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Making a TOBD Easy: A Conversation That Says It All

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Project Artifact: The Spear

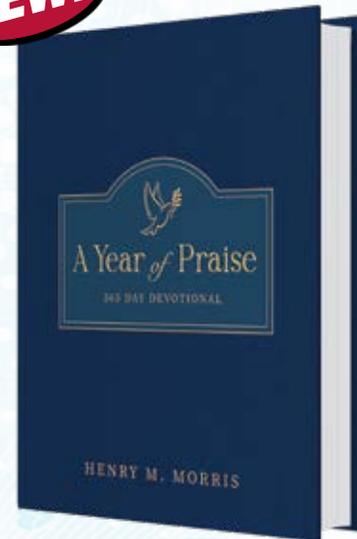
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**Written by Trey Bowling
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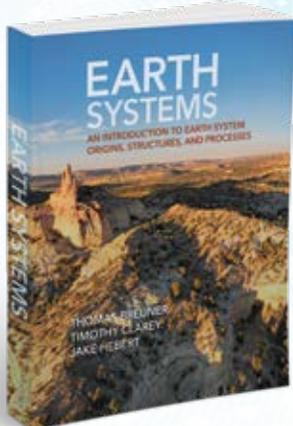
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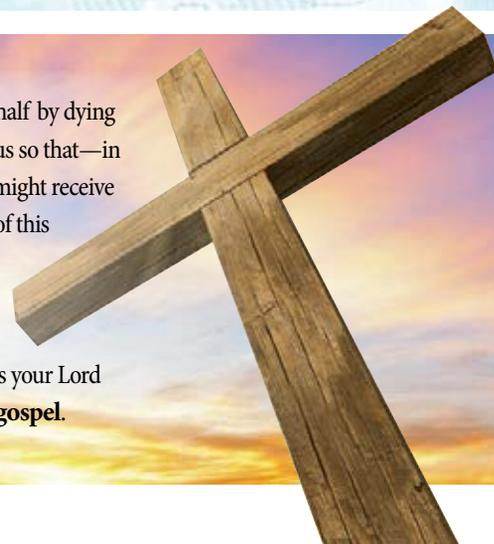
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Published by

INSTITUTE FOR CREATION RESEARCH

P. O. Box 59029

Dallas, TX 75229

214.615.8300

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DESIGNER

Dennis Davidson

[Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

(Colossians 1:15-20)

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Institute for Creation Research

ISSN (print): 1094-8562

ISSN (online): 2833-2806

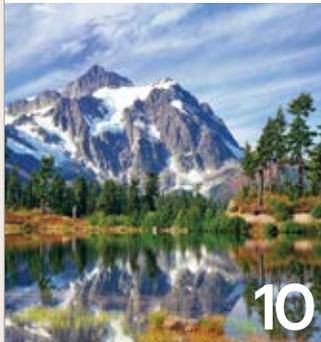
All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.



Front cover: Shuttle lift off
Image credit: iStock | 3DSculptor



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Image credit: NASA.gov

Making a TOBD Easy

A Conversation That Says It All

R A N D Y J . G U L I U Z Z A , P . E . , M . D .

“ get what you’re saying! And I would love to *think about* biology from a design perspective, but I don’t even know where to begin,” my friend David said while walking to a breakout lecture at an intelligent design conference. Moments before I had emphasized that *thinking about* creatures from an engineering perspective was different from simply recognizing specified or irreducible complexity or, for that matter, any other complicated feature. He had abruptly stopped, and I sensed his desire for immediate clarity.

“Well, it’s not hard to do,” I encouraged him in hopes of still making it to the lecture, “and your appreciation of biology will skyrocket. But the hard part is letting go of nearly all we’ve previously been taught. The prevailing framework was purposefully set up to get people to *think about* the way creatures *operate* as if they were never engineered. We’ll know that our thinking about creatures has changed when how we talk about their operation is exactly the way we talk about highly engineered, man-made things.”

Spontaneous conversations can turn into delightful surprises. A real gem happened when my friend David and I began discussing what it really means to see biology from an engineering perspective. I planned on getting straight to the point. But our meandering conversation and bunny trails ultimately made it easier to see the distinctiveness of engineered biology, consequential key theological issues, and why a theory of biological design (TOBD) matters. You’re welcome to eaves drop.

We’re Thinking More Like Darwinists than Engineers

“Wait,” David cut in, “nearly everyone here believes that organisms were intelligently designed.”

“That’s true,” I said, “but listen to how we talk. Our vocabulary, which *reflects the concepts* guiding our thinking, is essentially identical to that of the evolutionist. We’re still thinking from the nonengineering perspective. For example, take the plenary speaker who just alluded to adaptation. In essence he said that when a population of organisms develops ‘random mutations’ that get fractioned out over time by deadly struggles to survive, then the ‘fittest’ are the ones that have ‘selectable traits.’ How’s that different from Richard Dawkins’ description?”

“Since we’ve all been conditioned to think about adaptation within the Darwinian mechanism, and we’re reassured that it’s compatible with design, we fail to think deeply about its basic assertions. But, let me ask, does the Darwinian process that we just heard sound in any way like an engineered way for creatures to adapt? Engineers



don't talk like that—which indicates they think differently. How we *should* think about creatures' operation is the same way we think about a space shuttle's operation as 'engineered'—a word that helps align our thinking closer to reality than 'designed.'"

"Hold up a second," he said. I could see his tentative look. "How does describing organisms as engineered make a difference in our thinking any more than saying they're designed?"

I replied, "Well, anyone here can take the back of a napkin and sketch out a design for something, yet the key question that *engineers* need to ask is . . ." David stepped in and supplied the right question, "will that design actually *work*?"

Darwin Hijacked the Iterative Engineering Process

"Yes! And more importantly," I added, "engineers apply physics and chemistry-based *tests* to determine if the materials and design(s) will work while simultaneously *improving* it. Engineers enhance designs through an iterative process. By testing them against specific challenges and selecting the best solutions (i.e., test-select-repeat), they refine the design's characteristics for, let's say, efficiency, optimization, or robustness. Creatures demonstrate these highly refined characteristics in abundance. How creatures came to have these characteristics," I stressed, "is perhaps the biggest question in biology because they intuitively look incredibly engineered. Now we can see why understanding this *iterative engineering* process ties so many things together."

"I'm not exactly seeing that link between 'doing engineering' and the development of either evolutionary theory or a theory of engineered adaptability," David said.

"You're in big company," I replied. "It's likely most evolutionists don't understand Darwin's cleverness in developing his theory. For millennia most people intuitively thought that the rational reason creatures look exceptionally engineered is that they were created by the supernatural power and genius of a divine engineer. So, how could someone—without looking foolish—claim that creatures were really produced by a random, natural, mindless process? No one throughout history has ever seen something create itself—especially having multiple parts working together for a purpose. How did Darwin change the way people think about creatures so radically that sceptics like Dawkins could claim to be 'intellectually fulfilled atheists?'"

David moved his books to his other arm and waited through my pause. I sensed that the Lord wanted us to stay on topic and skip the breakout session. I said, "Darwin ingeniously and quietly imported the *iterative engineering process* as nature's mechanism to produce incredible biological complexity."

"An engineer's path to improved design," I went on, "is to repeatedly test potential solutions and select the best one until the design is refined to where he wants it. *Analogously*, Darwin's process begins with organisms producing various traits (i.e., potential solutions to problems). These undergo tests in deadly struggles imposed by so-called selective pressures. Survivors are said to possess select-

able traits, and the best of those are 'selected for' by nature—which was personified to act like a thinking human engineer with selective capability. The process repeats *ad infinitum*. Once these corresponding steps are pointed out, they're obvious to see despite evolutionists concealing each step with their just-so stories, selective jargon, and personifications."



Do Evolutionists Really Say That?

