Shades of the Enlightenment!

How the Neo–Deist '*Intelligent Design Movement*' Recycles the Enlightenment's Methodology of '*Reason*' as a Humanistic Substitute for Biblical Creationism's Revelation–verified Epistemology

by

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ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on the epistemological similarities (and dissimilarities) of today's "Intelligent Design Movement" and the Deism–oriented Enlightenment of the late 1700s. The controversy of origins, which largely focuses on Creation doctrine, is theologically foundational to Biblical Christianity, because the God of the Bible, from the Bible's very first verse, has primarily defined Himself as the Creator. But the study of origins involves more than Biblical theology, because it also involves natural revelation, as Paul indicates in Romans chapter one. Accordingly, how Christians treat the doctrine of Creation is affected by their interrelated understandings of Who God is, of how He communicates, of how to interpret His Bible, of how to interpret His natural revelation, etc.

During most of the latter half of the 20th century, the Christian community faced three major options regarding what to believe about cosmic and human origins: (1) the secular version of evolution; (2) several varieties of "theistic evolution"

(theories postulating that God "used evolution" to make His creation); and (3) a religious (and typically Bible-argued) version of young-earth creationism ("YEC"), which frontally rejected all evolutionary concepts, elements, and compromises.

However, at the close of the 20th century, one more option emerged, unlike the other three options: the **"Intelligent Design Movement"** view of origins (herein "**IDM**"). Some of the IDM's essential elements, in theory and in practice, are comparable to those of the humanism–based Enlightenment, a special revelation–ignoring form of humanism which emerged in Europe (and America) as the deism of the late 1700s.

For example, the IDM, like the Enlightenment deists, avoids appealing to the Bible as authoritative "special revelation", opting for an epistemological methodology of empirically based human reason. Theological implications of this self–imposed limitation are analyzed, with an introduction to IDM by one of its leaders (William Dembski), followed by some YEC analysts' observations, educational ministry concerns, theological criticisms — and some relevant Scripture.

Shades of the Enlightenment! The "spirit" of the Enlightenment has returned (epistemologically speaking), — or else a "kindred spirit" has, — in the form of the so–called **"Intelligent Design Movement"** (**"IDM"**). But, are IDMers and Enlightenment deists really "birds of a feather", theologically speaking?

Today's IDMers wear today's fashions and they argue from data which is quantified using computer technology, — so IDMers would not be mistaken on today's streets for François-Marie Arouet Voltaire[1] or Thomas Jefferson.[2] However, is there a *basic theological difference* between Voltaire's (or Jefferson's) "human reason" epistemology and the recent IDMers' "let's–leave–the–Bible–out–of–this–discussion" epistemology? *Déjà vu?* But why ask? Because today we repeatedly see Intelligent Design Movement gurus, with **closed Bibles**, recycling the old deists' humanistic methodology of "human reason".

I. <u>WHAT IS THE "INTELLIGENT DESIGN MOVEMENT"?</u>

To appreciate what IDM is, especially from an evangelical Christian theology perspective, one needs to appreciate the major intellectual alternatives which historically preceded it.

During most of the latter half of the 20th century, the Christian community faced three major options regarding what to believe about cosmic and human origins:

(1) the secular version of "evolution" (illustrated by Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and subsequent neo–Darwinists, e.g., Carl Sagan, Richard Dawkins, Stephen Jay Gould);

(2) several varieties of "theistic evolution" (old–earth theories which postulated that God "used evolution" to make His creation, *e.g.*, Hugh Ross' "progressive creation", Teilhard du Chardin's "Star Wars"–like Piltdown–and–pantheism theories), Norm Geisler; and

(3) a religious (and typically Bible–argued) version of "literal–seven–day" creation (a/k/a YEC, meaning "young–earth–creation"), which frontally rejects all evolutionary science concepts or compromises (illustrated by such notable science doctors as Henry Morris, Duane Gish, A.E. Wilder–Smith, Steven Austin, John Morris, Werner Gitt, David Menton, Jan Mercer, Bill Cooper[3], Malcolm Bowden, Donald DeYoung, Harold Slusher, Jonathan Sarfati, Andrew Snelling, Carl Wieland, Thomas Barnes, Melvin Cook, Gary Parker, Ethel Nelson, — just to mention a few creationists from our own generation.

However, at the close of the 20th century, one more option emerged, unlike any of the other three options**:** the "intelligent design movement" (**"IDM"**). Following is an extended quotation from William Dembski, one of IDM's leaders, to define its essence and recent history:

> According to Darwinism, undirected natural causes are solely responsible for the origin and development of life. In particular, Darwinism rules out the possibility of God or any guiding intelligence playing a role in life's origin and development. Within western culture Darwinism's ascent has been truly meteoric. And yet throughout its ascent there have always been dissenters who regarded as inadequate the Darwinian vision that undirected natural causes could produce the full diversity and complexity of life.
>
> Until the mid 1980s this dissent was sporadic [*sic*], focused largely at the grass roots [*sic*], and seeking mainly to influence public opinion through the courts (and not very effectively at that). With the Intelligent Design movement this dissent has now become focused, promising to overturn the cultural dominance of Darwinism much as the freedom movements in eastern Europe overturned the political dominance of Marxism at the end of the 1980s.
>
> The Intelligent Design movement begins with the work of Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley, Michael Denton, Dean Kenyon, and Phillip Johnson. **Without employing the Bible as a scientific text,**

these scholars critiqued Darwinism on scientific and philosophical grounds. On scientific grounds they found Darwinism an inadequate framework for biology. On philosophical grounds they found Darwinism hopelessly entangled with naturalism, the view that nature is self-sufficient and thus without need of God or any guiding intelligence. More recently, scholars like Michael Behe, Stephen Meyer, Paul Nelson, Jonathan Wells, and myself have taken the next step, proposing a positive research program wherein intelligent causes become the key for understanding the diversity and complexity of life.

Through this two-pronged approach of critiquing Darwinism on the one hand and providing a positive alternative on the other, the Intelligent Design movement has rapidly gained adherents among the best and brightest in the academy. Already it is responsible for Darwinism losing its corner on the intellectual market. If fully successful, Intelligent Design will unseat not just Darwinism but also Darwinism's cultural legacy. And since no aspect of western culture has escaped Darwinism's influence, so no aspect of western culture will escape reevaluation in the light of Intelligent Design.

What then is Intelligent Design? Intelligent Design begins with the observation that intelligent causes can do things which undirected natural causes cannot. Undirected natural causes can place scrabble pieces on a board, but cannot arrange the pieces as meaningful words or sentences. To obtain a meaningful arrangement requires an intelligent cause. This intuition, that there is a fundamental distinction between undirected natural causes on the one hand and intelligent causes on the other, has underlain the design arguments of past centuries.

Throughout the centuries theologians have argued that nature exhibits features which nature itself cannot explain, but which instead require an intelligence over and above nature. From Church fathers like Minucius Felix and Basil the Great (3rd and 4th centuries) to medieval scholastics like Moses Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas (12th and 13th centuries) to reformed thinkers like Thomas Reid and Charles Hodge (18th and 19th centuries), we find theologians making design arguments, arguing from the data of nature to an intelligence operating over and above nature.

Design arguments are old hat. Indeed, design arguments continue to be a staple of philosophy and religion courses. The most famous of the design arguments is William Paley's watchmaker argument (as in Paley's *Natural Theology,* published 1802). According to Paley, if we find a watch in a field, the watch's adaptation of means

to ends (that is, the adaptation of its parts to telling time) ensure that it is the product of an intelligence, and not simply the output of undirected natural processes. So too, the marvelous adaptations of means to ends in organisms, whether at the level of whole organisms, or at the level of various subsystems (Paley focused especially on the mammalian eye), ensure that organisms are the product of an intelligence.

