of random, natural processes, and second, that a strict reliance on natural causes can be equated with the religion of naturalism.

The strengths of the IDM are several. It has drawn a large and capable cadre of scholars of many persuasions. Major contributors include agnostics, New Agers, Christians, and evolutionists. It is strictly secular in its writings, lectures, and policy. The two principles above are the glue that binds proponents together. All desire to see



science and education freed from the religious shackles of naturalism.

With such a secular stance, the IDM has made inroads into school boards and legislatures. Often criticized as being creationist in disguise, the IDM scrupulously refuses to speculate on the identity of the designer. It is what it claims to be, strictly secular, seriously promoting better science and education.

The weaknesses of the IDM in some ways are similar. Its big umbrella sometimes offends supporters who take a more firm and definitive position. Establishment critics, who wrongly charge advocates with a hidden agenda, “sneaking creationism in through the back door,” have been able to intimidate school boards and judges, and to date virtually all of ID initiated lawsuits and lobbying efforts have failed. Temporary gains have all been lost.

Another weakness follows from pushing Biblical teaching away. The Bible has answers to life’s big questions. Likewise strict naturalism has consistent answers, although quite different. ID has no answers at all which satisfy. Furthermore, the Bible insists that God receive glory for His majestic handiwork, and it is not likely that He will bless or grant lasting success to any effort which chooses to omit Him from their thinking.

The differences between Biblical creationism and the IDM should become clear. As an unashamedly Christian/creationist organization, ICR is concerned with the reputation of our God and desires to point all men back to Him. We are not in this work merely to do good science, although this is of great importance to us. We care that students and society are brainwashed away from a relationship with their Creator/Savior. While all creationists necessarily believe in intelligent design, not all ID proponents believe in God. ID is strictly a non-Christian movement, and while ICR values and supports their work, we cannot join them. 



A Look Back at the Scopes Trial

by John D. Morris

The 1925 Scopes Trial remains a pivotal point in American history. It behooves us to look back and learn from it.

It all began with the growing acceptance of Darwinism in the early 1900s. It had taken decades for evolution to affect the sciences. Many had readily welcomed secular evolution’s religious and moral implications, and a great push was on to teach it in the schools. In response, several states including Tennessee passed laws forbidding public schools from teaching that man had an animal ancestry. Leaders in the newly formed ACLU were among those who embraced a fully secularized worldview based on Darwinian naturalism and desired to change this law. The Scopes Trial was its first case.

As with many of the ACLU’s groundbreaking lawsuits, an effective strategy was utilized. Ads were placed in several Tennessee newspapers seeking a teacher who was willing to test the law. Businessmen in the small town of Dayton, Tennessee, saw an opportunity to bring attention to their community, and recruited John Scopes. Scopes was not a biology teacher, but did



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substitute from time to time. He never recalled actually mentioning evolution, but after his “arrest” the lawyers arranged for him to speak privately of evolution to one student, to make sure he broke the law.

Sure enough, Dayton received excessive publicity, with news reporters and radio coverage from around the world. Prominent scientists gathered to testify for evolution, but the judge limited the testimony to the bare facts of the case. Did Scopes break the law? Thus, the bulk of the push for evolution, barred from the courtroom, was aired in the international media, which exhibited a great disdain for Christianity and a stinging ridicule of Christians.

In the end, after several twists, turns, and dirty tricks, John Scopes was convicted—a ruling later overturned on a technicality. The ACLU welcomed the conviction, intending to appeal it to the Supreme Court where they expected a great victory for evolution. When the case was overturned, no appeal was possible.

What did occur was a debilitating defeat for Christians in the public eye. Believers retreated into their churches, and abandoned the schools, media, and influence in the public arena to the secularists. We still suffer from this retreat today, as we find Christian principles systematically excluded. America, whose citizenry overwhelmingly identifies with Christianity, has become fully secularized. The Scopes Trial was the turning point.

Many Christian activists, legislators, and educators desire to reverse this ruling, and many have been the misguided attempts. Lacking proper strategy, they *all* have failed. Conversely, ICR has never advocated a legislative or legal solution to this problem, and recommends a long-range educational approach instead.

But it should not be assumed that ICR doesn’t care. I have long felt that a helpful lawsuit is possible, and without being explicit, let me say that I would welcome an opportunity to sit down with legal

scholars and plan out a winning strategy, just like the ACLU did for the Scopes Trial, and just as they do today.

Truth is on our side, as is the scientific evidence, but the majority opinion of influence peddlers and legal precedent stand against us. Nevertheless, I am convinced a careful plan, with realistic goals, can begin to mend the damage inflicted at the Scopes Trial. I stand ready to participate in a careful and prayerful effort.

There are several books available through ICR’s Customer Service at 800/628-7640 which deal with this issue. 

