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Intelligent Design Theory: The God-of-the-Gaps Rooted in Concordism

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THEISTIC EVOLUTION: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique
by J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and
Wayne Grudem, eds. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. 1,000 pages. Hardcover;
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In their 1,000-page *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* (2017), proponents of Intelligent Design (ID) Theory reveal for the first time the theological foundations of their antievolutionary views.¹ During the last twenty-five or so years, ID theorists have repeatedly declared that their position on origins is based thoroughly on science and have carefully distanced their work from religion. Consequently, they have argued that their theory deserves to be presented in public schools and universities as an alternate scientific model to biological evolution.²

Since its inception, ID Theory has been criticized for being a God-of-the-gaps understanding of the origin of living organisms. In the book that launched this modern antievolutionary movement, *Darwin on Trial* (1991), lawyer Phillip Johnson notes that critics contend

it is a grave error to insert God into scientific accounts of (say) the origin of life, because this creates a “God of the gaps” who will inevitably be pushed aside as scientific knowledge advances.³

But the root of ID Theory has now been publically revealed. About one-quarter of *Theistic Evolution* is a strident defense of a concordist hermeneutic, which ultimately undergirds this antievolutionary God-of-the-gaps view of origins. Evidence of the theological underpinnings of ID Theory

is demonstrated by the inclusion in this book of a seven-page scripture index that cites over 1,500 Bible verses.

Before beginning this essay book review, three preliminary comments are required. First, according to a God-of-the-gaps approach to divine action, there are “gaps” in the continuum of natural processes, and these “discontinuities” in nature indicate places where God has miraculously intervened in the world.⁴ Critics charge that this view portrays the Creator as a meddler who tinkers about sporadically in the origin and operation of the universe and life. However, it must be emphasized that God can act in the creation in any way and at any time he wants, including through dramatic interventions in origins.

If there are gaps in the continuum of natural processes, then science will identify them, and over time these gaps will “widen” with further research. That is, as scientists explore a true gap in nature where God has intervened, evidence will increase and demonstrate that there are no natural mechanisms to account for the origin or operation of a physical feature.

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If this ever happens, it would be reasonable to conclude that a divine intervention had occurred in the past.⁵

However, there is an indisputable pattern in the history of science. The God-of-the-gaps understanding of divine action has repeatedly failed.⁶ Instead of the gaps in nature getting wider with the advance of science, they have always been closed or filled by the ever-growing body of scientific information. In other words, history reveals that these purported gaps have always been *gaps in knowledge* and not actual *gaps in nature* indicative of the intervening hand of the Lord. The belief in the God-of-the-gaps is ultimately based on a lack of information regarding the origin and operation of the natural world.

The second preliminary comment deals with concordism. This hermeneutical approach has appeared throughout church history and assumes that the Bible, in some way, aligns with the facts of nature.⁷ Many evangelical Christians take for granted that God revealed some basic scientific truths in scripture well before their discovery by scientists today.⁸ Concordism is then presented as proof that the Bible really is the inerrant Word of God. Only a Divine Being who is powerful and transcends time could have given modern scientific information to the ancient authors of scripture.⁹ It must be acknowledged that concordism is a reasonable assumption. After all, God is the Creator of the world and he is also the Author of the Bible. The expectation that there is some sort of harmony or alignment between scripture and the facts of science is an assumption that makes sense to most Christians.

In recent years, there has been a trend moving away from concordism within evangelical biblical scholarship. For example, John Walton, professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, observes,

Through the entire Bible, there is *not a single instance* in which God revealed to Israel a science beyond their own culture. No passage offers a scientific perspective that was not common to the Old World science of antiquity.¹⁰

Stated another way, scripture features what could be termed an “ancient science.” With this being the case, concordism is not possible. Ancient ideas about nature (e.g., a flat earth) cannot align with modern science (e.g., a spherical earth). To move beyond the use of the Bible as a source of scientific information, a nonconcordist hermeneutic suggests that the Holy

Spirit descended to the intellectual level of the biblical writers and allowed their ancient knowledge of nature to be used as a vessel to deliver inerrant spiritual truths. In other words, God accommodated by permitting the inclusion of an incidental ancient science during the process of inspiring scripture.