Though intuitively appealing, Paley's argument had until recently fallen into disuse. This is now changing. In the last five years design has witnessed an explosive resurgence. Scientists are beginning to realize that design can be rigorously formulated as a scientific theory. What has kept design outside the scientific mainstream these last hundred and thirty years is the absence of precise methods for distinguishing intelligently caused objects from unintelligently caused ones. For design to be a fruitful scientific concept, scientists have to be sure they can reliably determine whether something is designed.

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What has emerged is a new program for scientific research known as Intelligent Design. Within biology, Intelligent Design is a theory of biological origins and development. Its fundamental claim is that intelligent causes are necessary to explain the complex, information-rich structures of biology, and that these causes are empirically detectable.

To say intelligent causes are empirically detectable is to say there exist well-defined methods that, on the basis of observational features of the world, are capable of reliably distinguishing intelligent causes from undirected natural causes. Many special sciences have already developed such methods for drawing this distinction-notably forensic science, cryptography, archeology, and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (as in the movie *Contact*).

Whenever these methods detect intelligent causation, the underlying entity they uncover is information.

> [*NOTICE: at this point, Dembski should indicate that YEC biochemist A.E. Wilder–Smith, who earned 3 doctorates in bioscience fields, thoroughly provided both the scientific and educational foundation for this biochemical information–based breakthrough insight, — accordingly, all the IDMers have done is "jump on the bandwagon" of Wilder–Smith's research and*

teaching, and have built somewhat thereupon — JJSJ].

Intelligent Design properly formulated is a theory of information. Within such a theory, information becomes a reliable indicator of intelligent causation as well as a proper object for scientific investigation. Intelligent Design thereby becomes a theory for detecting and measuring information, explaining its origin, and tracing its flow. Intelligent Design is therefore not the study of intelligent causes per se, but of informational pathways induced by intelligent causes.

As a result, Intelligent Design presupposes neither a creator nor miracles. Intelligent Design is theologically minimalist. It detects intelligence without speculating about the nature of the intelligence. Biochemist Michael Behe's "irreducible complexity," physicist David Bohm's "active information," mathematician Marcel Schützenberger's "functional complexity," and my own "complex specified information" are alternate routes to the same reality.

It is the empirical detectability of intelligent causes that renders Intelligent Design a fully scientific theory, and distinguishes it from the design arguments of philosophers, or what has traditionally been called "natural theology." The world contains events, objects, and structures which exhaust the explanatory resources of undirected natural causes, and which can be adequately explained only by recourse to intelligent causes. Scientists are now in a position to demonstrate this rigorously. Thus what has been a long-standing philosophical intuition is now being cashed out as a scientific research program.

Intelligent Design entails that naturalism in all forms be rejected. Metaphysical naturalism, the view that undirected natural causes wholly govern the world, is to be rejected because it is false. Methodological naturalism, the view that for the sake of science, scientific explanation ought never exceed undirected natural causes, is to be rejected because it stifles inquiry. Nothing is gained by pretending science can get along without intelligent causes. Rather, because intelligent causes are empirically detectable, science must ever remain open to evidence of their activity.

Where does this leave special creation and theistic evolution? Logically speaking, Intelligent Design is compatible with everything from the starkest creationism (i.e., God intervening at every point to create new species) to the most subtle and far-ranging evolution

(i.e., God seamlessly melding all organisms together in a great tree of life). For Intelligent Design the first question is not how organisms came to be (though this is a research question that needs to be addressed), but whether they demonstrate clear, empirically detectable marks of being intelligently caused. In principle, an evolutionary process can exhibit such "marks of intelligence" as much as any act of special creation.

If you're a Christian, what is the theological payoff of Intelligent Design? It is important to realize that Intelligent Design is not an apologetic ploy to cajole people into God's Kingdom. Intelligent Design is a scientific research program.

That said, Intelligent Design does have implications for theology. The most severe challenge to theology over the last two hundred years has been naturalism. Within western culture, naturalism has become the default position for all serious inquiry. From biblical studies to law to education to art to science to the media, inquiry is expected to proceed only under the supposition of naturalism.

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By making the design in nature evident, Intelligent Design promises to cure western culture of this unfortunate Enlightenment hangover. Indeed, Intelligent Design provides the clearest refutation of naturalism to date. Naturalism looks to science to justify its rejection of purpose in nature. Intelligent Design shows that naturalism fails on its own terms. To be sure, there are good philosophical reasons for rejecting naturalism-the very existence of the world and the intelligibility of the world raise questions which science cannot answer, and which point beyond the world. Intelligent Design shows there are also good scientific reasons for rejecting naturalism.

For Further Study: The Intelligent Design movement begins with the publication of *The Mystery of Life's Origin* by Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley, and Roger Olson (Philosophical Library, 1984) and *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis by Michael Denton* (Alder & Adler, 1986). These two books presented a powerful scientific critique of evolutionary theory. Moreover, they set the tone for subsequent publications by refusing to mix the scientific evidence for design with theological views about creation.

The next key text in the movement was Phillip Johnson's *Darwin on Trial* (InterVarsity, 1991). Johnson not only reviewed the scientific evidence against evolutionary theory, but also showed how evolutionary theory was hopelessly compromised with naturalism.

Johnson continued his analysis in *Reason in the Balance* (InterVarsity, 1995) and *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (InterVarsity, 1997).

Dean Kenyon and Percival Davis's *Of Pandas and People* (Haughton, 1993) and J. P. Moreland's *Creation Hypothesis* (InterVarsity, 1994) proved transitional texts. Whereas previous texts criticized evolutionary theory without offering a positive alternative [*sic*], these texts began examining what a design-theoretic alternative to evolutionary theory would look like.

With the publication of Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* (Free Press, 1996) the dam burst. Here for the first time [*sic*] were the outlines of a full-fledged scientific research program for design in biology. Behe's book was reviewed everywhere from *Science* and *Nature* to the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal.* It was voted *Christianity Today's* "Book of the Year." Its impact has been phenomenal.

My own *The Design Inference* (Cambridge) and *Mere Creation: Reclaiming the Book of Nature* (InterVarsity) will appear fall of 1998. Key researchers with books in preparation include Stephen Meyer, Paul Nelson, Del Ratzsch, John Mark Reynolds, and John Wells. The movement has a professional journal entitled *Origins & Design* (www.arn.org). The Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture coordinates many of its efforts (www.discovery.org).

Quoting from William A. Dembski, "The Intelligent Design Movement" (9-9-2006, posted on the website of the Access Research Network, under "William A. Dembski Files"), at www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd_idmovement.htm, reprinted from *Cosmic Pursuit* (spring 1998). Notice that Dembski alluded to Paley's Natural Theology, the theological and historical importance of which Dembski understates. (For a modern reprint, see Bill Cooper's edition, with an updated introduction: Paley's Watchmaker, an abridged edition of William Paley's *Natural Theology,* first published in 1802 (Chichester, West Sussex, England: New Wine Press, 1997; available via www.answersingenesis.org). In fact, historically speaking, Paley's Natural Theology was a large part of why Charles Darwin never qualified for a graduate program in anything (much less in any scientific discipline), earning only a bachelor's degree in divinity!

Of special *theological* importance, in Dembski's introductory summary, are a few theology–relevant observations:

(1) IDMers ***avoid using the Bible*** to obtain authoritative information regarding their "scientific" investigation topics (and,

consequently, Jesus is never mentioned as having proved that He is the Creator incarnate, nor is His crucifixion and resurrection ever promoted as the solution[4] to the universal curse of sin and death);

(2) IDMers have thus far limited their analytical activities to proving "intelligent design" in the created universe and its observable inhabitants, noticeably avoiding empirical studies that show the "natural science"–observable effects of sin, sufferings, death, and divine judgment;[5] and

(3) IDMers are content to join forces and co–labor with doctrinally "strange bedfellows" (yet, despite such theological diversity, those "ecumenical" collaborations rarely *if ever* include any Bible–promoting Protestant YEC "literalists"!), if one assumes that theological soundness is important for teaching truth about the Creator.