A Second Look at Fundamentalism, the Scopes Trial, and Inherit the Wind by N. M. Aksionczyk

Scopes: Creation on Trial by R. M. Cornelius and J. Morris
History of Modern Creationism by H. M. Morris

The Long War Against God by H. M. Morris



The “Battle for the Beginning” Enlists Rocky Mountain Christians

Taking the initiative to elevate the message of Biblical creationism within the Christian community, ICR inaugurated its new “Back to Genesis” conference in Colorado Springs on April 28, 2007. Spearheading this effort to provide a non-technical presentation of both scientific and Biblical evidence were ICR board members Col. Chas Morse and Dr. David Wismer, both of Colorado Springs. Speakers included Drs. Humphreys, Sanford, Nason, and Morris III, with special guests Dr. David Noebel and Astronaut Jeff Williams. Over 800 registered for the all-day event hosted by Pastor Larry Mahan and the Rocky Mountain Calvary Chapel.

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A History of Brief Time

by Larry Vardiman, Ph.D.

Some 20 years ago I made the statement, *There are two major problems in physical science that young-earth creationists need to address which are central to the conflict between evolution and creation—(1) radio-isotopes and the age of the earth, and (2) the size of the cosmos and the time it takes for light to arrive on earth from distant stars.* Within the past few years both of these questions have begun to be resolved in favor of the young-earth position.

The RATE project reported in 2005 that rapid helium diffusion rates in granitic zircons, the formation of polonium radiohalos in granitic biotite, and the presence of radiocarbon in coal and diamonds have provided evidence for accelerated nuclear decay in earth's past which leads to an estimate of thousands, not billions of years for the age of the earth.

Recently, Dr. Russell Humphreys, as part of the ICR COSMOS program, reported that he has successfully developed a new solution to Einstein's equation of general relativity which lays a foundation for a new creationist cosmology. His solution is based on using boundary conditions which place earth at the center of *the heavens* rather than at some insignificant position in a universe with no center or outer boundary. He had reported earlier in *Starlight and Time* that time would be slowed dramatically near the center of such a cosmos because of the gravitational effects of the mass of stars surrounding earth. In other words, a day on earth would be equivalent to millions or billions of years at the stars far from earth, resulting in sufficient time for their light to reach earth in only thousands of years of earth time.

Dr. Humphreys has now formulated his model into predictive equations which

can be used to explain other observations and validate his solution, such as the red shifts of stars, the rotation of galaxies, and the "Pioneer Anomaly." He hopes soon to be able to explain the rapid formation of stars during the fourth day of creation, the source of cosmic background radiation, how we can see post-Fall events like exploding stars and colliding galaxies, and why all galaxies look the same regardless of distance. He presented these early results at a recent meeting with other creationist cosmologists, who are also making good progress toward solving these problems in similar ways. COSMOS is reclaiming the heavens, so that Christians can once again proclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). It appears that we are well on the way to solving both of the big problems in the physical sciences I identified 20 years ago. As Dr. John Morris often says, "It's a wonderful time to be a creationist." If you wish to donate funds to support the theoretical studies in this exciting program, please contact me at LVardiman@icr.org or 360/631-5034. 

ICR "Brain Trust" Gathers in Dallas

The researchers and science staff of ICR, along with board members and representatives from ICR communications and internet ministries, gathered at the Morris Center in Dallas on May 7–8, 2007. Topics discussed included new initiatives that will lead ICR research activities in the next decade, as well as core scientific and Biblical platforms that currently define ICR's message of Biblical creationism.

Dr. Henry Morris III encouraged these leaders to prayerfully hone their scientific "teaching points" that ICR can communicate both to the academic world and, as Dr. John Morris emphasized, the Christian community. Texas-sized steaks rounded out the meetings—cowboy boots optional. 

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Vardiman Speaks in Idaho

Dr. Larry Vardiman presented the results of the RATE project in three presentations



to the students at Classical Christian Academy in Post Falls, Idaho, on April 25. About three hundred students at the private Christian school attended two assemblies where Dr. Vardiman passed out granite rock samples for the students to study while he discussed evidence for a young earth. He talked about helium escaping from zircons in the granite—like helium leaking from a balloon, radiohalos formed from high-energy alpha particles damaging the rock around uranium and polonium centers, and the presence of measurable quantities of radiocarbon in coal and diamonds. These evidences demonstrate that the earth is thousands of years old, not billions as most textbooks teach.

The students were very inquisitive and asked a multitude of questions. Two of Dr. Vardiman's grandsons, Spencer and Carter, attend this school where Dirk Darrow is the principal.

Seattle, Washington

The fifth Annual Worldview Apologetics Conference was sponsored by Crossroads Bible Church and Antioch Bible Church near Seattle, on April 21–22, with ICR President Dr. John Morris as one of the main speakers.