Three examples of selectionist theory imitating the iterative engineering process and personifying nature to explain the origin of advanced biological complexity:

1. Adaptable genomes

"We humans are living, breathing computational systems that have been *evolving in complexity* and power for millions of years. . . . These structures aren't random. Over millions of years, *nature appears to have optimized* the genome's shape to make it more efficient at storing and accessing information."¹ (emphasis added)

2. Intracellular machinery

"Inside every cell in the body, molecules known as proteins act like tiny machines, carrying out biological functions—their *efficiency honed by eons of natural selection*."² (emphasis added)

3. Feet

"Adaptive changes *groomed by natural selection* might indeed *sculpt* a fin into a primitive foot."³ (emphasis added)

Our conversation had so far covered how far creationists and design advocates currently are from thinking about biology from an engineering perspective. David better understood how the appropriation of the iterative engineering process of test-select-repeat into selectionism is a ruse that misleads the general population into thinking selection can explain the origin of biological complexity. So, discussing theology was bound to come.

Engineered Biology: Better for Theology and Science

"It's clear," David said forcefully, "that the theological implications are huge."

Looking to sum up with some reasons *why* thinking about crea-

tures from an engineering perspective is vital, I said, “Exactly. Darwin’s school of thinking about adaptation—‘random-mutation, natural selection’—shrewdly has an anti-designer element that’s so unintelligibly random, clunky, death-driven, and cruel that if God used it, then He isn’t worth our respect. That anti-designer element is coupled with the *pro*-design element that intentionally mimics the iterative engineering process to build astounding complexity. But instead of an engineer, *nature* is the *active* force. Nature supposedly works on relatively *passive* organisms. Over time nature is credited with crafting organisms that *look* like they were highly engineered by God (but really weren’t) to be precisely fitted for life in diverse ecological niches. In one swoop, Darwin’s ostensibly natural process explains the mind-boggling *complexity* of organisms. And since they’re specialized for different niches, the *diversity* of life is also supposedly accounted for.”

Do Evolutionists Really Say That?

Three examples of exquisite engineering supposedly crafted by bumbling natural selection:

1. “This example of convergent evolution of protein function provides an impressive demonstration of the *ability of natural selection to cobble together complex design solutions by tinkering* with different variations of the same basic protein scaffold.”⁴ (emphasis added)
2. “However, if one wanted to play with a comparison, one would have to say that *natural selection* does not work as an engineer works. It *works like a tinkerer*—a tinkerer who *does not know* exactly what he is going to produce.”⁵ (emphasis added)
3. “In the same way, *natural selection . . . builds* step by step, even if *by trial and error, entities of infinite complexity*, ingenuity, and if one be inclined to say so, *beauty*.”⁶ (emphasis added)

“So . . .” David jumped in, “are you saying that evolutionists are unimpressed that irreducible complexity is an unassailably positive evidence for intelligent design?”

“Totally unimpressed,” I said. “Selectionism is a mystical way of thinking about biology with nothing but *mental constructs* (e.g., selective pressures) that the selectionist personifies as active agents possessing God-like power to sculpt biological systems of infinite complexity—both specified and irreducible. We cannot overcome the selectionist way of thinking about biology merely with evidence of its limitations—especially when our arguments come from that same mystical framework.”

“Every time we say, ‘all selection *can do is . . .*’ or ‘selection pressures *can only* mold . . .,’ we don’t refute personifications—we reinforce them. Even worse, we embed *our* minds within Darwinism in how we interpret biology. We’re so off track from the outset that we’re not even asking engineering-based research questions. Our minds will only be liberated when we leave this mysticism behind and begin thinking about biology from *an engineering perspective*.”

David replied thoughtfully, “I see some irony here. Engineers don’t explain the success or failure of their solutions to problems by inserting imagined selection events or unquantifiable selection pressures. So, if this engineered approach is imported into biology, then paradoxically it’s so-called naturalism loses its magical explanations. If the precision of engineers was controlling biology, then evolutionary biologists would choke, so to speak, on their own naturalism if peer-reviewers allowed only *observable* natural causes as explanations and rejected any imaginary selective narratives. The engineering-based approach would kill the ghost of selectionism animating the evolutionary machine. That’s powerful. How do we teach that?”

David’s insight was spot on. Darwinists insist that their creative—though unconscious—process is a non-supernatural explanation, but it is only a facade of naturalism and just as mystical as any cultic belief ever was. David now understood why we need to replace all vestiges of selectionism in our minds with an engineering perspective.



Image credit: NASA.gov

Using Space Shuttles to Explain Biology

“To start thinking from an engineering perspective, consider what people intuitively understand about space shuttles. They know they’re highly engineered to travel through wide-ranging external conditions. People correctly assume that shuttles are filled with fully automated systems. If asked to explain how a shuttle operates, they naturally focus on *the shuttle* and *its* engineered features *alone*. They know that anything that the shuttle can or can’t do rests *totally* upon the capabilities of its features.”

“Selectionism indoctrinates all to view creatures like passive modeling clay being shaped by their *environment*. But by applying an

engineering perspective to biology, we replace the selectionists' explanations with something they won't consider: creatures—just like space shuttles—are highly engineered to adjust to wide-ranging external conditions, *driving their own adaptations by changing themselves*. Engineering descriptions of causal operability must ultimately focus on the designed entity. That's step one in thinking about biology from an engineering perspective."

"No one has ever taught me to think like that," David said. "That's a total theoretical shift in emphasis. We must teach people to describe creatures just like they describe space shuttles as active, problem-solving vessels."

"Design advocates," I added, "must embrace four decades of growing research that demonstrates that essentially all biological systems—even cells themselves—have innate abilities to acquire, transmit, store, and retrieve data, transform data to information, and act proactively or responsively, i.e., demonstrate *cognitive* abilities. These correspond conceptually, operationally, and quite often structurally to human-engineered systems performing similar functions. These internal capabilities actively control their relationship to their environments to maintain homeostasis, metabolize resources, adapt, grow, and reproduce."

"So this engineering-oriented thinking helps keep our position from falling in the personification trap," David remarked.

"That's where another step will help," I added. "We need to educate design advocates to describe how *specific* traits *successfully solve the problems* of certain environmental exposures, conditions, or design constraints. The objective phrase 'the organism successfully solved . . .' replaces the invisible finger that 'selected for/by/against . . .' This ensures that the creatures themselves—not nature—are properly credited for solving problems."

David jumped in, "This must mean that if we're examining organism-to-organism relationships, we analyze each one separately from its own perspective."

"Exactly," I affirmed. "And a third way to see things from an engineering perspective is to evaluate our verbiage in attributing causality. If it sounds silly when applied to the operation of man-made things, then don't apply it to biological things."

David asked, "Is this what distinguishes 'successfully solved' as more precise than saying, 'selected against'?"

I answered, "Consider the space shuttle *Columbia* that suffered a heart-wrenching loss traversing the atmosphere on reentry. Any



NASA engineer would lose his job if he explained the heat-friction failure by saying 'the atmosphere selected against it' or the shuttle 'wasn't favored.' Engineers know that an entity's traits determine its capabilities and should be identified with the success or failure of resolving environmental challenges. The engineers examined the *shuttle's traits* and then remedied the shuttles—not the atmosphere."

Wrapping Up

As we walked back to the auditorium, I stressed, "It also shows that switching perspectives isn't simply *semantics*. The engineering perspective completely changes our focus back to organisms as *the cause* of their own changes. After this lecture, let's discuss

how a TOBD enables *specific* research predictions." David concurred as we found our seats.

Darwin's selectionism gets us headed in the wrong direction from the outset. A thoughtful evolutionist, Dr. James Shapiro, recognizes this but also appreciates the hurdle in changing people's perspective. He said, "A shift from thinking about gradual selection of localized random changes to sudden genome restructuring by sensory network-influenced cell systems is a major conceptual change. It replaces the invisible hands of geological time and natural selection with cognitive networks and cellular functions for self-modification."

In changing the way people think about God's *creatures*, Darwin changed the way people think about God. Since creatures are engineered by the Lord Jesus, *only by* explaining their operation from an engineering perspective will we reclaim the wonder due to His handiwork. 

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Dr. Guliuzza is the president of the Institute for Creation Research. He earned his doctor of medicine from the University of Minnesota, his master of public health from Harvard University, and received an honorary doctor of divinity from Southern California Seminary. He served in the U.S. Air Force as 28th Bomb Wing flight surgeon and chief of aerospace medicine. Dr. Guliuzza is also a registered professional engineer and holds a B.A. in theology from Moody Bible Institute.