(The theological importance of these three trends will be discussed later in this paper.) Also, it is troubling how leading IDMers ignore and/or understate the decades of massive contributions already made by the Biblical creationists — since the debut of Whitcomb & Morris' Genesis Flood launched the modern revival of creation science (and creation theology),[6] not to mention the gargantuan achievements (under God) of Drs. Wilder–Smith, Gish, Austin, Mercer, Cooper, etc.

II. HOW IS THE "INTELLIGENT DESIGN MOVEMENT" LIKE DEISM?

Before answering this question, one should review of what Enlightenment "deism" was, especially what deism used for its epistemological methodology. In particular, notice especially how beliefs about "truth" are related to the powers of human "reason".

Theologically speaking, what was the essence of "Enlightenment" thinking? Was that philosophic fad a true breakthrough into the "light" of truth? Or was the "Enlightenment" a recoiling from the Protestant Reformation's blast of Scriptural light? Thus, by side–stepping the authoritative foundation of ***Biblical*** epistemology, was the "Enlightenment" a reactionary attempt to reëstablish a neo–"Dark Ages" of humanistic epistemology? These important questions were soundly answered, some 30 years ago, by a genuinely Protestant scholar, Francis Schaeffer:

> The French philosopher Voltaire (1694–1778), often called "father of the Enlightenment," was greatly influenced by the results of this bloodless revolution in England [i.e., the Glorious Revolution of

1688, ending the Stuart dynasty] .... The impact of the Bloodless Revolution and the ensuing freedom of public expression is shown in Voltaire's *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (1733). ... While Voltaire is sometimes overflattering about English conditions, he may be excused because of the terrible contrast in France. There were indeed vast areas in France which needed righting, but when the French Revolution tried to reproduce the English conditions without the Reformation base, but rather on Voltaire's humanist Enlightenment base, the result was a bloodbath and a rapid breakdown into the authoritarian rule of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The utopian dream of the Enlightenment can be summed up by five words: Reason, nature, happiness, progress, and liberty. It was thoroughly secular in its thinking. The humanistic elements which had risen during the Renaissance came to flood tide in the Enlightenment. Here was man starting from himself absolutely. **And if the humanistic elements of the Renaissance stand in sharp contrast to the Reformation, the Enlightenment was in total antithesis to it. The two stood for and were based upon absolutely different things** [*i.e., The Reformation's Bible and the Enlightenment's "human reason"*] **in an absolute way, and they produced absolutely different results.**

To the Enlightenment thinkers, man and society were perfectible. And the French romantically held to this view even in the midst of the Reign of Terror. Voltaire sketched out four epochs of history, of which his own was the apex. Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794), a mathematician, who was one of the philosophers of Voltaire's circle and who was the author of *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1793–1794), could talk of nine stages of progress as he hid in a garret in Paris while hiding from the Terror! While hiding for his very life from Robespierre's secret police, he wrote: "We have witnessed the development of a new doctrine which is to deliver the final blow to the already tottering structure of prejudice. It is the idea of the limitless perfectibility of the human species. . . . " Later he managed to escape from Paris, was recognized, arrested, and imprisoned, dying in custody while awaiting his turn at the guillotine.

If these men had a religion, it was deism. The deists believed in a God who had created the world but who had no contact with it now, and who had not revealed truth to men [*such as the revealed truth of the Bible*]**. If there was a God, he was silent.** And Voltaire demanded no speech of him — save when, after the Lisbon earthquake in 1755, Voltaire illogically complained about his nonintervention. The men of the French Enlightenment had no base

but their own finiteness. They looked across the Channel to a Reformation England, tried to build without a Christian base, and ended with a massacre and Napoleon as authoritarian ruler.

In June 1789, the first phase of the liberal bourgeois plan of the French Revolution was at its height. Jacques–Louis David (1748–1825) depicted this in his painting *The Oath of the Tennis Court*. Here members of the National Assembly swore to establish a constitution. Their base, consciously, was purely a humanistic theory of rights. On August 26, 1789, they issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It sounded fine, but it had nothing to rest upon. In the Declaration of the Rights of Man what was called "the Supreme Being" equaled "the sovereignty of the nation" — that is, the general will of the people. Not only was there a contrast to England's Bloodless Revolution [*which explicitly rested upon a Protestant base*], but a sharp contrast with what resulted in the United States from the Declaration of Independence which was made thirteen years earlier [*as well as the U.S. Constitution, which was authored in 1787, two years before, with an explicit allusion to Jesus via the "our Lord" date clause in its Article VII*]. One had the Reformation base, the other did not.

It took two years for the National Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution (1789–1791). Within a year it was a dead letter. By that time what is often known as the Second Revolution was in motion, leading to a bloodbath that ended with the revolutionary leaders themselves being killed.

To make their outlook clear, the French changed the calendar [*which, by its dichotomy of "B.C." and "A.D.", recognizes the Advent of Christ as the central event on world history*] and called 1792 the "year one," and destroyed many of the things of the past, even suggesting the destruction of the cathedral at Chartres. They proclaimed the goddess of Reason in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris and in other churches in France, including Chartres. In Paris, the goddess was personified by an actress, Desmoiselle Candeille, carried shoulder–high [*like a pope or a Cæsar*] into the cathedral by men dressed in Roman costumes.

Like the humanists of the Renaissance, the men of the Enlightenment pushed aside the Christian base and heritage and looked back to the old pre–Christian times. In Voltaire's home in Ferney the picture he hung (in such a way on the wall at the foot of his bed that it was the first thing he saw each day) was a painting of the [*Roman*] goddess Diana with a small new crescent

moon on her head and a very large one under her feet. She is reaching down to help men.

How quickly the humanist ideals came to grief! In September 1792 began the massacre in which some 1,300 prisoners were killed. Before it was all over, the government and its agents killed 40,000 people [*compare this to the 70,000 Huguenot Protestants whom French Catholics massacred on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572,[7] at the order of Queen–Mother Catherine de Medici*], many of them peasants. Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794), the revolutionary leader, was himself executed in July 1794. This destruction came not from outside the system; it was produced by the system. As in the later Russian Revolution the revolutionaries on their humanist base had only two options — anarchy or repression.

The parallels between the course of the French Revolution and the later Russian Revolution, both resting on the same base, are striking. . . . .

Quoting from Francis A. Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture (Wheaton: Crossway / Good News Publishers, 1976), pages 120–124.

The essence of the Enlightenment, therefore, was a humanistic attempt to build a deistic religion and a deistic society on "human reason", divorced from Biblical revelation truth. The results were sinful. The results were pathetically sad, spiritually tragic, economically wasteful, socially wicked, theologically stupid, intellectually idiotic, and culturally fatal.

Humanism is a no friend to man (or to woman). Humanism, because it ignores the ultimate source and depository of inerrant truth,[8] is also no friend to real science, yet the revealed truth of Scripture is.[9]

Closing the Bible is an unwise approach to researching, understanding, and/or teaching about creation. Rather, opening and reading (and diligently studying) the Holy Bible is a wise approach to learning about, understanding about, and preparing to teach about God's creation. To avoid using the Bible in a so–called educational "ministry" is a humanistic approach to educational "ministry". And, being careful to avoid giving Christ the credit, for creation, is neither godly nor "wise".[10]

Thus, IDMers have a humanistic "let's–leave–the–Bible–out–of–this–discussion" epistemology. This practice resembles the humanistic "Reason"–based epistemology of the Enlightenment deists. Consider specifically these similarities between the Enlightenment deists and today's IDMers:

(1) both deists and IDMers avoid using the Bible to obtain authoritative information regarding their "scientific" investigation topics (and consequently Jesus is never mentioned as having proved that He is the Creator incarnate);

(2) both deists and IDMers have thus far limited their analytical activities to proving "intelligent design" in the created universe and its observable inhabitants, noticeably avoiding empirical studies that show the "natural science"–observable effects of sin, sufferings, death, and divine judgment; and

(3) both deists and IDMers are content to join forces and co–labor with doctrinally "strange bedfellows" (yet those ecumenical collaborations rarely *if ever* include any Bible–promoting Protestant "literalists"!), if one assumes that theological soundness is important for teaching truth about the Creator.