Thirdly, I have written this essay book review from the perspective of evolutionary creation.¹¹ This evangelical Christian view of origins asserts that *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit created the universe and life, including humans, through an ordained, sustained, and intelligently designed evolutionary process* (see Appendix). In particular, evolution is teleological and features a plan, a purpose, and a final goal.¹² Evolutionary creationists firmly reject dysteleological evolution and the belief that the evolutionary process is the result of irrational necessity and blind chance. Instead, these evangelical Christians believe that biological evolution is intelligently designed and creates intelligently designed living creatures that “declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1).¹³

The term “evolutionary creation” became popular during the mid-1990s as part of an effort to distinguish evangelical Christians who accept biological evolution from a variety of liberal theisms that are often categorized under the general term “theistic evolution,” such as panentheism and process theism.¹⁴ Evolutionary creationists are also adamantly opposed to secular interpretations of evolution such as deistic evolution, Darwinian evolution, Neo-Darwinism, atheistic evolution, and dysteleological evolution.¹⁵ Regrettably, antievolutionists often misrepresent evolutionary creation by conflating this distinctly evangelical Christian view of origins with these liberal theisms and secular evolutionisms. In proceeding through this essay book review, it will become evident that many criticisms launched at so-called “theistic evolution” by ID theorists are, for the most part, against these liberal and secular ideologies, which evolutionary creationists firmly reject.

Definitions of Evolution

Stephen Meyer, Discovery Institute Director of Science and Culture, is the most important ID theorist in the world today. In the opening chapter of *Theistic Evolution*, he defines the term “evolution” and offers three meanings: (1) “change over time,” (2) “common descent or universal common descent,” and (3) “the creative power of the natural selection/random variation (or mutation) mechanism.”¹⁶

Meyer then makes an important qualification to his third definition, which he labels “#3a.” He adds, “The natural selection/random variation (or mutation) mechanism can explain the appearance of design in living systems apart from the activity of an actual designing intelligence.”¹⁷

Meyer does not object to his first definition of evolution. In fact, he asserts that “neither in this section [i.e., his chapter], nor in any other [in this book], do we critique theistic evolution where evolution is defined as meaning merely ‘change over time.’”¹⁸ As a former geophysicist in the oil industry, Meyer accepts that the earth is 4.6 billion years old and acknowledges, “The fossil record provides strong support for this idea [change over time].”¹⁹ He then extends this meaning of evolution to also include “micro-evolution,” which he defines as “small-scale changes” within a species, such as color changes in pepper moths.²⁰ And even though Meyer entitles his opening chapter of the book “Scientific and Philosophical Introduction,” he fully reveals his theological beliefs and concordist hermeneutic. He contends that the “Jewish and Christian scriptures clearly affirm that God has caused change over time, not only in human history but also in the process of creating the world and different forms of life.”²¹

But Meyer rejects his second and third definitions of evolution. He correctly defines “common descent” as the notion that “relatively simple organisms can, with adequate time, change into much more complex organisms.”²² In dismissing this form of evolution, commonly termed “macroevolution,” Meyer’s concordism is once again on full display:

[S]ome biblical theists question universal common descent based on their interpretation of the biblical teaching in Genesis [1] about God creating distinct “kinds” of plants and animals, each of which “reproduce after their own kind.” Those who think a natural reading of the Genesis account suggests that different kinds of plants and animals reproduce only after their kind, and do not vary beyond some fixed limit in their morphology [i.e., microevolution], question the theory of universal common descent on biblical grounds ... Indeed, the Bible describes God as not only acting to create the universe in the beginning; it also describes him as presently upholding the universe in its orderly concourse and also describes him as *acting discretely as an agent within the natural order*.²³

It is quite evident from this passage that Meyer’s concordism is the root of his God-of-the-gaps view of origins. His “natural reading” of Genesis 1 leads him to believe in a Creator who acts “discretely as an agent” in the origin of “distinct ‘kinds’ of plants and animals.” The phrase “after their/its kind/s” appears ten times in Genesis 1 (vv. 11; 12, twice; 21, twice; 24, twice; 25, thrice) and it is a key concept that undergirds ID Theory. But is a concordist interpretation of this phrase correct? More anon.

Meyer’s third definition of the term “evolution” deals with the mechanisms of evolution and their relationship to intelligent design. In assuming that biological evolution is based entirely on natural selection and random mutations, he argues that this view of evolution leads to the belief that design in nature is only an appearance and merely an illusion. To support his case, Meyer quotes well-known atheists and their dysteleological view of evolution. For example, Richard Dawkins claims that “biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.”²⁴ Similarly, Francis Crick states that biologists need to “constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved.”²⁵ George Gaylord Simpson also asserts that “man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.”²⁶ And to further his argument, Meyer cites liberal Christian and theistic evolutionist Kenneth Miller, who maintains that “evolution works without either plan or purpose ... Evolution is random and undirected.”²⁷

But Meyer’s strategy is quite obvious. He conflates so-called “theistic evolution” with secularist evolutionism and liberal theism. In particular, Meyer not only misrepresents evangelical Christians who accept evolution, but his rhetorical tactic is a straw man argument. As noted previously, evolutionary creation firmly rejects secular, dysteleological, and liberal theistic interpretations of evolution, and it definitely upholds the reality of intelligent design in nature. Moreover, this evangelical Christian view of evolution asserts that God planned men and women to be the pinnacle of creation because we are the only living organisms who have been created “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27).