The seminar was born from the burden of Dr. Karl Payne and Jason Turner to see Christians able to defend their

faith in the notoriously liberal Seattle area. The several speakers addressed numerous issues in creationism, Christian thinking, and ministry. Particular attention was paid to the problem of pain, and the Christian response. Nearly 1000 people attended.

Dr. Morris's four lectures at the seminar demonstrated how scientific discovery and evidence support Biblical doctrine, a good complement to the more philosophical nature of the other lectures. His two lectures on Sunday morning at Antioch Bible Church (Pastor Dutch Hutcherson), encouraged the believers.

Numerous attendees reported having heard ICR lectures previously, particularly with Drs. Henry Morris and Duane Gish, and how their material had filled a great need.

“Thousands or Billions?”

Conference in Bozeman, Montana

Grace Bible Church of Bozeman, Montana, sponsored a weekend conference entitled, “Thousands or Billions?” from April 20–22 including presentations on Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth, The Origin of Man, The Geologic Column and the Fossil Record, Starlight and Time, Dinosaurs and Dingbats, The Collapse of Natural Selection, and The Authority of God's Word. Drs. Henry Morris III, Duane Gish, John Baumgardner, Russ Humphreys, Andrew Snelling, and Larry Vardiman of ICR and Pastor Bryan Hughes of Grace Bible Church made almost two dozen presentations during the weekend.

Over 1000 people attended the Friday night sessions and about 800 the all-day Saturday sessions. Presentations were made at Heritage Christian School and Grace Bible Church's Pastor's Conference, in addition to the general meetings. Participants came from throughout the region, including as far away as Alberta, Canada. About 200 students, faculty, and

others from the community also attended two highly interactive and well-attended lecture and question and answer periods at Montana State University. Pastor Hughes's Sunday morning expository sermons on the first chapter of Genesis, "God's Creation Account," was a highlight of the conference. Conference organizers Robert Armstrong, Mike Oard, Esther Fishbaugh, Mark Amunrud, and Paul Trey are to be congratulated on an outstanding success in spreading the creation message to the northern Rocky Mountain region. 📻



This month on "Science, Scripture, & Salvation":

Weekend of: **Title/Topic:**

July 7 Biting Bugs
 God created all bugs including the ones that put a damper on summer-time activities. But if God made everything "very good" in the beginning, how did they become so bothersome? Listen in!

July 14 One Giant Leap
 July 20, 1969, will live on in history as one of man's greatest achievements—the moon landing! Why was this event important, and what did we learn from it? Join us for this exciting program!

July 21 The Lingering Effects of the Scopes Trial
 In July 1925, the world gathered in a small Tennessee town for the unfolding of a legal battle that would have far-reaching impact. To this day, there are many misconceptions about what really happened at the Scopes Trial. To hear more, please tune in!

July 28 The Creation Zoo
 A favorite past-time of many people is visiting some of God's wild creatures in the safe environment of the local zoo. Although zoos tend to support evolutionary philosophy, they can be valuable tools in teaching our children about creation. To learn more, join us!

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**Do you have cousins?
 Would you like to participate
 in the ICR GENE Project?**

The ICR GENE Team is studying variation in the human mitochondrial genome. We are currently seeking people and their maternally related cousins to participate in this study. If you have a cousin or two and would like to help by donating a few of your cheek cells, please call ICR (619/448-0900) and ask for John Rajca or Dr. Dan Criswell. Mitochondrial DNA is obtained as volunteers swab their inner cheeks. We can extract the DNA from the collected cheek cells. The collection procedure only takes a minute and is totally painless. We will provide the materials you need and instructions on how to collect the cells and mail them back to ICR. All the ICR "family" should partner with us in this research to further understand God's creation.



Ministry Money

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (I Timothy 6:17).

The principles of money management routinely place ministry leaders in certain tensions regarding wise stewardship. Some insist on debt-free ministry operations. Others see prudent financing for capital projects as wise financial leveraging. Many believe that accumulation of “rainy day” savings is vital, while others suggest that spiritual leaders simply trust the Lord to supply as needed.

Ministry advisors, such as board members, are often perplexed about realizing ministry growth. Wait until all the money is “in” before acting, or “trust” the Lord and move forward? Measure expansion of the ministry by business investment principles or look for “open doors” as God’s green light? Here are some Biblical admonitions to help us all make wise financial decisions.

The Lord is the owner and provider of all true riches. “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18). “For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof” (I Corinthians 10:26).

Hoarding wealth is not wise. “God said unto him, Thou fool. . . . So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:16–21).

God promises to supply as needed. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22).

We are expected to use God’s wealth for Kingdom gain. “Then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading” (Luke 19:15).

Be assured that ICR rigorously measures our expenditures and our methods with the “tension” of human prudence and godly trust. Thankfully, the Lord has favored us with wise counselors to assist in managing the resources you have shared with this ministry. We are grateful for His supply through you.



Dr. Henry Morris III, ICR Chief Executive Officer

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