Consider the public teachings of the Enlightenment deists, especially what they taught about the Holy Bible. Voltaire, remembered as the "father of the Enlightenment", refused to base his understanding of authoritative truth and values on the Holy Bible as God's written revelation. Likewise, Thomas Jefferson. Likewise, Thomas Paine. Likewise, Baron Montesquieu. Likewise, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Likewise, David Hume. Likewise, Marquis de Condorcet. Likewise, Benjamin Franklin. Likewise, Maximilien Robespierre. Likewise, Russia's Catherine the Great. Likewise, Prussia's Frederick the Great. Likewise, Elihu Palmer. Likewise, Ethan Allen. (Et cetera.)

And likewise, the recent "Intelligence Design Movement", — like the Enlightenment deists, — avoids recognizing (much less appealing to) the Bible as authoritative "special revelation", but rather IDM limits its epistemological methodology to using human "reason".

What theological implications might one expect from such a humanistic epistemology? What about the IDMers' track record for acknowledging the Biblical creation movement's achievements? What about the IDMers' track record for endorsing Biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and authority (as such are understood by what Francis Schaeffer called a "Reformation base")? What about the IDMers' track record for teaching science about the historic worldwide Flood? How do IDMers handle the geophysical evidences of Earths relatively "young" (i.e., thousands of years old, not billions) age?

Young-earth creationists and ID theorists: similarities and differences

Young-earth creationists (YECs) and the Intelligent Design Movement (IDM) are natural allies in many ways, although we have

major differences as well. See **AiG's views on the Intelligent Design Movement** [*hyperlink omitted*]**.**

Dr Henry Morris, the founder of the modern YEC movement, recently wrote a review [*hyperlink omitted*] of The Design Revolution, by the scientific leader of the IDM, Dr William Dembski. Morris pointed out, with ample justification, how YECs developed many of the insights now claimed by the IDM, long before the IDM was even thought of. For example, the late Dr Richard Bliss long ago used the **electric motor of the bacterial flagellum** [*hyperlink omitted*] as an example of design, now a favourite of the IDM (the IDM doesn't seem to have caught up with YECs on the **ATP synthase motor** [*hyperlink omitted*]); Morris himself has long differentiated horizontal and vertical changes, equivalent to noninformation-gaining and information-gaining; triple doctorate A.E. Wilder-Smith influenced many IDM people, such as Drs Charles Thaxton and Dean Kenyon, about the whole information concept. Also, in 1991, *Answers in Genesis* was using the **information concept to elucidate the boundaries of the created kinds, years before Johnson and Dembski came on the scene** [*hyperlink omitted*]**.**

Dembski replied to Morris in turn, and generously wrote

> Nonetheless, it was their literature that first got me thinking about how improbable it is to generate biological complexity and how this problem might be approached scientifically. A.E. Wilder-Smith was particularly important to me in this regard. Making rigorous his intuitive ideas about information has been the impetus for much of my research. . . . .

Apologetic value?

Dembski reasonably points out that he has furthered the information argument by *quantifying* it, extending the work on *specified complexity.* He also argued that ID was more effective in apologetics than YEC:

> *Take, for instance, the well-known former atheist Antony Flew, whose conversion to theism (albeit a weak form of it) recently made international news. What did Flew cite as a key factor in his conversion? Not creationism but rather design-theoretic arguments for the intelligent origin of life.*

Here, one would have to go along with Morris again — his long-serving ally, biochemist Dr Duane Gish long ago raised severe critiques of chemical evolution long before the IDM existed, as we have raised many [*such critiques*] independently (see **Q&A: Origin of life** [*hyperlink omitted*; *note: Gish and Wilder–Smith already proved such*]). It also shows a weakness of the approach: that Flew did not gain saving faith. The Bible is clear that revelation from nature is enough to condemn man (Romans 1:20), but not to save him. For that, we need the preaching of the gospel, and that is found in Scripture (Matthew 28:18—20; Luke 24:47; Romans 10:13—15). See also **Design is not enough!** [*hyperlink omitted*]

It's also notable that Flew is still bothered by the problem of evil, which is answered coherently only under a biblical Creation / Fall / Redemption framework, where death and suffering are intruders, the result of *sin*. See **Why would a loving God allow so much death and suffering?** [*hyperlink omitted*], and contrast it with **The god of an old earth: Does the Bible teach that disease, bloodshed, violence and pain have always been 'part of life'?** [*hyperlink omitted*]

Materialism: our common foe?

Dembski certainly has a commendable goal of ''dislodging materialism''. He realises that evolution is founded not upon evidence but rather on the *interpretation* of this evidence within a materialistic framework (see **Refuting Evolution ch. 1** [*hyperlink omitted*]*).* However, materialism in *biology* was preceded historically and logically by materialism in *geology* (see **Darwin, Lyell and billions of years** [*hyperlink omitted*]). But Dembski fails to see how his own old-earth belief is an inadvertent deduction from the materialism in geology (and astronomy).

Even worse, much of Darwin's opposition came from people who were essentially old-earth ID proponents, and he scored many points against them (see **Darwin versus a faulty creation model** and **Annie's death and the problem of evil**). [*hyperlinks omitted*]

There is no reason to believe that today's IDM will do any better than yesterday's, when they have *already conceded a materialistic framework of geological history*. Dr Terry Mortenson's book **The Great Turning Point** [Master Books, 2004; available @ www.answersingenesis.org e-bookstore] *documents how the undermining of biblical history started by questioning the biblical timescale* and *order of events*. See also his article "Philosophical

naturalism and the age of the earth: are they related?" from *The Master''s Seminary Journal*.

Quoting from Jonathan Sarfati, "ID Theorist Blunders on the Bible: Reply to Dr. William Dembski", posted as www.answersingenesis.org/docs2005/0207dembski.asp, on *Answers in Genesis* website (dated 2-7-2005)**.**

Indeed, it appears that the **IDMers are still blind to the historic fact that the quest for truth, about the natural world and its design, was foundationally short–circuited** (by Scripture–rejecting geologists, like Charles Lyell) **on geo-physical science issues,[11] prior to Darwin's *Origin of Species*, —** as is irrefutably documented by Dr. Terry Mortenson (of Answers in Genesis) in his benchmark work**, *The Great Turning Point*, q.v.**

Another young-earth-creation scholar has analyzed the shortcomings of IDM, emphasizing that a recognition of creation's design, apart from a clear understanding of Who that Designer is, treats the creation as if it is more important than the Creator:

> **The ID movement does have several positives. ID may serve as a useful tool in preliminary discussions about God and creation to gain an audience that might be turned off at the mention of the Bible.**
>
> **Since the movement is very careful not to associate itself with Christianity or any formal religion, some think it will stand a better chance of gaining acceptance as an alternative to Darwinism in the schools. The movement has produced many resources which support the biblical creationist viewpoint. It makes clear that Darwinism/naturalism is based on the presupposition that the supernatural does not exist, thus affecting the way one interprets the scientific evidence.**
>
> **However, the major problem with the ID movement is a divorce of the Creator from creation.** The Creator and His creation cannot be separated; they reflect on each other.
>
> In today's culture, many are attracted to the ID movement because they can decide for themselves who the creator is——a Great Spirit, Brahman, Allah, God, etc. The current movement focuses more on what is designed, rather than who designed it. Thus, leaders in the movement do not have problems with accepting an old age for the earth or allowing evolution to play a vital role once the designer formed the basics of life.