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APRIL 18-19



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APRIL 21

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article highlights

- North Cascades National Park displays impressive sights and features that have been compared to the Alps.
- The North Cascades area didn't exist before the Flood. Pieces of continental material and ocean sediments were literally scraped off the top of the subducting plate as it was pulled under North America during the Flood year. This process added slivers of land to the western edge of the continent.
- The Flood's tectonic activity then brought about the unique conditions needed to form the Ice Age, and its huge glaciers carved the park's U-shaped valleys and other distinct features.
- Even in this post-Flood world, we can recognize the beauty and evidence of God's creation.

*North Cascades National Park, Mt. Shuksan
(an example of a glacial horn)*

NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

Assembled During the Flood and Sculpted by Ice

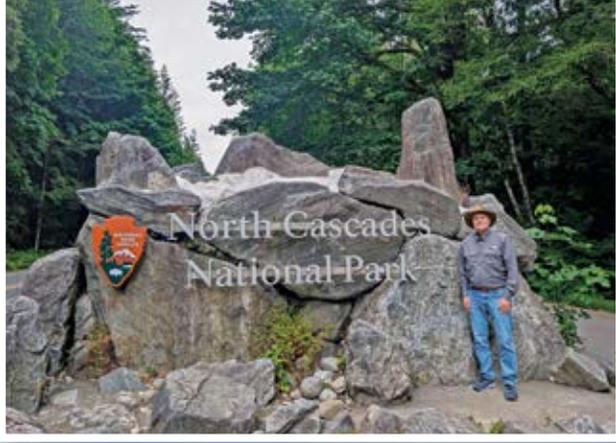


Image credit: Benjamin Trotman



Map of Cascade Volcanic Arc
Image credit: www.usgs.gov



North Cascades National Park is sometimes called “the American Alps” for its stunning vistas that average about 5,000 feet above sea level, with the highest reaching 9,220 feet at Goode Mountain in the south unit.¹ About three hours from Seattle, the park is just a few miles east of Mount Baker, and its northern border abuts Canada. “Nowhere do the mountain masses and peaks present such strange, fantastic, dauntless, and startling outlines as here,” wrote Henry Custer in 1859 as a member of the International Boundary Commission.²

Established as a National Park in 1968, North Cascades encompasses 789 square miles of mountainous terrain filled with hundreds of waterfalls, massive U-shaped valleys, and turquoise-colored lakes.¹ In fact, the numerous waterfalls gave the park its name.² North Cascades also contains one of the deepest lakes in the U.S.: Lake Chelan, reaching a depth of about 1,500 feet.²

People enjoy the beautiful vistas and lakes as they are, but the park’s fascinating geological and glacial history inspires even greater appreciation for the impressive features there. And all is the result of the global Flood.



Diablo Lake is a bright turquoise color due to glacial flour, composed of tiny flour-sized pieces of rock ground up by alpine glaciers

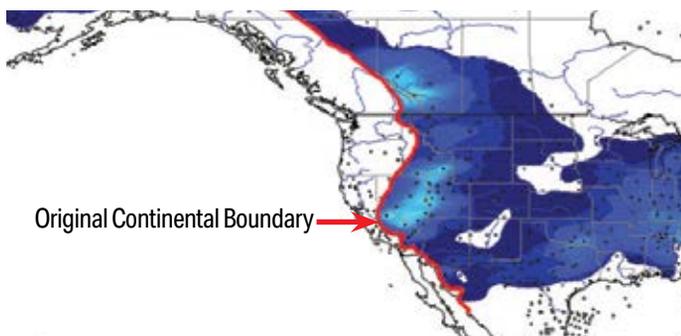


Gorge Creek Falls
Image credit: Tim Clarey

Accretion During the Flood

The Cascade Mountains may conjure up images of Mount Rainier, Mount Hood, and even Mount St. Helens and its historic eruption of 1980. But maybe surprisingly, not all of the Cascade Mountains are volcanic in origin. The volcanoes compose the Cascade volcanic chain or High Cascades. However, parts of the Cascade Mountains have a dramatically different origin altogether.

The section of Washington that includes North Cascades didn't exist at all prior to the Flood. North America originally ended in eastern Washington, near Spokane. This western part of North America was later pieced together by plate tectonic activity, sliver by sliver, and added to the continent. There are three of these slivers within the park, known by geologists as "accreted terranes,"³ that are separated by steep fault zones that run nearly north-south.¹



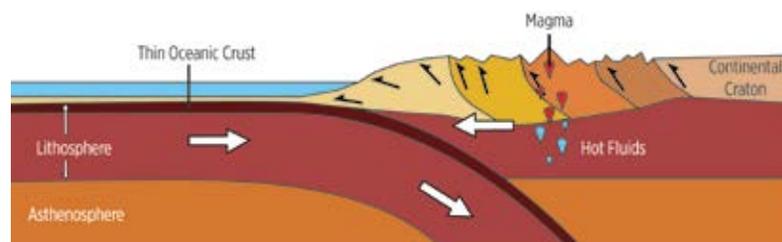
The earliest megasequences of the Flood (in blue) stop at the original western edge of North America

How exactly does that happen? Geoscientists have demonstrated that slivers (120–250 miles wide) of continental crust can be added

to the continents as the denser ocean crust is pulled down into the mantle. Flood geologists think this happened much quicker during the Flood year, with plate rates of several yards per second.⁴ They have called this catastrophic plate tectonics (CPT).

In the process, pieces of small continents, ocean sediments, and possibly islands embedded in the ocean crust were scraped off the subducting ocean crust, leaving behind or accreting 120- to 250-mile-wide belts of rock. These were added to the edges of the continents during the Flood year, literally as the "rug was pulled out from underneath it." Each terrane has a completely different geology compared to the adjacent terrane.

Most of North Cascades National Park is a single terrane called the Cascade Crystalline Core.² This piece of crust was added to North America during the deposition of the Zuni Megasequence, close to the highest water point of the global Flood (possibly about Day 140).⁵



Accreted terranes formed by the addition of sediments and crustal rocks that were literally scraped off the top of the subducted plate

Runaway Subduction Caused the Ice Age

CPT also provides a mechanism for the Ice Age that occurred at the end of the Flood. A hot, newly formed ocean crust covering



Bell Snow Mountain

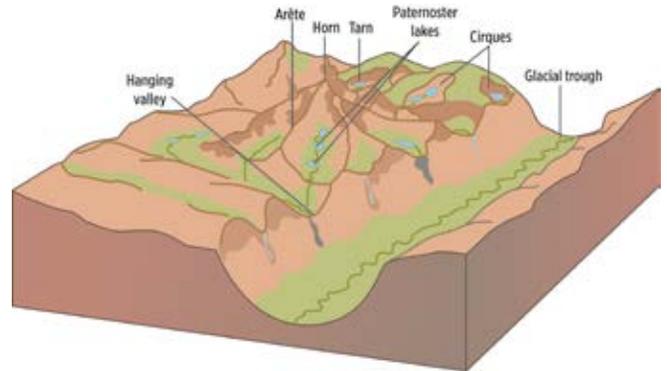
70% of the world would have provided tremendous amounts of heat energy to the ocean water above. This would have raised the overall temperature of the water and caused a greater amount of evaporation, resulting in staggering amounts of precipitation. Increased volcanic activity from the subduction zone volcanoes, including the Cascades volcanoes, and the unique chemistry of subduction zone magmas late in the Flood would have placed huge volumes of ash and aerosols into the atmosphere, cooling the climate most noticeably in the higher latitudes.

The net result of hotter oceans and tremendous silica-rich volcanic activity brought on from plate motion would be a widespread Ice Age. Finally, as the ocean water slowly cooled and volcanic activity diminished in the centuries after the Flood, the Ice Age would have ended as abruptly as it began.

Sculpted by the Ice Age

Why is this Ice Age information relevant to the North Cascades? Because the national park shows ample evidence that it was filled with alpine glaciers during the Ice Age. Vast U-shaped valleys (glacial troughs), horns, and jagged ridges called arêtes are found throughout the park. These erosional features are indicative of alpine glaciated terrains. The deep Lake Chelan lies in the bottom of a glacial trough. And most of the lakes in the park are a vivid turquoise blue due to a fine, dust-sized material left by glaciers called glacial flour.