Now it must be noted that natural selection and random mutations are important mechanisms in biological evolution. What Meyer and his ID colleagues

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fail to grasp is that these natural processes operate within the boundaries of an overarching set of physical laws that are ordained and sustained by the Lord. Regrettably, most antievolutionists deprecate the notion of randomness. But randomness is an essential component of God's "very good" creation (Gen. 1:31).²⁸ For example, Brownian motion is the random movement of particles within a fluid. If this motion did not exist in our cells, we would die. Brownian motion drives biomolecules to assemble and disassemble according to their God-designed properties and the God-designed biochemical pathways within the cell.²⁹ To further explain randomness, consider a set of loaded (weighted) dice. Tossing these intelligently designed dice in any random way will in the end have the winning number appear most of the time. Evolutionary creation contends that this is also the case with biological evolution. With unfathomable foresight, the Creator set in motion and upheld over time intelligently designed self-assembling natural processes, including random processes, to create the universe and life as well as humans.

From the passages above, it is obvious that Meyer is a progressive creationist (or old earth creationist; see Appendix). To claim that he and his ID proponents in *Theistic Evolution* accept evolution as "change over time" is inaccurate. The term "evolution" is not properly associated with God-of-the-gaps miraculous interventions. As a research associate who has worked in a university paleontology department for over fifteen years, I have never met a scientist who defines evolution in this way. To repeat, Meyer's belief in a God who acts "discretely as an agent" to make "distinct 'kinds' of plants and animals" is progressive creation. His concordist hermeneutic and "natural reading" of Genesis 1 forces him to view living organisms through an antievolutionary paradigm. Even before opening the Book of Nature, Meyer already has the answer to the question of origins—a concordist reading of the Book of Scripture leads him to a God-of-the-gaps who creates plants and animals "after their own kind."

Conflated Definitions of Intelligent Design and the "Theistic Evolution vs. Intelligent Design" False Dichotomy

One of the most surprising aspects of this 1,000-page tome is that contributors never explicitly or for-

mally define the term "intelligent design," which appears nearly three hundred times.³⁰ As noted above, Meyer in the first chapter of the book offers three precise definitions of the term "evolution," and takes six pages to do so. Other authors also make similar efforts to define evolution.³¹ But Meyer and his twenty-four colleagues simply assume the meaning of intelligent design. In my reading of *Theistic Evolution*, I can identify two basic definitions of this term, and these are often conflated.

The most common use of the term "intelligent design" by ID proponents is that it refers to physical features in living organisms that arose through miraculous interventions. More specifically, the unique and central concept of ID Theory is that intelligent design in nature is "empirically detectable," "scientifically detectable," and "physically detectable."³² Meyer notes that "advocates of intelligent design affirm, namely, that the past activity of a designing intelligence, including God's intelligence, is *detectable* or discernible in living systems."³³ In offering an example, he argues, "The abrupt appearance of novel fossil forms represents the paleontological signal, or *detectable* consequence, of some earlier-acting cause(s) that were sufficient to build animal structural and functional complexity within the time available."³⁴ References to the "past activity of a designing intelligence" and "earlier-acting cause(s)" are definitely indicative of a Creator who intervenes miraculously in the origin of living organisms. I term this the "God-of-the-gaps definition of intelligent design."

Like many chapters in *Theistic Evolution*, the Bible is used to undergird ID Theory, including this understanding of intelligent design. In criticizing theistic evolution, Meyer contends,

Yet, denying the *detectability* of design in nature generates another theological difficulty [for theistic evolution]. In particular, this view seems to contradict what the biblical record affirms about the natural world (or "the things that are made") revealing the reality of God and his "invisible qualities" such as his power, glory, divine nature and wisdom.³⁵

Of course, Meyer is appealing to Romans 1:19–20. "Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men and women are without excuse." However, is the apostle Paul in this passage

referring to intelligently designed gaps in the creation that are “empirically detectable,” “scientifically detectable,” and “physically detectable”?

No, not at all. And here lies a deep theological problem with ID Theory. It assumes that intelligent design is scientifically provable through identifying gaps in nature. But ID theorists fail to fully understand the biblical notion of natural revelation. It is a nonverbal divine disclosure inscribed in the Book of Nature. As Psalm 19:1 states, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” This verse does not read, “The heavens declare God’s scientifically detectable gaps in nature.” Instead, the creation, through its beauty, complexity, and functionality, powerfully impacts everyone, and it leads us toward a *belief* in the Creator and some of his attributes. But even more problematic from a theological perspective, in attempting “to place God in a test tube,” so to speak, ID theorists undermine an indispensable component of biblical Christianity—faith. In the great biblical chapter on faith, Hebrews 11:6 states, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” And Hebrews 11:3 asserts, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command.” It is not by scientifically detectable gaps in nature that we can *prove* that God formed different kinds of living organisms. Inadvertently, proponents of ID Theory undercut the necessity of faith by claiming that design is “scientifically detectable.” To put it bluntly, the God-of-the-gaps definition of intelligent design is unbiblical.