Proponents of ID fail to understand that a belief in long ages for the earth formed the foundation of Darwinism. If God's Word is not true concerning the age of the earth, then maybe it's not true concerning other events of the Creation Week; and maybe God was not a necessary part of the equation for life after all.

Without the framework of the Bible and the understanding that evil entered the world through man's actions (Genesis 3), God appears sloppy and incompetent. People ask why God is unable to prevent evil from thwarting His plans, resulting in such poor design, instead of understanding that because of the Fall there is now a cursed design.

God's role as Creator is foundational to His role as Redeemer.

In addition, because the ID movement does not acknowledge God as Redeemer, there seems to be no final solution for the evil in this world; and by all appearances it will continue to reign supreme. However, when trusting the Bible as opposed to neglecting it, we read that Jesus clearly conquered death with the Resurrection (Romans 6:3—10) and that one day death will no longer reign (Revelation 21:4). Again, the Creator and the creation reflect on each other.

Romans 1:20 states that all men know about God through His creation. However, recognizing that there is a designer is only the first step. Colossians 1:15—20 and 2 Peter 3:3—6 demonstrate how God's role as Creator and Redeemer are inexorably intertwined. Again, God's role as Creator is foundational to His role as Redeemer. Recognizing a designer is not enough to be saved; submitting to the Redeemer is also necessary.

The Creator and His creation cannot be separated; therefore, knowledge of God must come through both general revelation (nature) and special revelation (the Bible). The theologian Louis Berkhof said, "…… since the entrance of sin into the world, man can gather true knowledge about God from His general revelation only if he studies it in the light of Scripture." It is only then that the entire truth about God and what is seen around us can be fully understood and used to help people understand the bad news in Genesis and the good news of Jesus Christ. [*footnotes omitted; emphasis added*]

Quoting from Georgia Purdom, "The Intelligent Design Movement: Does the Identity of the Creator Really Matter?", posted on the *Answers in Genesis* creation science ministry website, at

www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v1/n1/intelligent-design-movement, (5-2-2006), *including citation to* Louis Berkhof, Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938), page 60.

III.   AS PRACTICAL MINISTRY, IS "IDM" STRATEGY A WISE IDEA ?

Which is more important, to "save the culture", or to publicly honor the Creator? If the **means** used to "save the culture" requires compromising our testimony to the Creator, what is the true **end** being served — God Himself or human culture? The two greatest commandments are to love God and to love your (human) neighbor, yet the axiological priority must not get reversed! First and foremost, loving and honoring and glorifying God is commanded; — *only after that* is there a moral duty to love mankind.

> But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked, tempting Him, and saying, "Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"
>
> Jesus said unto him, " **'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' This is the <u>first</u> and great commandment.** And the <u>second</u> *is* like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Quoting **Matthew 22:34–40.**[12]   Accordingly, any attempt to "reach out" to a human neighbor (in the name of "save–the–culture" and/or educational "ministry") is *not a **theologically acceptable excuse*** to short–cutting one's highest duty to love God with our hearts, souls, and minds.

In short, it seems that the deistic approach of the IDMers all–too–quickly leads to a subversion of the two greatest commandments, allowing God to be pushed back to "second place" while IDMers first and foremost "reach the needs" of humans (by defeating evolutionary "naturalism" and/or "materialism" without using the Bible).

Also, on a related (yet distinct) question, how theologically serious are the IDMers about teaching the "truth"? Like Enlightenment deists, IDMers carefully avoid endorsing the Holy Bible as the ultimate authority for answering questions about Creation, about universal mortality, about the worldwide Flood, and about other "natural science"–related topics. (*See* **APPENDIX "A"**.)

The topic of universal mortality is a particularly awkward topic for IDM. If the world and its inhabitants, including mankind, are so wonderfully designed — and

they are — how do you explain the ubiquitous curse of entropy, the corruption that pervades everything and everyone on Earth, and inexorably leads all life–forms to suffering, disease, injury, and death? If everything is so brilliantly designed, why is life a dying process — that end in death? Genesis has the answers to all of these questions (and the Epistle to the Romans provides explanations at an even deeper theological level), but IDM has nothing to offer!

Similarly, what about the worldwide Flood? IDMers make no meaningful contribution here, yet the Book of Genesis provides the answers that fit the scientific evidence. Obviously, this is not the "best of all possible worlds", at present. Why? Although the Genesis Flood focuses on <u>divine judgment</u>, this critically important theological topic (with its many natural science implications) is effectively avoided by IDMers, — just like it was by the deists of the Enlightenment. (And, this very flaw of the deists is what opened the "door" to Darwinism's theoretical explanation of why the natural world demonstrated predation, suffering, and <u>death</u>.)

Why not use quantitative bioscience to show how Earth's human population growth fits the Genesis Flood account, but not evolutionary "old–earth" scenarios?[13] Again, the Genesis Flood is a topic lost on the IDMers, just like it was on deists of the Enlightenment.

Is this an indicator of how serious the IDMers are about teaching truth? Why would an IDMer avoid praising the Bible for what it is — God's written revelation to mankind, the error–free and ultimate authority for recognizing and understanding all true history, all true science, and the meaning of life (including the truth about human life's origins)? One may argue that IDM is like the Book of Esther, obviously documenting the glory of God — yet without expressly mentioning His name. (If so, what could be wrong with that?) Without becoming unduly distracted with trying to guess (or quote) the personal "motives" of each IDMer, it is nonetheless fair to recognize some *observable trends,* regarding the results of some IDM teaching. Indeed, an IDM commitment to using a particular teaching method, in some contexts, may reveal something about the **teaching priorities** which many IDMers have for teaching *certain* theological truths.

For example, suppose someone's life goal was to personally honor the Lord Jesus Christ, and to publicize His glory to others. (Notice that this is a *doxological* life–goal that somewhat overlaps with, but is <u>not</u> the same as, a life–goal of primarily trying to "save a lot of sinners from going to Hell" when they die.) Is it excusable to continually fail to accredit Christ, in public, for His work in creation?

Both IDM and deism, in academic practice (if not also in doctrine), are careful to avoid recognizing the Holy Bible as being God's perfect and authoritative revelation of true information about Creation. Consequently, both IDM and deism **cannot** explain the created world or living creatures — or even mankind — as

being divinely created by the same God Who has provided redemption from the empirically observable curse of sin and earth.

Indeed, deists and IDMers, alike, have seriously stumbled at global "natural history" evidences of **sin, suffering, death, and divine judgment.** As a practical matter, what are the educational consequences of providing inadequate answers to questions (and creation evidences) about sin, suffering, death, and divine judgment? **In fact, it was the very problem of suffering, dying, and death** (unexplained by the deists)**, which Charles Darwin extrapolated his "natural selection" biology theory upon.**

In other words, the deistic approach to explaining nature as intelligently designed, without the counter-balancing explanation (from the Bible) regarding *why* that created life was dying, opportunistically opened the door for Darwinism to replace intelligent design as the popularly accepted explanation for the existence of life. The problem of entropy — which leads to death in all life–forms — needs to be explained by integrating Biblical information with the observable data of nature. (*For example, see attached* **APPENDIX "B".**)

Unsurprisingly, some are reluctant to endorse the Bible's teaching about sin, suffering, and death – people don't want to be reminded of sin and suffering and disease and death (and divine judgment after death). Therefore, to limit one's "ministry" to documenting "intelligent design" is a lot more "positive", popular, and profitable.)

In public, like the deists of the past, IDMers *refuse to refute* those who deny the Bible's divine inspiration, inerrancy, and authoritativeness.