Mount Shuksan and Eldorado Peak are glacial horns, formed by several glaciers eroding different sides of the peak.¹ The Picket Range, Sawtooth Ridge, and Mount Johannesburg are examples of knife-edged glacial arêtes.² Hanging valleys are also found throughout the park with many spectacular waterfalls descending from them to the glacial trough below, with one dropping 1,500 feet from a small trough on Bacon Peak.¹



Alpine glaciers leave distinctive erosional features like wide U-shaped valleys, hanging valleys, horns, and arêtes

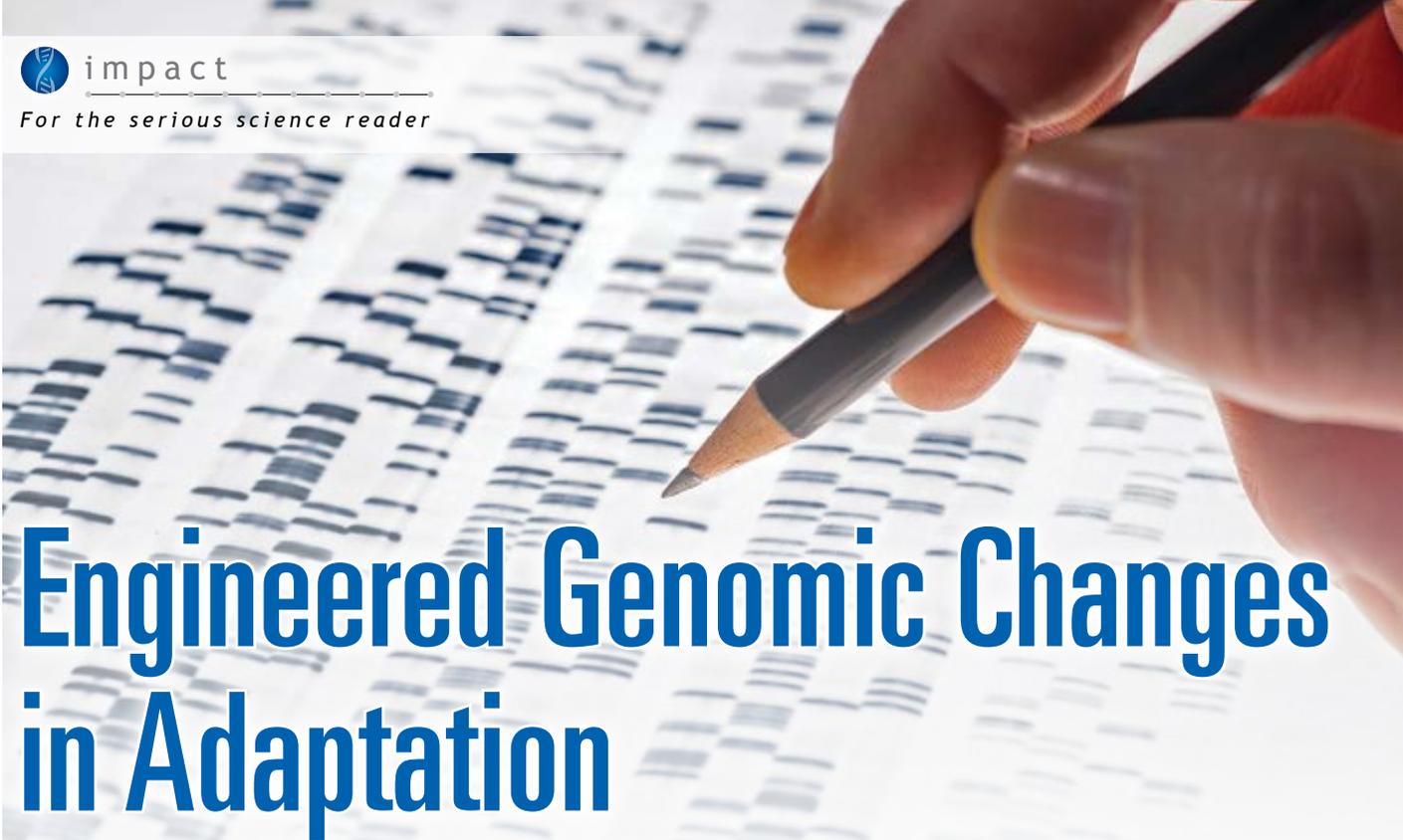
The beautiful mountains and valleys of North Cascades National Park are the result of the Flood, both directly and indirectly. The rocks composing North Cascades were assembled by catastrophic processes during the Flood, and the subsequent Ice Age smoothed and scoured the uplifted mountains into spectacular valleys and peaks. This resulted in the many waterfalls, vivid blue lakes, and jagged ridges. The handiwork of the Lord Jesus is on display all across the post-Flood landscape. 🙏

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Dr. Clarey is the director of research at the Institute for Creation Research and earned his Ph.D. in geology from Western Michigan University.





Engineered Genomic Changes in Adaptation

J E F F R E Y P . T O M K I N S , P H . D .

Programmed genome rearrangements (PGRs) are deliberate, genetically controlled changes in an organism's DNA sequence and chromosome structure that occur during normal development or in response to detecting changes in environmental conditions. These PGRs range from single bases to genes to even large genomic regions. They are precisely orchestrated modifications that involve deletions, inversions, duplications, translocations, sequence reductions, or sequence amplifications.

These are part of an engineered biological program, not random-chance occurrences, and defy the untenable evolutionary concept of random genetic mistakes that are worked on by a mystical selective agent. The following examples clearly demonstrate that PGRs are key elements of a highly engineered regulatory process that purposefully

enhances adaptive flexibility. Creatures are engineered with the innate ability to closely track environmental changes and adapt accordingly in targeted ways, as is expected by ICR's CET model of adaptation.

Immune System Diversification

One of the most important aspects of adaptation is an organism's built-in system to regulate pathogens that can cause disease and even death. In vertebrates, V(D)J recombination and class-switch recombination are divinely engineered immune-based systems that create diverse antibodies and T-cell receptors.¹ V(D)J recombination is the foundational genetic process that gives the adaptive immune system its extraordinary ability to recognize a nearly infinite variety of pathogens. This process occurs in the bone marrow during early B-cell (white blood cell) development. This antigen-independent mechanism literally involves a precise cut-and-paste rearrangement of three distinct gene segments: variable (V), diversity (D), and joining (J).

The process is initiated by the RAG-1 and RAG-2 enzymes, which recognize specific recombination signal sequences and introduce double-strand breaks in the DNA. Combinatorial variability is accomplished by randomly selecting a single segment from a large pool of available immune genes inherited from the creature's mother and father. This diversity is further amplified by junctional diversity, where enzymes like Artemis and TdT (terminal deoxynucleotidyl transferase) randomly add or remove nucleotides at the joining sites. Because these segments encode the complementarity-determining regions (CDRs) of the antibody's variable domain, the resulting unique DNA sequence defines the specific antigen-binding site of the

article highlights

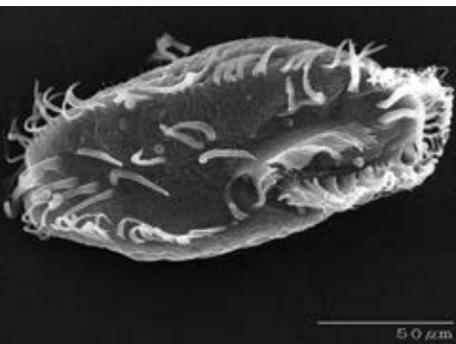
- Programmed genome rearrangements (PGRs) include a wide variety of engineered genomic systems that purposefully modify, alter, and relocate DNA to create adaptive outcomes.
- In vertebrate immune systems, genetic recombination creates diverse antibodies and T-cell receptors for controlled DNA rearrangement, allowing rapid adaptation to numerous pathogens.
- Ciliate genome scrambling and encryption showcases mind-boggling engineering that would baffle a computer scientist.
- DNA elimination in nematodes trims down the size of the genome after development to improve efficiency.
- Genome changes restructure gene regions on a massive scale for targeted adaptive solutions. And even specified single base changes in DNA create adaptive outcomes.