Now there is a subtle and important point that needs to be made. Scientific evidence can certainly contribute to the belief that the world is intelligently designed. The history of science reveals that as scientists have probed deeper into nature, greater and more astonishing examples of beauty, complexity, and functionality have been discovered, thus declaring God’s glory. But the facts of science do not *prove* that the universe and life are designed. To be more accurate, scientific evidence contributes to a powerful *argument* for the reality of intelligent design. Everyone is deeply affected by the nonverbal revelation in the creation, including antireligious individuals.³⁶ And as Romans 1:19–20 states, every man and woman is accountable to this “plain” and “clearly seen” natural revelation so much so that we “are without excuse” if we reject it.³⁷

The second meaning of intelligent design that appears in *Theistic Evolution* is what I term the “traditional and biblical definition of intelligent design.”

For example, John West, vice president of the Discovery Institute, asserts,

Both the Old and New Testaments clearly teach that human beings can recognize God’s handiwork in nature through their own observations rather than [through] special divine revelation [i.e., scripture]. From the psalmist who proclaimed that the “heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19) to the Apostle Paul who argued in Rom. 1:20 that “since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,” the idea that we can see design in nature was clearly taught. Jesus himself pointed to the feeding of birds, the rain and the sun, and the exquisite design of the lilies of the field as observable evidence of God’s active care towards the world and its inhabitants (Matt. 5:44–45, 48; 6:26–30).³⁸

It is important to note that these passages cited by West regarding Jesus’s view of nature do not deal with any God-of-the-gaps events. Instead, they appeal to God’s ordained and sustained natural processes from the realms of ecology, meteorology, and astronomy. With this being the case, West unsuspectingly opens the door to the possibility that evolutionary processes are also a revelation of God’s glory and attributes.

Leading ID theorist and molecular biologist Douglas Axe also affirms a traditional biblical understanding of intelligent design. He writes,

The book of Job, for example, tells us how Job was reminded of his smallness when asked by his Creator, “Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars and spreads his wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high?” (Job 39:26–27). Those questions have the same humbling effect on us, thousands of years later ... I see no way around the fact that the arresting awe we’re meant to have for the maker of the majestic eagle is lost the moment we accept that accidental physical processes could have done the making instead.³⁹

Axe is quite correct in identifying the overwhelming power of God’s revelation in nature. He is also right in believing that living organisms such as the eagle are not a result of mere “accidental physical processes.” Axe adds that such a dysteleological view of biology fails because it clashes with a “common sense fact—a plain truth testified to by our strong intuition that life is designed.” I completely agree.

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But it is critical to point out that it is “our strong intuition,” and not gaps in nature, that leads us to experience the “arresting awe” for the Creator.

Theistic Evolution presents two different meanings of the term “intelligent design.” In failing to distinguish between the God-of-the-gaps definition of design and the traditional biblical definition of design, a serious conflation arises. The authority of the Bible’s inerrant revelation that nature reflects intelligent design (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20) is inadvertently transferred to ID Theory’s antievolutionary God-of-the-gaps view of design. *This conflation leaves unsuspecting readers with the impression that the existence of scientifically detectable gaps in nature is a thoroughly biblical doctrine and that scripture is adamantly opposed to evolution.*

By conflating the biblical view of design with the God-of-the-gaps understanding of design, ID theorists in *Theistic Evolution* entrench a false dichotomy between biological evolution and intelligent design. This dichotomy is recast by philosopher and book editor J. P. Moreland into “theistic evolution versus intelligent design.” He repeats this phrase four times in his chapter opening the philosophical critique of theistic evolution, and he also refers to “theistic evolution/intelligent design” twice.⁴⁰ As a result, Moreland controls the categories of the discussion. Chained to this simplistic false dichotomy and black-and-white form of thinking, proponents of ID Theory and their supporters are blinded from seeing the possibility that evolution is an intelligently designed process that creates intelligently designed living organisms, as proposed by evolutionary creation.

Evolution: A Collapsing Theory of Origins?

A central theme in *Theistic Evolution* is that the modern theory of biological evolution is in the process of breaking down. Meyer contends that the “theory [of evolution] is being abandoned by its own philosophical allies as empirically insufficient, or simply false.”⁴¹ Similarly, philosopher Paul Nelson claims that “the theory of common descent is in trouble: possibly very serious trouble, from which it may never escape.”⁴² And molecular biologist Ann Gauger with Meyer and Nelson asserts that biological evolution is a “scientifically failing theory of origins.”⁴³ Let’s examine some of the arguments used by ID theorists to support their belief that evolutionary theory is collapsing.