Even worse, deists and IDMers teach natural science *as if* one should *avoid* acknowledging the divine truthfulness, inerrancy, and authoritativeness of the Holy Bible, especially as applied to how (and what) the Bible teaches about Creation. Because Christ is the world's Creator, the ultimate effect of publicly practicing deism is to cheat the Lord Jesus Christ out of divine glory He deserves as the Creator. The deists' academic practice — of minimizing Who Jesus really is — fails to properly "honor" Christ. **In other words, <u>deism</u> dishonors the Christ of the Bible, by cheating Him out of glory He rightly deserves. As shown above, <u>IDMers</u> similarly cheat Christ in public.**

But isn't it important, in "educational" ministry, for a Christian to use Biblical information to provide authoritative information regarding Who the Creator really is, — namely, that all of the natural world's Creator is the same Lord Who became incarnate as Jesus Christ, Who alone provides redemption from sin, unto those who believe in Him, and Who otherwise remains as the divine Judge of all who don't?

Because most of the leaders of the intelligent design movement (*see short bios below*) are not fully Bible-believing scientists and researchers, their primary thrust is not to convince people that the Bible is totally true from its very first verse, including its gospel message. Also, while it is difficult to judge the motives of each one, we don't see much evidence that these well-intentioned scholars are using their abilities to point people to the most important aspect of who the Creator of the universe is: that Jesus Christ is Savior. In terms of eternity, what does it really profit if a person accepts there is a Creator, but doesn't recognize that He is foremost Christ the Redeemer (Colossians 1)?

Knowing the sinful heart of man, we believe it's even possible that the next generation of scientists may come to believe in some sort of vague, New Age designing intelligence that has been manipulating DNA over billions of years — so long as this "intelligence" is not the God of the Bible, who is not only Savior, but also Judge.

At AiG [i.e., *Answers in Genesis* ministry], our commitment is to share the truths and accuracy of the Bible——starting with Genesis, in which is found the foundational logic for all the rest of Christian doctrine — with the hope that people will go far beyond just a recognition that there is a Creator (almost 90% of Americans do anyway, but most are not born-again as the Bible would describe).

AiG faced a situation some four years ago that can help illustrate this point. AiG lecturers were invited to speak in a Muslim country on creation, but a number of restrictions were placed on what we could say. We could not bring up biblical doctrine — especially the gospel message — in any of the talks, and were requested to speak only on the scientific aspects of the creation versus evolution controversy. Even though this would have been a receptive audience (most orthodox Muslims believe in creation), we nevertheless declined their kind invitation.

You see, our purpose as a ministry is not just to convince people that there is a Creator, but that He is far more than that — that the Creator is Christ, and is the only way to be saved.

Quoting Mark Looy, "It's Intelligent Design, But is That Good Enough?" (posted on the *Answers in Genesis* website, as www.answersingenesis.org/docs2/4257gc3-24-2000.asp, March 2000).

Surely there is a modern trend within the "evangelical" camp which downplays the importance of Scripture as God's perfectly inspired and authoritative Word. For example, consider the following quotation from an evangelical leader associated with a seminary historically known for its theological soundness:

> What I tell my students every year is that **it is imperative that they pursue truth rather than protect their presuppositions. And they need to have a doctrinal taxonomy that distinguishes core beliefs from peripheral beliefs. When they place more peripheral doctrines such as inerrancy and verbal inspiration at the core, then when belief in these doctrines start to erode, it creates a domino effect: One falls down, they all fall down.** It strikes me that something like this may be what happened to Bart Ehrman. His testimony in *Misquoting Jesus* discussed inerrancy as the prime mover in his studies. But when a glib comment from one of his conservative professors at Princeton was scribbled on a term paper, to the effect that perhaps the Bible is not inerrant, Ehrman's faith began to crumble. One domino crashed into another until eventually he became 'a fairly happy agnostic.' I may be wrong about Ehrman's own spiritual journey, but I have known too many students who have gone in that direction. The irony is that those who frontload their critical investigation of the text of the Bible with bibliological presuppositions often speak of a 'slippery slope' on which all theological convictions are tied to inerrancy. Their view is that if inerrancy goes, everything else begins to erode. **I would say that if inerrancy is elevated to the status of a prime doctrine, that's when one gets on a slippery slope. But if a student views doctrines as concentric circles, with the cardinal doctrines occupying the center, then if the more peripheral doctrines are challenged, this does not have an effect on the core.**

Quoting from Daniel Wallace, "Interview of Daniel B. Wallace on Textual Criticism" (interview taken from *http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com*, re–posted at ***www.bible.org***).

In other words, according to Dallas Theological Seminary's professor Daniel Wallace, the doctrines of Biblical inerrancy and verbal inspiration are **not** "prime" or "core" doctrines — they are merely "peripheral" doctrines. (*Of course, no IDMer should be disturbed at Wallace's regard for bibliology as a merely **"peripheral"** doctrine.*) Don't expect to find that "evangelical" opinion from John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, C. I. Scofield, Bob Webel, or Francis Schaeffer ! Query**:** just how does Daniel Wallace's minimized bibliology square with God's

own declaration, that He Himself honors His Word even above His own holy name?

> I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy loving-kindness and for Thy truth: **for Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name.**

Quoting **Psalms 138:2.**

Is it important, in "educational" ministry, for a Christian to document and explain the natural effects of sin, sufferings, death, and divine judgment? Surely there is a modern trend within the "evangelical" camp which downplays divine judgment, such as the "emerging" popularity (and the "I–dare–you–to–pin–me–down– doctrinally" neo–universalism) of ecumenist Brian McLaren.[14] Lamentably, Brian McLaren and his "emerging" ilk are not the only mouths in Christendom who are arrogantly and/or flippantly denying the Biblical doctrines of sin, death, and divine judgment.

Is it important, in "educational" ministry, for a Christian to avoid joining forces and co–laboring with doctrinally "strange bedfellows", if one assumes that theological soundness is important for teaching truth about the Creator? **(***Consider* **Amos 3:3.)**

According to creationist surgeon Carl Wieland (*quoted below*), one of the leading IDMers is a practicing **Roman Catholic** (Dr. Michael Behe), — and another leading IDMer is an ordained Unification Church **"Moonie"** (Dr. Jonathan Wells). Is IDM's actual "ministry"an example of genuine Reformation–based Christianity? Is IDM, which avoids teaching the Bible, a real "ministry" (as defined by Biblical standards) — or is it merely an ecumenical syncretism?

> The Intelligent Design Movement's motivation appears to be the desire to challenge the blind acceptance of the materialistic, godless, naturalistic philosophy of Darwinian evolution. They confront many of the philosophical underpinnings of today's evolutionary thinking. As a movement, they are unwilling to align themselves with Biblical creationism.
>
> The informal leadership of the IDM has more or less come to rest on Phillip Johnson, a distinguished retired (emeritus) Professor of Law at the University of California at Berkeley who is a Presbyterian. Philosophically and theologically, the leading lights of the ID movement form an eclectic group. **For example, Dr Jonathan Wells is not only a scientist but also an ordained cleric in the Unification Church (the 'Moonie' sect)** and Dr

Michael Denton is a former agnostic anti-evolutionist (with respect to biological transformism), who now professes a vague form of theism. However, he now seems to have embraced evolutionary (though somehow 'guided') transformism. **Dr Michael Behe, author of *Darwin's Black Box,* is a Roman Catholic who says he has no problem with the idea that all organisms, including man, descended from a common ancestor.**

Quoting from Carl Wieland, "AiG's Views on the Intelligent Design Movement", posted on the *Answers in Genesis* website at www.answersingenesis.org/docs2002/0830_IDM.asp (8-30-2002), with emphasis added.

What would the apostle Paul, who authored **2nd Corinthians 6:14-17**, say about this "strange bedfellows" ("co-laborers in the ministry") arrangement? Also, what would the apostle John, who authored **2nd John 1:7–11**, say? Amos' rhetorical question remains:

Can two walk together, except they be agreed ?