B-cell receptor. By leveraging a limited set of inherited genes through these random combinations and junction additions, the human body alone can generate over 10^{13} unique antibodies—ensuring a defense against virtually any disease-causing pathogen.

If the V(D)J recombination system were not amazing enough, on top of this is added yet another level of engineered complexity and diversity called class switch recombination (CSR). This involves a crucial DNA editing process in B cells that changes an antibody's functional class (like IgM to IgG, IgA, or IgE) without altering its antigen specificity. This allows for tailored immune responses against different pathogens by swapping the constant DNA region (of an area called the heavy chain) that changes the class of the antibody that performs different functions throughout the time of an infection and afterwards. This irreversible process involves targeted DNA double-strand breaks (DSBs) in repetitive switch (S) regions. These broken ends are then joined and the intervening DNA deleted. After this, the enzyme activation-induced deaminase (AID) and specific cytokines for proper activation and isotype selection are required to put the whole system into action.

Genome Scrambling and Encryption

One-cell eukaryotic creatures called ciliates are expanding our knowledge of genome dynamics and taking our concept of PGRs to a whole new level. And contrary to the evolutionary prediction of simple-to-complex in the alleged



Scanning electron microscope view of *Oxytricha trifallax*

Image credit: Robert Hammersmith, Public domain

tree of life, one-cell ciliates are exhibiting astonishing genetic complexity. One particular ciliate genome that has been studied in depth reveals unimaginable levels of programmed rearrangement combined with an ingenious system of encryption.^{3,4}

The ciliate *Oxytricha trifallax* has two different genomes contained in separate

nuclei. One is called the micronucleus. It is dense and compact and used for reproduction. The other is called the macronucleus. It is dramatically rearranged, amplified, and used for the creature's standard daily living. After two *Oxytricha* perform sexual conjugation, the old macronucleus is degraded and a new one is formed from the contents of the micronucleus during the development of the new ciliate. This process involves an elaborate cascade of events in which about 90% of the germline DNA (in reproductive cells) is deleted and the remaining fraction is dramatically reorganized and amplified into over 16,000 new chromosomes (called nanochromosomes).⁴ While scientists previously understood that the genome of this creature underwent a dramatic reorganization, they did not understand the full significance of

the phenomena because only the DNA of the macronucleus had been completely sequenced.

Researchers sequenced the micronucleus of *Oxytricha trifallax* and were surprised at the levels of complexity and rearranging they discovered.³⁻⁵ The germline genome of the micronucleus is fragmented into over 225,000 precursor DNA segments that are massively and precisely reordered (unscrambled) during the construction of the new macronucleus and its nanochromosomes (most of which contain only one gene each). However, it gets even more complicated. Many of the genes reconstructed in this process come from numerous individual fragments dispersed across the micronuclear genome—with some even being inverted in their orientation.

So how does a system keep track of and sort out several hundred thousand strings of biological information? As it turns out, an ingenious system of encryption was discovered that enables the decoding of these 225,000-plus fragments. This process uses specialized pointer sequences that flank the macronucleus-designated fragments as a type of encryption and addressing system. In addition, highly specialized RNA guides that are also encoded in the genome mark the specific DNA sections that need to be moved as a type of decryption system. Because even the protein-coding regions of genes (exons) are fragmented, the internal eliminated sequences (IESs) interrupt exons, making their removal a strict requirement for gene expression. Thus, the whole process of slicing and splicing is not error-tolerant but quite precise, involving highly complex systems of encryption and decryption to function properly.

So what is the point of all this mind-bending complexity? Many of the precursor gene fragments can be rearranged in different ways to create more functional combinations or “more bang for the buck,” as they say. Thus, a highly useful feature arising from this radical genome architecture is that a single macronucleus-destined sequence in the micronucleus may contribute to multiple distinct macronucleus chromosomes.

Programmed DNA Elimination

Programmed DNA elimination (PDE) is a highly regulated developmental process discovered in nematodes as a new facet of PGR associated with multicellular development. During PDE, specific genomic sequences are permanently removed from cells destined for normal body cells while the DNA remains intact in reproductive cells.⁶ This was first discovered in the parasitic nematode *Ascaris*. Now a recent 2025 research paper confirms that PDE is widespread across the Rhabditidae nematode family, including free-living genera like *Oscheius* and *Mesorhabditis*.⁷ The PDE process typically occurs during early embryogenesis (between the 2- and 16-cell stages) through hundreds of precisely engineered double-stranded DNA breaks followed by the controlled degradation of excluded fragments. This recycles the material involved.

The biological consequences of PDE are highly significant. In *Ascaris*, approximately 13%–18% of the germline genome is eliminated, including nearly 1,000 genes primarily involved in spermatogenesis and early development that are no longer needed. This serves as a permanent form of gene silencing that effectively prevents the expression of germline-restricted traits in body tissues. Beyond gene removal, PDE targets the removal of repetitive features called satellite DNA. All germline chromosome ends are also removed. They are then remodeled through new telomere additions. This complex genomic editing ensures body cells possess a streamlined genome optimized for their specific functional roles.

Large-Scale Genomic Structural Changes

Stick Insects

In a study published in 2025, researchers examined the genetic basis of habitat adaptation in *Timema cristinae*, a small wingless stick insect found on two different mountains in California. While the insects studied were the same species, the two different body types exhibited different color patterns that were either striped or green. These patterns corresponded to the color schemes of two different host plants that were specific to each mountain (*Adenostoma fasciculatum* and *Ceanothus spinosus*). In other words, the genome configurations associated with the PGR of each insect morph conferred highly



Spanish walking stick
(*Pijnackeria hispanica*)

Image credit: Fritz-Geller Grimm, CC BY-SA 2.5

specific color patterns to provide camouflage against visual predators like birds and lizards.

Using complete chromosome-level genome assemblies, the researchers discovered that these adaptive color patterns are governed by complex structural genomic variation on chromosome 8 rather than more simple features like single gene or small structural differences. They discovered the insect color pattern was associated with large sections of chromosomes that had been moved (translocated) and then also flipped in their orientation (inverted), specific to each of the two mountains.

The scale of these habitat-specific genetic variations was massive: these structural variants spanned approximately 43 million DNA bases containing 299 genes on one mountain habitat and 15 million bases containing 97 genes on the other. The fully functional and habitat-specific complex chromosomal rearrangements originated independently—demonstrating a predictable and repeatable genome alteration mechanism for adaptation.

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These large structural variants function similarly to a genomic feature called supergenes. These are genomic blocks where recombination is suppressed, allowing a suite of coadapted genes to be inherited together. The research identified 12 sets of similar but variable genes shared within the structural variants of both mountains that included pro-corazonin and ecdysteroid kinase. These are known to regulate insect coloration and metabolism. In other words, the insects adapt themselves in both color pattern and behavior to avoid predators.

The researchers concluded that while simple inversions are often credited for such polymorphisms, the reality of structural variation can be far more complex. These findings suggest that such diverse genomic architecture may be a widespread, underappreciated innate mechanism for rapid and repeatable adaptation.

Zokors

Zokors are plant-eating, mole-like rodents native to much of China, Kazakhstan, and Siberian Russia known for their powerful digging abilities. They use strong claws to create extensive tunnel systems and to forage for tubers and roots. Zokors have a number of features engineered for subterranean life, including excellent smell, underground hearing, and tolerance for low-oxygen environments.



The mole-like zokor

Image credit: Xiao Sa, CC BY-SA 4.0

A recent paper was published investigating how genomic structural variants (SVs), another type of PGR, facilitate zokor adaptation to extreme low oxygen levels at high-altitudes (genus *Eospalax*).⁹ The researchers generated a high-quality genome assembly for the high-altitude species to identify specific SVs by comparing it to genome assemblies from five other zokor species thriving in low-oxygen levels at lower elevations. The study also included analyzing gene expression and the three-dimensional structure of the genome.