A claim repeatedly made by proponents of ID Theory is that the tree of life representing the evolution of living organisms as outlined by Charles Darwin does not align with the pattern found in the fossil record.⁴⁴ Figure 1 presents two contrasting patterns that often appear in ID literature. Pattern A is referred to as “Bottom-Up”; Pattern B, “Top-Down.”⁴⁵ For anyone not familiar with this scientific evidence, the abrupt appearance of numerous straight lines in Pattern B certainly gives the impression that most living organisms were made at about the same time, and that different kinds of creatures were created quickly and separately near the beginning of the Paleozoic period (541 million years ago). Moreover, these straight lines also seem to indicate that the morphology (anatomy) of these life forms has not changed since their first appearance in the fossil record.

Pattern B, however, is dealing with different *body plans* of animals, whereas Darwin’s tree of life in Pattern A employs different *species* of animals. For example, the body plan of chordates has four features: notochord, pharyngeal slits, dorsal hollow nerve cord, and post-anal tail. It appeared near the start of the Paleozoic period as a small worm-like creature similar to a lancelet. But the chordate body

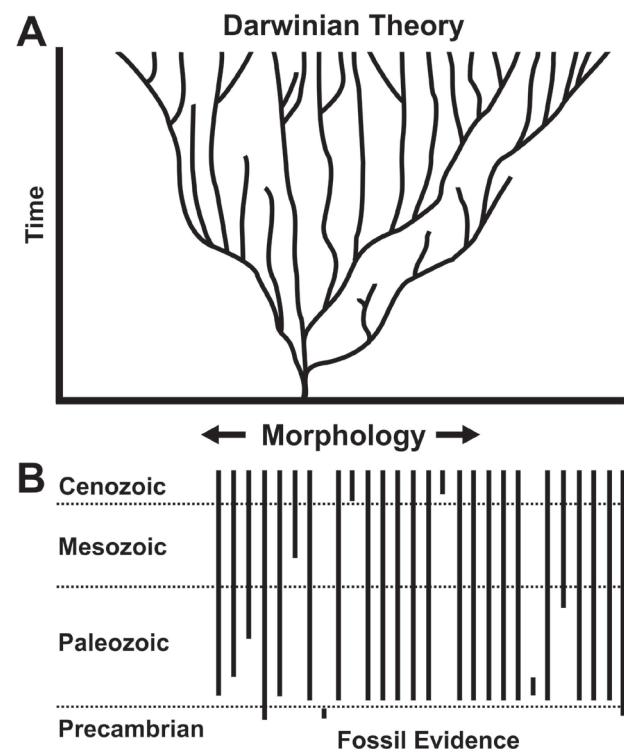


Figure 1. The “Bottom-Up” Darwinian Fossil Pattern (A) and the “Top-Down” Pattern of the Appearance of Body Plans in the Fossil Record (B).

plan is also found in vertebrates—fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Though the body plan of chordates has remained constant through time, the dramatic anatomical differences between these animals are completely overlooked in Pattern B. In other words, if the morphological features of vertebrate species were included, the pattern would not be one single straight line, but instead a tree-like pattern with countless branches. This frequent placement of Darwin's tree of life next to the appearance of body plans by ID theorists misleads unsuspecting readers and gives them the impression that the fossil record presents an antievolutionary view of biological origins.

Another argument that reappears throughout *Theistic Evolution* and ID literature deals with the purported problem of the origin of biological information.⁴⁶ In appealing to the God-of-the-gaps, Meyer and Nelson openly admit,

Intelligent design invokes a past event—albeit a mental event—rather than a law [i.e., a natural process] to explain the origin of information necessary to produce various novel forms of life as well as the complexity of the cell.⁴⁷

However, there are well-known mechanisms in nature that increase biological information. To cite just two: gene duplications and chromosome duplications. And these can account for the Cambrian Explosion and the origin of vertebrates.⁴⁸ With duplications, the original genes and chromosomes continue to keep cells functioning normally, while the duplicated genetic material can evolve into new genes, resulting in new biological features. For example, a series of genes directs the formation of the body plan in animals. The similarity between

individual genes and the sequential order of them on separate chromosomes points back to numerous gene and chromosome duplication events in the past. Figure 2 shows the remarkable similarities between the body plan genes in a fruit fly, lancelet, and human.⁴⁹ Notably, when ID theorists discuss these genes, they do not present this diagram because it is striking evidence that all living organisms are genetically related through evolution.