Quoting **Amos 3:3.**

In **Amos 3:3**, notice that the Hebrew verb translated (in the KJV) as "be agreed" is נוֹדָעוּ [nôʻâdû — *niphâl* perfect 3rd person passive form of the verb יעד**,** meaning "to gather [together]", "to assemble [together]", "to combine together", etc.]. In other words, can two walk as one, except they *be gathered together* (and thus travel as *combined together*)? If the underlying purpose of the IDM is a form of research–based–education, functioning as some sort of "ministry" to the public (which may be a flawed assumption), — how then can Protestants, Catholics, Moonies, and others "agree to meet together" and agree to "travel in combination together", in a joint venture of educational "ministry"?

This "soft" approach to truth–based alliances clashes with the theological argument Jesus had with the Samaritan woman, in John chapter 4, where He disputed her wrong theology:

The woman saith unto Him, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our [*Samaritan*] fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye [*Jews*] say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. **Ye** [*Samaritans*] **worship ye know not Whom; we** [*Jews*] **know Whom we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to

worship Him. God *is* a Spirit: and they who worship Him must worship *Him* in spirit and in truth."

The woman saith unto Him, "I know that Messiah cometh, Who is called 'Christ'; when He is come, He will tell us all things."

Jesus saith unto her, "I, Who speak unto thee, am *He.*"

Quoting **John 4:19–26.**

Yet surely there is a modern trend, within the "evangelical" camp, which downplays the importance of ministering from a non–syncretistic Reformation base. Although syncretistic tolerance and ecumenical "unity" may be deemed "Christian–like" (since it is "like" the "inclusivist" ecclesiastical behavior of many professing Christians), it is **not** "Christ–like", — because it is **not** like the exclusivist "sectarian" Christ Who argued with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.[15] The observation here, relevant to the *Intelligent Design Movement,* is that the work of an "interdenominational" educational ministry, nowadays, is often not limited to those with a Protestant Reformation base — the five doctrinal "solas" upon which the Reformation (despite bloody opposition) was built, to return the Holy Bible to the "plough-boys" of the world. On the theological (and ministerial) importance of the **5 "solas"** of the Protestant Reformation, please see Terry L. Johnson, <u>The Case for Traditional Protestantism: The Solas of the Reformation</u> (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), elaborating on the five great doctrinal pillars of the European Reformation: *sola Scriptura, solo Christo, sola fide, sola gratia,* and *soli Deo gloria.*

IV. <u>IS IT WISE TO SACRIFICE A DOLLAR, TO GAIN A DIME ?</u>

So, *why* is any of this important, theologically (or ministerially) speaking ?

The problem, despite the positive contributions of IDMers (some of which are noted herein), is that what is sacrificed (to "stick with" IDM's human–reason–based epistemology) exceeded the benefits achieved, generally speaking. The pay-off is like spending a dollar to gain a dime. A forensic logic technique is gained (apologetically speaking), yet the exorbitant price paid therefor is a functional withdrawal from the Protestant Reformation–recovered "five *solas*" of Biblical truth.[16] What *net* "good" is that, if we really care about transmitting truth to our neighbors?

Reconsider: the controversy of "origins" largely focuses on the doctrine of Creation, and the doctrine of Creation is ***theologically foundational*** to <u>Biblical</u> Christianity.

Why? Because the God of the Bible, from the Bible's very first verse, defines Himself as the Creator. Because the Biblical theology of creation is foundational, *how* Christians treat the doctrine of creation must dynamically affect their interrelated understandings of Who God is, and what He has done, and how to interpret what He has said in His Bible, and how to interpret the information He continues to reveal as "natural revelation", etc.

Consequently, the study of "origins" involves a lot more Biblical theology than the historic record of how many days God used to create the world (and its initial inhabitants), — because the doctrine of creation is foundational to understanding (and application of) the epistemological role and limits, *as well as the contemporary consequences*, of natural revelation. Notice how Paul indicates, within Romans chapter one, that God currently judges sinners (in this earthly life!) for how they wrongfully respond to nature's revelation about Himself (as their Creator):

> **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;**
>
> **Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them.**
>
> **For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:**
>
> **Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**
>
> **Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,**
>
> **And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.**
>
> **Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creation more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen.**

> **For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:**
>
> **And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was suitable.**
>
> **And even as they did not like to retain God in** *their* **knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; . . . .**

Quoting **Romans 1:18–28.**

By the way, what does it mean (in **Romans 1:28**) that God "gave them up" to a "reprobate" mind? Could this mean that "human reason", because humans are sin–corrupted, is logically short–circuited, so that the deists' trust in "human reason" is an epistemological dead-end?

Consider the literal impact of what Paul teaches, in **Romans 1:28**, about the "reprobate" character of human reason, about from the redemptive cure of Christ's salvation (and the Spirit's inextricably intertwined "illumination" of Scripture's truths):

> **And even as they <u>did not like to retain</u> God in** *their* **<u>knowledge</u>, God gave them over to a <u>reprobate mind</u>, to do those things which are not convenient . . . .**

The man or woman who rejects knowledge of God, whether that knowledge be provided by Scripture or natural revelation, is showing analytical "disapproval" of God. It is therefore just, as a divinely imposed consequence, for such a one to have God "disapprove" of his or her analytical thinking. This demonstration of divine judgment's logic, shown by the cause–and–effect "word–play" in Paul's statement, reveals how God metes the punishment to the crime:

"did not like to retain" [οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν]   root verb: δοκέω

corresponds to:

"reprobate mind" [ἀδόκιμον]   root verb: δοκέω

In other words, when humans *disapprove* of God as their Creator, God returns the favor, giving them over to minds that cannot properly approve of other aspects of reality. The "reprobate mind" is a corrupted mind that cannot properly evaluate truth; its most basic "quality control" is ruined.

In light of the truth taught in Romans chapter one, epistemological confidence in "human reason" is reliance upon a "weak reed" indeed. ***The real problem is epistemological:*** **the Bible is perfect truth, whereas human reason is faulty.** Human reason cannot aptly explain our origins, our life, our ***dying***, or our ***death*** — we absolutely need the Bible for that. But why focus on understanding our creaturely experience of ***dying***? Answers are needed for dying, too, true answers, — so we can understand the logic of the whole reality of being the creatures we are. Big–picture answers — expressly integrating the Bible's truths — are needed, because natural science *without Biblical answers* inexcusably ignores and dishonors Christ.

Accordingly, "Intelligent design"[17], yes — but don't dare stop there.

The natural world shows us intelligently designed life, but that wonderfully created life is dying. The Bible needs to be used to explain how a perfect Creator made a perfect creation, yet permitted Adam to make a real choice — which Adam did, and so now we have an imperfect creation, an intelligently designed creation that is "groaning" for its ultimate redemption.

But someone might say: "Well, at least IDM is an improvement on the naturalistic materialism of the ***public*** schools and colleges." *Maybe so.* But, even if so, is it worth the epistemological price *in any other context*?

V. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

May we appreciate our triune God's special and general revelations of truth to us, — and may we accordingly glorify and thank our God, in and through Christ Jesus, as our personal Creator and Redeemer, Who magnifies His inspired Word even above His divine name.

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[original appendices available on request]

Appendix "A" (on post–Flood human population growth)

Appendix "B" (on entropy, how all life-forms are dying)

[11,300+ words]

ENDNOTE REFERENCES

[1] Theologically speaking, Cain and Nimrod are the historic "forerunners" of humanistic religion and humanistic culture, Voltaire is usually credited as the "father of the Enlightenment", a specific form of humanism which plagued European and American societies in the late 1700s.