The study identified 18 large inversions (>1 Mb) unique to *E. bailey*, the species habituating the extreme hypoxic environment. Interestingly, these inversions were often located near chromosome ends. Gene regulation was also altered with specific intronic SVs (noncoding regions) in three key hypoxia-related genes (*EGLN1*, *HIF1A*, and *HSF1*) with upregulated gene expression. This provided a molecular basis for hypoxia tolerance. In regard to the three-dimensional genome, a massive 50-million-base rearrangement on chromosome 1 altered chromatin accessibility. This 3-D structural shift led to the fusion of topologically associating domains (TADs), bringing critical low-oxygen response genes into closer proximity to each other

and modifying their expression profiles.¹⁰

All of these genetic changes were connected to a number of body adaptations such as larger lung mass, higher red blood cell counts, and increased hemoglobin concentrations (compared to low-elevation zokors), enhancing their oxygen-transport capacity. The research demonstrated that large-scale genomic rearrangements, 3-D genome changes, and smaller SVs are key genetic factors that produce traits that allow zokors to thrive in environments that would be lethal to most mammals.

Human Disease-Based, Targeted Adaptive Changes

Because humans are created in the image of God and, regarding adaptation, are endowed with the mental prowess to simply adjust their behavior and surrounding conditions in response to environmental changes, known major genetic structural variations connected to extreme environments are currently unidentified. However, several recent studies have been published showing that small genetic variants, a small-scale type of PGR, can confer disease resistance.¹¹ In humans, the *HBB* gene provides instructions for making a protein called beta-globin—a component (subunit) of a larger protein called hemoglobin, which is located inside red blood cells.

In one study, they found that the human *HBB* gene region contained a segment where a novel single DNA base alteration could produce protection from malaria.¹² This is called the protective HbS mutation. Using a novel genome scanning method on large numbers of humans, researchers identified that the *HBB* region's variability rate was about 2.6 times higher than the genome-wide average, with distinct rates for specific alterations like HbS connected to malaria resistance. The variability conferred in this region also allows a switch back to a normal state when malaria is not present. Thus, instead of the standard Darwinian model of random mutation and selection, the data instead point to predictable adaptive genetic changes.



Anopheles stephensi, female—malarial parasite carrier

Image credit: public domain

Another recent study in humans found that a region in the human *APOL1* gene could be altered to provide resistance to sleeping sickness by the *Trypanosoma* parasite.¹³ In fact, the data indicated that

this single DNA base change is generated more frequently where it's needed for disease-resistance adaptation. This challenges the long-held idea that mutations arise randomly regardless of benefit. This pattern of adaptive genetic change increased in the relevant disease-challenged population, similar to the HbS mutation with the same implication: genetic change is adaptively directed and not random.



Trypanosoma brucei, the sleeping sickness parasite

Image credit: Zephyris, CC BY-SA 3.0

Summary

PGRs from small, single bases to large-scale translocations, inversions, and deletions are not random but engineered features that are directed, purposeful, and repeatable. Furthermore, these innate mechanisms are directly connected to how creatures adapt themselves to challenging environments that would otherwise be impossible to survive in without PGRs. The wide diversity of examples emerging from conventional genomics research point directly to an all-powerful and all-knowing Creator-engineer—the Lord Jesus Christ. 🙏

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Dr. Tomkins is a research scientist at the Institute for Creation Research and earned his Ph.D. in genetics from Clemson University.



ICR in Thailand

DAVE NAPIER AND BRIAN THOMAS, PH.D.

As the unified body of Christ, we marvel when individual notes come together to form beautiful harmonic chords. Dino Dave and Dr. Brian were blessed to experience this firsthand when they traveled to Bangkok in November 2025 to share evidence for creation and Christ.

It all began in 2024. ICR Discovery Center volunteer Paiboon Sithiopaskul volunteered to translate ICR's booklet *Creation Q&A* into Thai. Nobody suspected this offer would open so many doors for creation to reach Thailand and beyond. Upon learning that Scripture Union (SU) Thailand would translate it, ICR President Dr. Guli-uzza suggested that ICR should send creation speakers for the launch of the book. A year later, Dave and Dr. Brian flew halfway around the globe to speak for five days in tropical Thailand.

Attendees at one particular event began to pick up Dave and Dr. Brian's main theme and melody. That evening, Dave used a *Spinosaurus* tooth fossil at the lobby display to discuss with one young Thai visitor how dinosaurs died only thousands of years ago in the Genesis Flood. This made sense to him, and he happily accompanied Dave into Dr. Brian's main session to learn more about how science relates to the Bible.



Dino Dave shows how dinosaurs fit the Bible's history at a Christian school in Bangkok

A powerful question time followed where questions came not from doubt but from excitement—science actually confirms the Bible! During this time, the attendees began to harmonize with Dave and Dr. Brian's melody. One elderly woman had spent four decades as a Buddhist nun before recently finding new life in Christ. She asked a key question but did it before the microphone could get to her. Thankfully, the translator heard it and said, "She asks, 'Are you saying that Jesus created us all?'" Dr. Thomas exclaimed, "Yes!" Unprompted praise broke out at this good news. She now knows her Savior also as her Maker! Dave and Dr. Brian's travails suddenly felt "not worthy to be compared with the glory" (Romans 8:18). No wonder they want to return in 2026!

Other groups now want in. SU Indonesia and SU Vietnam want to translate ICR books. They recognize both how evolution's unscientific and godless view steers people away from the Savior and the need for the faith-building, life-changing truths that our Maker wants to save us and that science backs this gospel.

ICR's heart is doing science, and then ICR's hands take that science to the streets. When you prayed for and donated to ICR in 2025, your notes blended with the harmonies felt that night in Thailand and in each day's labors in Dallas. With your partnership, we can keep up "the good fight" for souls at home and around the world (1 Timothy 4:2). Together, we form a symphony of saints serving our Creator and Savior, King Jesus. 🙏



Follow this QR code to a short video of Dr. Thomas sharing about the Thailand trip.

Mr. Napier is an event coordinator and speaker at the Institute for Creation Research. Dr. Thomas is a research scientist at the Institute for Creation Research and earned his Ph.D. in paleochemistry from the University of Liverpool.



Dr. Thomas presents creation and Christ at a Christian school in Bangkok



Students get to handle genuine fossils that confirm the Flood

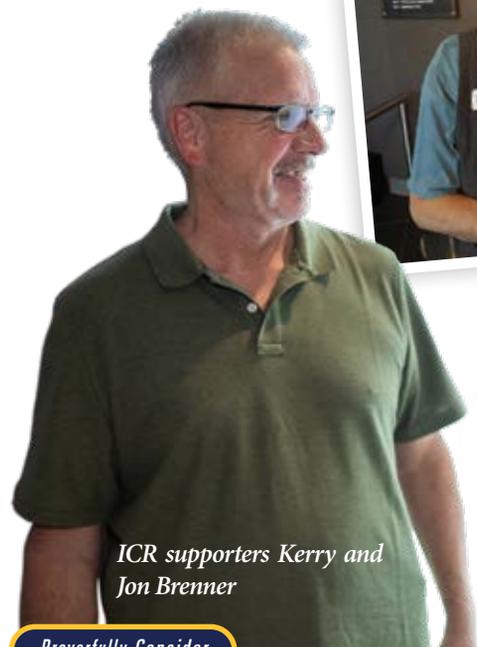
What Is a Charitable Gift Annuity?

REGINA KRIEG

A charitable gift annuity (CGA) is a simple, proven way to make a gift to ICR and receive fixed income for life—often at rates higher than CDs. Payments are secure, may be partly tax-free, and your gift can provide a charitable tax deduction.

Retiring With Grace: Kerry's Story

I'm Kerry and I serve as a docent at the ICR Discovery Center. I'm also a donor to the ministry because Dr. Henry M. Morris instilled in me a desire for all mankind to know Jesus as their Creator, Savior, and coming King. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).



ICR supporters Kerry and Jon Brenner

ICR is dedicated to empower all communities, churches, and pastors with resources to combat evolution, secular humanism, and atheism. We are so thankful for all our donors who faithfully provide ICR with the resources to carry out this mission. I have the benefit of witnessing that fruit in the thousands of guests who visit each year.

My husband and I recently invested in an ICR Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA). There was a huge tax benefit up front and a substantial annual tax benefit. I also had an IRA that had taken many market hits over the years and wasn't earning interest. At a certain age, we all have to take required minimum distributions (RMDs), so I rolled the IRA over into an ICR CGA. Now my annuity payments replace the RMDs! These annuity payments can be an impor-

tant part of your estate planning and will be there for life. They guarantee that your generosity will continue after you're gone. ICR Donor Relations can give you more information regarding their CGAs.