Throughout the history of antievolutionism, a claim that incessantly appears is that there are no transitional fossils. For example, ID theorists Günter Bechly and Meyer assert that “alleged transitional sequences” with mammal-like reptiles are “at best, extremely rare exceptions” or “at worst, not at all the evidence of a continuous transformation that proponents of universal common descent claim.”⁵⁰ But this series is one of the most complete records of transitional fossils boasting over 1,000 species and more than 10,000 specimens.⁵¹ The fact that paleontologists use the term “mammal-like reptile” speaks of their transitional character between reptiles and mammals. To offer just one spectacular example, consider *Probainognathus*. It has *two* jaw joints—a reptilian joint between the articular and quadrate bones, and a mammalian joint between the squamosal and dentary bones.⁵² This is clear evidence of an evolutionary transition, going from reptiles to mammals.

In a similar way, ID theorist Casey Luskin claims that the fossil evidence for human evolution is “sparse,” “so weak,” and “simply isn't that clear.”⁵³ But this is also factually inaccurate. Paleoanthropologist Richard Potts, the director of the Smithsonian Human Origins Program, states that there are “approximately 6,000 fossil individuals of early humans,

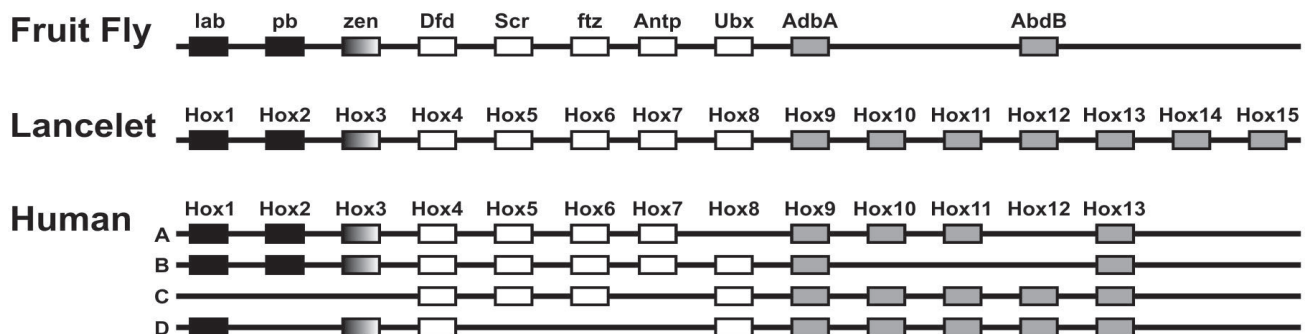


Figure 2. Body Plan Genes. Animals have a series of genes on a chromosome/s that instructs the development of a basic head-thorax-abdomen body pattern. The genes in the same columns in this diagram are very similar (homologous). The boxes represent genes labeled in groups: anterior (black), group 3 (gradient), middle (white), and posterior (gray).

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spanning the past six million years.”⁵⁴ Moreover, the 1,800 pages and four volumes of the well-illustrated *The Human Fossil Record* present indisputable evidence of the evolutionary transition of prehuman ancestors into humans. There is no lack of human transitional fossils.

It must be acknowledged that a remarkable aspect of *Theistic Evolution* is that it offers readers a rich review of amazing new biological research that supports a traditional and biblical understanding of intelligent design. For example, zoologist Sheena Tyler describes many exquisitely “orchestrated” and “choreographed” natural processes in developmental biology.⁵⁵ In outlining processes that form the heart, she notes that

cardiac transcription factors [proteins that influence genes] “choreograph” the expression of *thousands of genes* at each stage of heart development, by interacting with cofactors, and by binding with a constellation of regulatory DNA elements.⁵⁶

Tyler asks whether these developmental mechanisms “are assembled according to random and unguided Darwinian processes, or are these assemblies orchestrated, bearing hallmarks of intelligent design?”⁵⁷ But being entrenched in this dysteleological evolution versus intelligent design dichotomy, Tyler is blocked from seeing the possibility that God intelligently designed evolutionary processes in a manner similar to the mind-numbing orchestration of natural mechanisms in developmental biology.⁵⁸ As a result, Tyler and her ID colleagues have a narrow and limited design argument compared to evolutionary creationists, who have a much greater and more powerful view of intelligent design in affirming that God is behind each and every natural process in the world, including the mechanisms of evolution.

God-of-the-Gaps Arguments: Unwitting Support for Evolution?

In declaring the collapse of evolutionary theory, many ID theorists in *Theistic Evolution* argue that the dramatic appearance of new fossils in the geological record is scientific evidence that proves God employed miraculous interventions in the creation of different kinds of plants and animals. These God-of-the-gaps antievolutionists also contend that the remarkably similar genetic and biomolecular features in living organisms point away from a random and undirected evolutionary process. To account for these similarities, they assert that the Creator

repeatedly reused the same intelligently designed biological programs in making separate forms of life. Let’s examine these two central ID theory arguments and consider the possibility that they might inadvertently affirm biological evolution.

