

Intelligent Design and/or Scientific Creationism

by Henry M. Morris*

Although we have published a number of articles dealing with the "Intelligent Design" movement, we at ICR continue to get numerous inquiries—both from Christians and from the secular media—as to ICR's exact position relative to the ID movement. In particular, why do the leaders in that movement continually try to distance themselves from us Biblical creationists, even though our own leaders are also fully credentialed scientists just like theirs?

But then, why do the news media, as well as the scientific and legal establishments, keep insisting that Intelligent Design is merely a disguised form of creationism, accusing the ID people of hypocritically trying to hide that fact? For example, the following recent quote represents quite fairly the attitude almost universally characteristic of the modern scientific establishment. The author, a biology professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, is a prolific writer and debater against creationism. To him Intelligent Design is: "a thinly veiled version of creationism, a pseudo-intellectual enterprise that has nothing to do with science or philosophy (or indeed, good theology), and everything to do with inserting a religious wedge into public school education." (Massimo Pigliucci:

"More Than You Ever Wanted to Know about Intelligent Design," *Evolution*, vol. 59, December 2005, p. 2719.)

Having lost several creation/evolution debates with Dr. Duane Gish of ICR, Dr. Pigliucci evidently considers himself an authority on such things.

As a matter-of-fact, he is at least partially right. Some of the leaders of the ID movement have been frankly calling it a "wedge" with which they hope to open up the atheistic science establishment, so that teachers can at least acknowledge intelligent creation of life as a possibility.

But, as we creationists have been predicting, they are now finding this outcome highly unlikely at best. Scientists for the most part are adamant that scientific systems and processes, including their origin, must be studied and taught strictly on a naturalistic basis, with no consideration for God.

For those who really believe in an omnipotent purposeful God, this attitude is absurdly wrong, though the modern judiciary apparently agrees with it. Even the U.S. Supreme Court has seemingly concurred, as far as science teaching in public schools is concerned.

This was not the case with the founders of science. Respected scientists such as

*Dr. Henry M. Morris is Founder and President Emeritus of ICR.

Newton, Boyle, and most others all believed in Intelligent Design as the very foundation of science. And the same was true with our nation's early schools and colleges. In fact, the very first edition of Webster's Dictionary (1828) defined "science" thus: "1. In a general sense, knowledge, or certain knowledge; the comprehension or understanding of truth or facts by the mind. The *science* of God must be perfect."

Nor is it a modern notion. "*The heavens declare the glory of God*" said King David long ago. "*He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? . . . He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know?*" (Psalm 94:9-10). The evidence for Intelligent Design everywhere and in everything is so obvious that only "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*" (Psalm 53:1), and those who refuse to see it and desperately seek some evolutionary way of explaining it are "*without excuse*" (Romans 1:20).

Scientists and theologians of later generations have often tried to organize the evidence in more formal ways, such as the "watch and watchmaker" analogy of William Paley in his famous book *Natural Theology* (1802). And now we have Michael Behe and William Dembski and others in the ID movement with their more mathematical approach to recognizing design through such concepts as irreducible complexity and others.

ICR has stressed the need for intelligent design in our creationist arguments ever since we started. In his debates, Dr. Duane Gish has always argued that such creatures as the butterfly and the bombardier beetle could not possibly have arisen by chance variation and natural selection. Dr. Bliss a generation ago lectured on the marvels of the bacterial flagellum that has now become such a favorite example of the Intelligent Design

theorists. Creationists have welcomed the insights and arguments of the ID group: we certainly do not see any conflict with scientific creationism. To us, it is not Creation *or* Intelligent Design.

But the ID people (creation *by* Intelligent Design) insist that these are two different systems and that Intelligent Design is certainly *not* Scientific Creationism—especially not Biblical Creationism. They feel it best to leave the Bible and the Biblical God out of the argument entirely. Some even feel that evolution is okay, provided that it is not atheistic Darwinian evolution. Thus, theistic evolution is quite compatible with Intelligent Design (Michael Behe himself admits to being an evolutionist). And some (e.g., William Dembski) say that the Designer does not necessarily have to be a deity!

They argue, of course, that such flexibility is necessary to get the creation idea into the public arena at all. However, it is also now becoming increasingly apparent that ID will never be allowed in the public schools either, regardless of how it is compromised.

And what good would it do anyhow? If the ID system has to be so diluted as to be acceptable to any religion or philosophy except raw atheism, then why bother? Would believing in some false god or goddess and following some cultic system of practice be preferable to believing and practicing atheistic secular humanism? Think about it!

We think it sad that the schools and colleges are now not only closing the doors to ID speakers but also, probably as a related action, to genuine creationism as well. In the past, young-earth creationists were frequently invited to participate in debates and seminars on university campuses. Our lectures and debates have always focused especially on the scientific evidence, while never hedging on our belief in God and the Bible, and God has

blessed these events in the lives of many students.

There's another very important factor to keep in mind. As Christians, we ought to be more concerned with winning souls for eternity than getting a hearing in the public forum. And even more important than winning souls for Christ is unreservedly honoring God's Word, forever "*settled in heaven*" (Psalm 119:89). Someday all the schools will be gone and even heaven and earth will "*pass away*" but His Word "*shall not pass away*" (Matthew 24:35).

By attempting to argue without the Bible, however, the Intelligent Design theorists are ignoring the most important aspect of the whole question—namely, the *history* of life on Earth. After all, the creation/evolution issue is really a question of history, rather than science. Not *could* evolution happen, but *did* it happen? Evolutionists seem to think that Darwin proved that natural selection could account for all the amazing evidences of design in nature. If they can *imagine* how a feature might have evolved, they feel that proves it did happen. Any impossible event will occur if there is enough time, they like to claim.

But the actual historical record says that macroevolution *did not* occur—both the written record in the revealed Word of God and the inferred record from the fossils and the many scientific evidences of a young Earth, (as greatly strengthened by the recent ICR/CRS RATE Project results).

By ignoring this historical evidence—especially that in the Bible—the Intelligent Design movement alone cannot possibly succeed. In the meantime, it is diverting interest among Christians away from the much more cogent case for scientific Biblical creationism and thus tragically hindering a true witness for Christ and the Bible.

We do heartily commend the Intelligent Design scientists for the brilliant

new arguments and evidences they have added to the traditional case for Intelligent Design. But we insist the issue does not stop there. The Biblical testimony is all important, not to mention the very strong scientific evidence for recent creation and the global flood. Since the latter events cannot be *proved* scientifically (not being repeatable) they can always be explained away if one so desires, but it is certainly stronger than the scientific evidence for evolutionary uniformitarianism, (that evidence is not repeatable either!). The only way we can be absolutely sure of what happened in prehistoric times is for someone who was there and who is trustworthy to tell us what happened.

That is exactly what we have in the revealed Word of God. But evolutionists refuse to believe God and Intelligent Design theorists ignore Him. Both are mistaken.

So what if the public schools won't listen? Our nation's earliest schools were home schools and private Christian schools, and these produced the highest states of both literacy and morality in any nation's history. There is no *Biblical* warrant for government-controlled schools anyway. Government schools today should probably best be viewed as mission fields rather than educational centers. Almost the same can be said of secularized religious schools. Concerned parents should not entrust their children's spiritual and educational health to them.

In summary, I personally believe that the Intelligent Design movement is good as far as it goes, but it stops short of a valid and effective and useful worldview. It should not be a case of Intelligent Design versus Creationism but rather Intelligent Design Explained, Amplified, and Confirmed by Scientific Biblical Creationism. ☸