Please visit the Discovery Center soon. You never know . . . perhaps today He will return!

How a CGA Works

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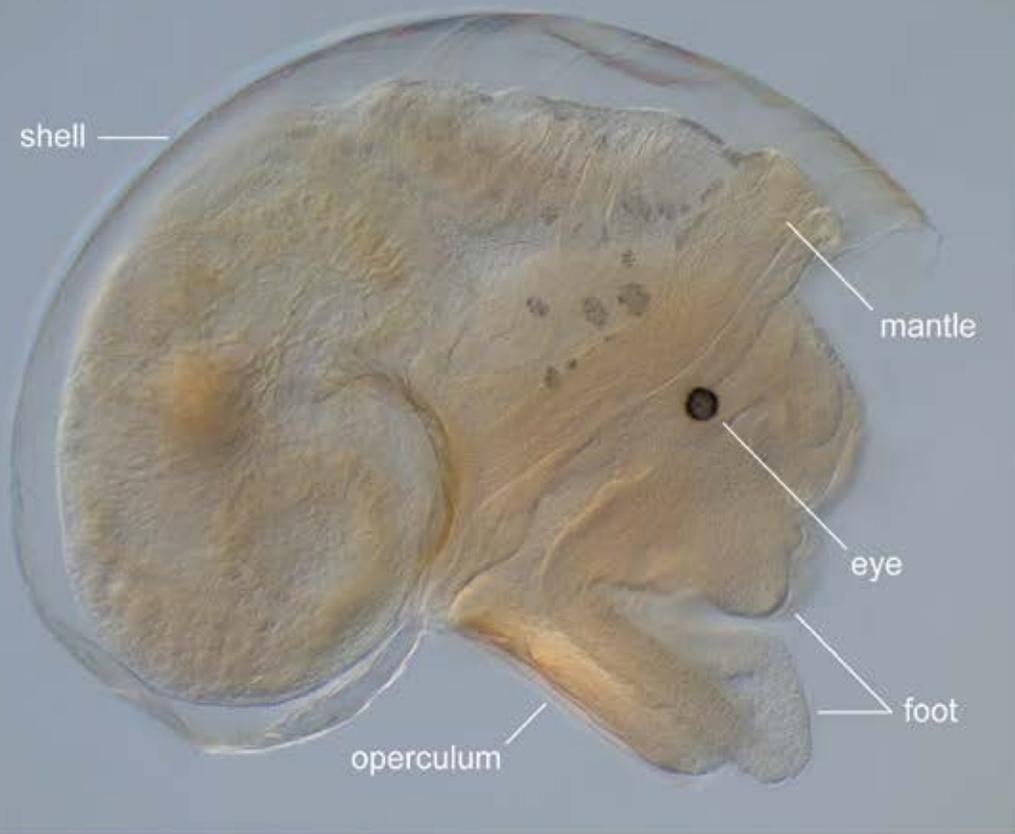
Mrs. Krieg is the director of planned giving at the Institute for Creation Research.



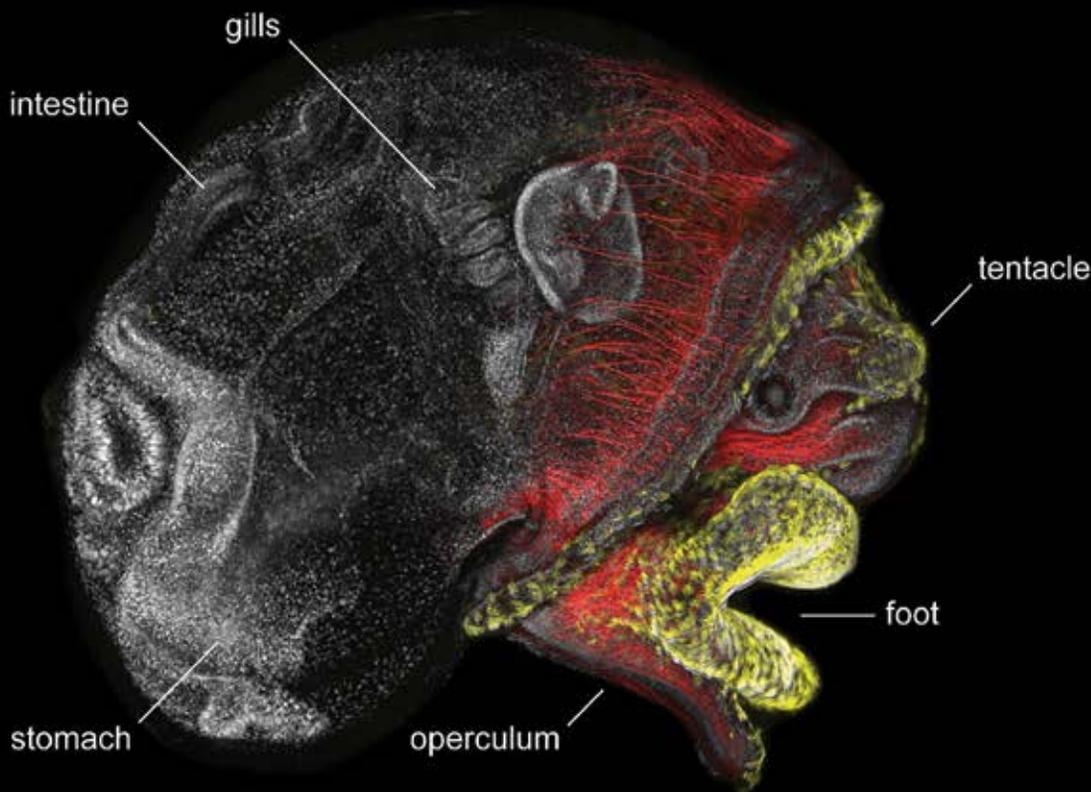
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“Then God said, . . . let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

— GENESIS 1:26 —

*Micrographs of juvenile aquarium snails (*Pomacea diffusa*) in right lateral view. Visible features include the operculum, foot, eye, shell, mantle, and digestive system. Bottom image reveals tufts of cilia (yellow), muscle fibers (red), and DNA in the nucleus of individual cells (white).*

Image credit: Michael J. Boyle; The William B. Dean, MD Imaging Center of the Institute for Creation Research

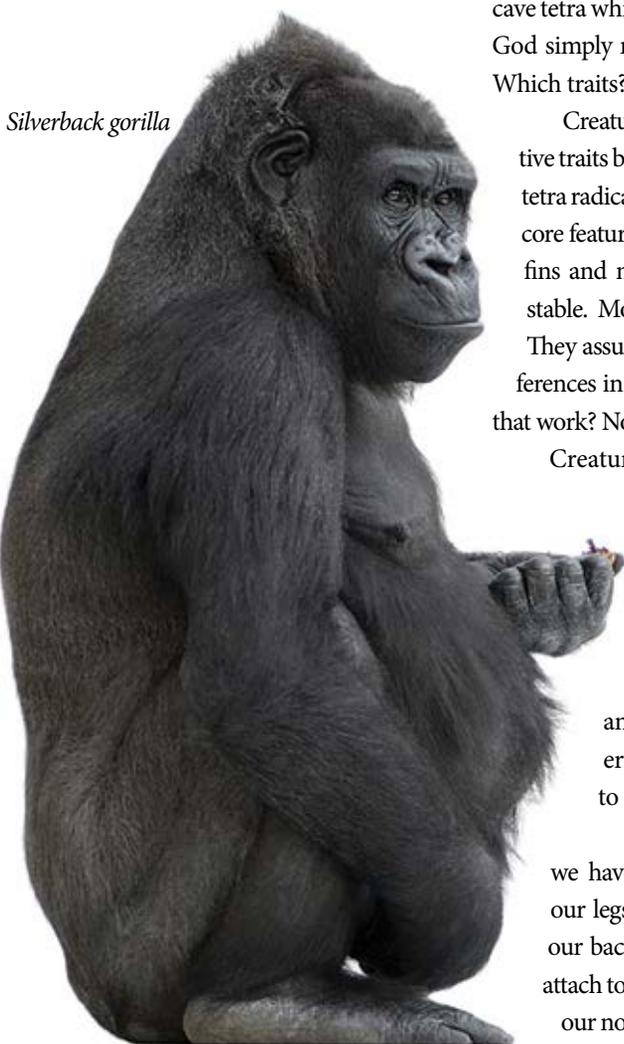
How Can I Know Evolution Is Wrong?