Fossil Explosions Argument

In their chapter “The Fossil Record and Universal Common Ancestry,” paleontologist Günter Bechly and Stephen Meyer argue that “the many discontinuous or abrupt appearances of new forms of life in the fossil record” is “a pattern that contradicts the continuous branching tree pattern of biological history postulated by proponents of universal common descent.”⁵⁹ Bechly and Meyer accept modern geology and a 4.6-billion-year-old Earth. They list nineteen examples of these bursts of organisms and the dates when these occurred during the past.⁶⁰

1. Origin of Life (4.1 billion years ago), first cells
2. Origin of Photosynthesis (3.7 bya)
3. Archaean Genetic Expansion (3.3–2.8 bya)
4. Avalon Explosion (575–565 million years ago), first marine organisms
5. Cambrian Explosion (540–515 mya), marine animals
6. Great Ordovician Biodiversity Event (485–460 mya), marine invertebrates
7. Odontode Explosion (425–415 mya), jawed fish with teeth
8. Devonian Nekton Revolution (410–400 mya), swimming animals
9. Silurian-Devonian Radiation of Terrestrial Biotas [427–393 mya],⁶¹ land plants
10. Carboniferous Insect Explosion (318–300 mya)
11. Triassic Explosion (252–235 mya)
12. Early Triassic Terrestrial Tetrapod Radiation (251–240 mya)
13. Early Triassic Marine Reptile Radiation (248–240 mya)
14. Mid-Triassic Gliding and Flying Reptile Radiation (230–228 mya)
15. Radiation of Flowering Plants (130–115 mya)
16. Mosasaur Radiation (91–66 mya)
17. Radiation of Modern Birds (65–55 mya)
18. Radiation of Modern Placental Mammals (62–49 mya)
19. Genus *Homo* (2 mya)

Of course, the use of terms such as “explosion” and “radiation” in modern geology unintentionally plays

into the hands of antievolutionists like Bechly and Meyer, and can mislead their unsuspecting readers. Such terminology gives the impression that there is scientific evidence for God's miraculous intervention in nature to create different kinds of living organisms, echoing back to the phrase "after their/its kind/s" in Genesis 1. Bechly and Meyer argue that the "discontinuous origins of novel forms of life as attested in the fossil record would have required the production of new genetic and epigenetic forms of information," and that these "*intelligently designed infusions* of new information into the biosphere" reflect "a rational order in the mind of a designer or creator."⁶² Again, this is the God-of-the-gaps of progressive creation.

However, the terms "explosion" and "radiation" need to be understood within the context of modern geology. The appearance of new living organisms over periods of tens of *millions* of years (note the dates in the list) is quite rapid from the perspective of a 4.6-billion-year-old Earth.⁶³ Moreover, it must be underlined that these bursts of new plants and animals often occur after mass extinctions in which 50 to 90 percent of species disappear in the "blink of an eye" (understood from the perspective of geological time). For example, the well-known Cretaceous-Tertiary (K-T) extinction event that killed the dinosaurs 66 million years ago also eliminated about 75 percent of species on Earth. This produced a dramatic decrease in competitive pressures to survive, leaving newly evolving creatures to increase unimpeded. Following the K-T extinction, the number of placental mammal species "exploded" 62–49 mya. Plants and animals also diversify quickly when they gain the ability to enter a new environment. For example, with the evolution of flight, modern birds "radiated" 65–55 mya.

Again, it must be emphasized that these bursts of new forms of life occurred over long periods of time that lasted tens of *millions* of years. Consequently, they cannot be aligned with a "natural reading" of Genesis 1 as proposed by Meyer's concordist hermeneutic.⁶⁴ Consider the origin of sea creatures in scripture. There is only one single divine command on the fifth creation day to create marine life. "God said, 'Let the water teem with living creatures'" (Gen. 1:20). But this obviously does not align with the five bursts of marine creatures in the fossil record over a period of 175 million years from the Avalon Explosion (575–565 mya) to the Devonian

Nekton Revolution (410–400 mya). In addition, the sequence of fossils in the geological record does not match the order that God creates plants and animals in Genesis 1. For instance, marine life and birds are created at the same time on the fifth day of creation; but as Bechly and Meyer record, the former (575–400 mya) precedes the latter (65–55 mya) by roughly 500 million years. Similarly, the Bible states that fruit trees (i.e., flowering plants) were created on creation day 3, before sea creatures on day 5. However, as Bechly and Meyer's list shows, the first marine organisms (575 mya) appeared before the first fruit trees (130 mya) by about 450 million years.

Finally, it must be underlined that Bechly and Meyer make a striking admission with regard to the pattern of fossils in the geological record. They note that there is a "progression" or "succession" in the order in which living organisms appear on Earth from simple forms of life to more complex forms, and they even concede that this "general pattern of successive temporal appearances *agrees nicely* with the Darwinian picture of the history of life."⁶⁵ Of course, this creates a quandary for ID Theory antievolutionists. If indeed our Creator employed God-of-the-gaps "infusions of new information" to make plants and animals, then why would he have ordered them to look as though living organisms had evolved? From my point of view, Bechly and Meyer unwittingly affirm biological evolution.