[2] Thomas Jefferson, who disdained the Old Testament, and who rejected the Holy Bible's inspired record regarding all miraculous data therein, is fairly representative of American deism. *See, accord, e.g.,* Francis A. Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture (Wheaton: Crossway / Good News Publishers, 1976), page 110. *See also, generally,* John Eidsmoe, Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of our Founding Fathers (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), pages 40–45, 215–246.

[3] Dr. William ("Bill" or "Nandad") R. Cooper, under God, has aptly provided a singular contribution to creation science education's advance. *E.g.,* Dr. Cooper has documented science history (e.g., creation–vs.–evolution history) and palæozoölogy, e.g., in chapters 10 & 11 of his After the Flood (Chichester, West Sussex, England: New Wine Press, 1995; available through www.answersingenesis.org); critical analysis of scientific methodology and scientific journalism (e.g., on the plesiosaur carcass caught off the coast of New Zealand in 1977, by the fishing vessel *Zuiyo–maru*, discussed on pages 139–141 of After the Flood, followed by his videotape ("**The Japanese Plesiosaur Reconsidered**", available through the *Creation Science Movement*, whose website is www.csm.org.uk), providing expanded analysis of the scientific methodologies applied by marine biologist Michihiko Yano, in contrast with those applied by his evolutionist detractors); editing Paley's Watchmaker (*cited infra*); *inter alia.*

[4] See **Romans 8:19-22**, in conjunction with **Genesis 3:17-19.**

[5] Michael Oard, "The Intelligent Design Movement Should Expand its Horizons: Let's Start Talking about the Flood and the Age of the Earth", in **Creation Matters**, *Newsletter of the Creation Research Society*, Volume 11, issue # 6 (November–December 2006), page 7, saying: "I have been amazed that the IDM does not seem to realize that philosophical naturalism *also* is responsible for the seemingly impregnable edifice of an old earth, the big bang model, and the claims against a global Flood ... In their wedge strategy, as mentioned previously, the IDM has chosen not to deal with the subjects of the age of the earth and the Genesis Flood — concepts that come from the Bible."

[6] This unjustified failure, to give credit where credit is due, also appears in "evangelical" literature supposedly concerned with how evangelicals teach the theology of creation. *See, e.g.*, James J. Scofield Johnson's *Book Review* of Terence E. Fretheim's God and

World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation, *published in **Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society***, Volume 49, issue # 1 [March 2006], at pages 141–143, observing**:** "Revealingly, it is the 'missing bibliography' — the Protestant evangelical authors who have already seriously written on . . . the need for a Biblical theology of creation . . . whom Fretheim inexplicably ignores. *E.g.,* there is no mention in the book's author index (pp. 369 – 374) of these well-published evangelical creation theologians: Drs. John Whitcomb, Henry Morris, Francis Schaeffer, Bill Cooper, Terry Mortenson, Tommy Ice, . . . — to name just a few glaring omissions. (Reformers Luther, Calvin, and Knox are also silently by-passed as irrelevant.) One wonders: how and why were John Whitcomb and Henry Morris ignored altogether by Fretheim? Their theological analysis of the Genesis Flood — a theological watershed publication (pardon the pun) – has largely catalyzed, if not also defined, the creation theology debates for 45 years!".

[7] Henry Hampton Halley, Pocket Bible Handbook: An Abbreviated Bible Commentary (Chicago: author–published, 15th revised edition, 1943), page 541.

[8] *See* John 5:39; 8:31-32; 14:6; 17:17; 2nd Timothy 3:15-16; Mark 12:24; Acts 10:43; Luke 24:44; Matthew 4:4; 5:18; Psalms 1:1-3; Ezra 7:10; etc.

[9] *See generally* Malcolm Bowden, True Science Agrees with the Bible (Bromley, Kent, England: Sovereign Publications / Bath Press, 1998), 551 pages.

[10] Though God's name is not mentioned (apart from acrostics), the Book of Esther is not an "exception" to this application of **Romans 1:16.** Why not? — because the Book of Esther is not provided as a role–model of teaching–the–public–about–creation "ministry"; — rather, Esther documents providential history, regarding how God immanently sustained the Jews who had failed to return to their homeland, despite God having given them political liberty to do so.)

[11] Once again, on the question of the "age of the Earth", a truly Evangelical reliance on the special revelation of Scripture could have (and should have) prevented this scientific disaster. *See, accord*, Thomas D. Ice & James J. Scofield Johnson, "Using Scriptural Data to Calculate a Range–Qualified Chronology from Adam to Abraham, with Comments on Why the 'Open– or–Closed' Genealogy Question is Chronometrically Irrelevant" * (presented March 1st, A.D. 2002, Evangelical Theological Society, Southwest regional meeting, at Criswell College, Dallas, Texas). [* This article is now posted at ICR's website as: www.icr.org/adam-abraham-chronology .]

[12] Matthew 22:38 literally reads "great and first" (μεγάλη και πρώτη).

[13] *See, e.g.,* attached **APPENDIX "A".**

[14] Observations from 1970s "dialogues" (in Montgomery County, Maryland) at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Ian McLaren, buttressed and re–confirmed by Brian McLaren's more recently published (and posted) Thomas More-like theological–fiction writings.

[15] Ecumenical "unity" in educational "ministry", which sacrifices a sound "Reformation base" (Francis Schaeffer's phrase for the core theology of the Reformation's "five solas"), is a so-called "unity" not limited to American "ministry" operations. An example of Reformation–sacrificing "unity" can be found in the Polish seminary called "Evangelical School of Theology", formerly called "Biblical Theological Seminary". (The institution's name change, in 2005, appears more appropriate.) That Polish seminary's website [www.ewst.edu.pl/en/EST_Board], in a webpage regarding its institutional "history", relates: "Dr. Zygmunt Karel and Dr. Mark Young worked together in Poland to design and develop an interdenominational school of theology." Also, that seminary's website proclaims (on its webpage regarding "Faculty & Staff"): "Consistent with the interdenominational character of Evangelical School of Theology, faculty members come from a variety of denominations and churches in Poland, including Baptist, Evangelical Free, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, and Brethren. ... This diversity brings a rich variety of experience, outlook and understanding to the teaching program." Also, the same website (on the webpage titled "EST Board") indicates that "founding" dean Mark Young is currently serving as a Board member of that interdenominational school, saying: "Dr. Young was a cofounder of BST (now EST) and the first Academic Dean. He is a highly respected teacher and educational consultant who served for many years as a missionary behind the "iron curtain". He is currently a professor of missiology at Dallas Theological Seminary, Associate Pastor at Stonebriar Church in Frisco, Texas and an active board member with several other ministries." Echo-like, Dallas Theological Seminary's website features, as one of its current faculty, a promoter of "missional" theological education, Mark S. Young, Ph.D., whose faculty page identifies him as the "founding academic dean of *Biblijne Seminarium Teologiczne* in Wroclaw, Poland".
     The observation here, relevant to the *Intelligent Design Movement,* is that the work of an "interdenominational" educational ministry, nowadays, is often not limited to those with a Protestant Reformation base — the five doctrinal "*solas*" upon which the Reformation (despite bloody opposition) was built, to return the Holy Bible to the "plough-boys" of the world. On the theological (and ministerial) importance of the **five "*solas*"** of the Protestant Reformation, please see Terry L. Johnson, <u>The Case for Traditional Protestantism: The Solas of the Reformation</u> (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), elaborating on the five great doctrinal pillars of the European Reformation: *sola Scriptura, solo Christo, sola fide, sola gratia,* and *soli Deo gloria.*

[16] David L. Brown & Malcolm Watts, "Five Pillars of Reformation Truth", posted at http://logosresourcepages.org/OurTimes/reformation.htm q.v.).

[17] The phrase "intelligent design", by the way, was <u>not</u> coined by the IDMers themselves. Moody Bible Institute's pioneer creationist, **Dr. Irving Moon,** used the phrase during the 1960s, in his "Moody Institute of Science" movie series, — and probably he was not the first to do so.