Evolution pushes Christians to doubt what our Bibles say about creation by asserting impersonal processes made everything over eons. Scripture asserts God created everything over six days. How can we know for sure that evolution is wrong?

To answer that, we should make sure we know what evolution means. Saying that it simply means change is too broad. After all, creation scientists also acknowledge creature changes. ICR is even studying how sighted, surface Mexican tetra (fish) became blind



Blind Mexican tetras



Silverback gorilla

cave tetra while hardly changing their DNA. God simply made certain traits adaptable.¹ Which traits?

Creatures adjust decorative or adaptive traits but not their core traits. Even the tetra radically change color and eyes while core features like streamlined bodies with fins and mouths connected to gills stay stable. Most folks miss this distinction. They assume evolution can engineer differences in creatures' core features. Could that work? Not at all, and here's why.

Creatures' core features include all-or-nothing systems. These need whole sets of specific parts to be in place at the same time. For example, contrast the parts that apes and humans use to walk. No animals walk like humans. Every bone would need reshaping to change an ape into a human.

Our toes point forward and we have arched feet. Our hips allow our legs to swing behind the plane of our backs. S-curved spines swivel and attach to our heads at an angle that aims our noses forward when we stand tall.

In contrast, apes prefer knuckle-walking. Their toes point inward and they have hinged feet. Their hips prevent their legs from swinging behind the plane of their backs. Stiff, C-shaped spines attach to their heads at an angle that aims their noses forward when on all fours. Some apes supposedly evolved, bit by bit, a fully human set of walking parts. How would that process go?

Let's say some ancient ape's big toes evolved into human ones while all else stayed the same. That evolving ape would lose its full ability to climb trees, *plus* it would be nowhere close to walking like a man. Or place a nearly-human spine into an ape's body.² This malformed creature would lose the stability needed to climb *and* walk. Professor Stuart Burgess wrote, "Such a scenario is completely ridiculous because such creatures would be struggling to walk properly on two legs for millions of years while supposedly being habitually bipedal [walking] and fit for survival!"³

Molecules-to-man evolution is wrong because it requires the impossible. Nature never engineers all-or-nothing systems. Engineers do that. Unchangeable core systems support the Bible's record of Jesus Christ as Creator.⁴

References

1. Learn about ICR's theory of biological design (TOBD) called continuous environmental tracking (CET) by searching ICR.org for those phrases. Learn about the tetra here: Boyle, M. J. et al. 2023. Testing the Cavefish Model: An Organism-Focused Theory of Biological Design. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Creationism*, 9, article 17: 120-143.
2. Some experts have done this using artwork while still calling it science. See Thomas, B. Anthropologist Wows Scientists. *Creation Science Update*. Posted on ICR.org June 27, 2022, accessed December 12, 2025.
3. Burgess, S. 2016. Human Anatomy: Unique Upright Design. In *Searching for Adam: Genesis and the Truth about Man's Origin*. T. Mortenson, ed. Green Forest, AR: Masterbooks.
4. "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth" (Colossians 1:16).

Dr. Thomas is a research scientist at the Institute for Creation Research and earned his Ph.D. in paleochemistry from the University of Liverpool.



I just want to mention how thankful I am that this devotional [*A Year of Praise*] is available in book format. I have saved numerous pages from *Days of Praise* that were written by Dr. Morris. . . . [H]is gift of writing is truly anointed and has brought me so much joy through the years. Thank you!

—D. W.



Thank you for the [Kids on Mission] classes. They are so good. **I love the lessons, the imagery, and the way Jesus is MAGNIFIED in every video.** Thank you for all your hard work and love for the children. . . . Thanks to you and a huge shout out to Dr. Michael Boyle!

—S. W.



Editor's note: Not a junior creation scientist yet? Visit ICR.org/kids-on-mission to learn more about our junior creation scientist club and join today!



Dr. Dwayne Gish, Dr. Henry Morris III, and Dr. Henry Morris II

Dear Dr. Guliuzza,
I am writing you to tell you how much I appreciate you and ICR. . . . I am fortunate to have met and shaken hands with Dr. Morris, who woke up the Christian community regarding the deception of evolution and the

scientific reliability of creation, and Dr. Gish, who was an amazing debater and spokesman for creation. . . .

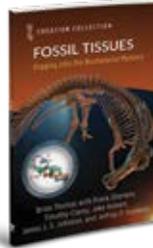
I commend you for not adopting the marketing strategies that dominate our culture today. . . . **ICR has always held to the highest standards of integrity, both in your scientific work and your relationships with supporters.**

—T. A. C.



I can't tell you how much I appreciate your generosity and kindness. Thank you for sending me your most precious magazine despite my incapacity to send any donation. You are our helping hand.

—A. F.

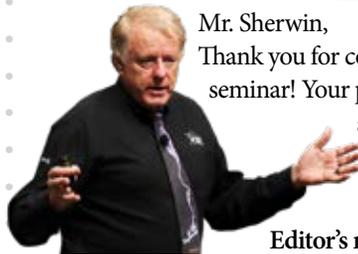


The Creation Science Association of Alberta is most grateful for the excellent presentations. Your opening remarks concerning why so many scientists are willfully ignorant of important observation from nature certainly struck a chord with your audience. **Your information that collagen in fossils cannot last more than one-half million years, and the implication of this finding, were very**

interesting. Also, your compilation of more than 130 references describing organic material in fossils definitely reinforced this message. One person mentioned, "I really enjoyed Dr. Thomas' talks. My favorite was the 12 impossible steps to build a cell."

—M. H.

Editor's note: You can find *Fossil Tissues: Digging into the Biomaterial Mystery* and other Creation Collection books at ICR.org/store.



Mr. Sherwin,
Thank you for coming and presenting this creation seminar! Your passion and knowledge are evident, and I appreciate you sharing with all of us. Hope to see you again!

—A. W.

Dr. Frank Sherwin

Editor's note: To learn more about upcoming ICR events or how your church can host one, visit ICR.org/events.

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Written by Michael Stamp, illustrated by Melissa Marquez

Ladybugs

There's nothing like the lovely ladybug! But don't let the name fool you—this itty-bitty creature isn't really a bug at all. Ladybugs are beetles, a type of insect with hard outer wings. Red ladybugs may be the most famous, but they come in many colors, like orange, yellow, and even pink! Each little ladybug illustrates the creativity and care of its Creator, Jesus Christ. Did you also know . . .

- ✓ Ladybugs are also known as lady beetles or ladybirds.
- ✓ Not all ladybugs are spotted. Some have stripes, while others don't have any pattern.
- ✓ Many kinds of ladybugs are helpful in gardens. They munch on pesky bugs that harm plants.
- ✓ Today, scientists recognize over 5,000 species of ladybugs. That's un-beetle-lievable!



Word Scramble

Uydlagb _____
 Nteisc _____
 Elebet _____
 Iwgsn _____

Count the Dots

1. + = 8

2. + = _____

3. + = _____

4. + = _____

5. + = _____

Color by Numbers

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	2	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
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1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

1 2 3 4

Answers to Word Scramble: ladybug, insect, beetle, wings
 Answers to Count the Dots: 1, 8, 2, 5, 3, 7, 4, 5, 9



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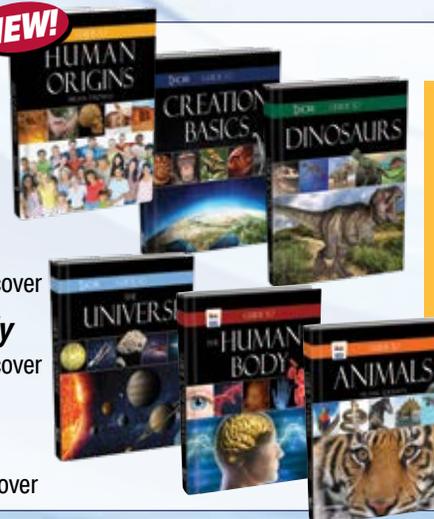
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