Common Designer Argument

In his chapter entitled "Universal Common Descent: A Comprehensive Critique," former Discovery Institute research coordinator Casey Luskin makes a remarkable admission about the genetic and biochemical similarities between all living organisms. He begins by stating that "it is *true* that the vast majority of organisms use the same 'standard code,' and all life forms employ similar types of biomolecules, such as, DNA, RNA nucleotides, and proteins."⁶⁶ Luskin then concedes, "*True*, universal common ancestry is one possible explanation for many genetic similarities we observe between organisms."⁶⁷ In other words, the molecular evidence in living organisms certainly supports biological evolution.

Of course, Luskin is quick to ask the question, "[A]re there other viable explanations?" And he answers,

Indeed there are. Intelligent agents frequently *re-use* the same parts in different designs to meet

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functional requirements, such as *reusing* wheels on cars and airplanes, or *reusing* key computer codes in different versions of Microsoft Windows ... Thus, common design—the intentional *reuse* of a common blueprint or components—is a viable explanation for the widespread functional similarities among the biomolecules found in different types of organisms. Universal common ancestry is not the only possible explanation.⁶⁸

According to this antievolutionary view of origins, God reused genetic and biochemical components from earlier plants and animals, and then placed them into newly created kinds of living organisms.

The Common Designer argument is popular within antievolutionary circles. But in my opinion, it creates more problems than it solves. Take, for example, the creation of toothless whales. They have huge mouths and trap small marine organisms with fibrous mats that hang from their upper jaws. These mats are called a “baleen.” Yet when a toothless whale develops in the womb (whales are mammals), teeth appear in its mouth.⁶⁹ These are malformed and never attach to the jaws to become functional. In fact, most are lost before birth. But why would the Common Designer recycle the tooth genes from toothed animals and place them in whales with a baleen? Another notable feature about whales is that they have genes similar to those found in land animals that are used to make receptors for smelling chemicals *in air*. However, these genes are defective in whales and do not function.⁷⁰ Such genes are termed “pseudo-genes.” Yet again, why would the Creator reuse genes that are intended for land animals and put malfunctioning forms of these genes in whales that live *in water*? The evolutionary explanation is much simpler and more convincing. Whales evolved from land animals with teeth and a keen sense of smell, and after entering the oceans, they no longer needed these two features to survive and were lost, though genetic remnants for these characteristics remain in their chromosomes.

Let’s also consider the origin of humans in the light of the Common Designer argument. According to the contributors of *Theistic Evolution*, Adam was a real historical person. In using a concordist hermeneutic to interpret Genesis 2:7, they conclude that Adam was not “born from human parents” and that God created him “directly and specially.”⁷¹ Return now to genes that make smell receptors. Land mammals have about 1,000 of these, but in humans nearly 60% of them are pseudo-genes.⁷² Are we to believe

that the Creator took these mammalian genes, made over half of them nonfunctional, and then placed these defective genes in Adam? Similarly, we share with chimpanzees the same pseudo-gene involved in the production of vitamin C.⁷³ Most animals can produce this essential vitamin because the gene is functional, but chimps and humans need to consume foods with vitamin C. Does it make sense that after creating chimps with this pseudo-gene, the Common Designer reused this flawed gene in Adam? Why not give him a fully functional gene for this vitamin? After all, we are the Creator’s most treasured creation bearing the image of God.

Finally, we know that humans and chimpanzees have about 25,000 functional genes and roughly 99% of these genes are identical at the DNA level.⁷⁴ More remarkably, people and chimps share approximately 10,000 pseudo-genes.⁷⁵ According to the Common Designer argument, after God made animals on the sixth day of creation, he then created Adam “directly and specially” by reusing and recycling nearly every chimpanzee gene, *including their 10,000 defective genes*. But does this sound reasonable? A more convincing reason for the genetic similarities between us and chimps is that we are genetic “cousins” that descended from a common ancestor in the past.

The Common Designer argument strikes most people as special pleading. If ID theorists were not concordists, it is doubtful they would argue for a God-of-the-gaps who reuses “a common blueprint or components” in the creation of plants, animals, and humans. But by admitting that “universal common ancestry is one possible explanation for many genetic similarities we observe between organisms,” Casey Luskin unwittingly affirms biological evolution. And coupling this biomolecular data with Bechly and Meyer’s admission that the fossil record “agrees nicely with the Darwinian picture of the history of life,” it provides powerful *independent* and *complementary* evidence that living organisms have evolved.⁷⁶ To write off this scientific evidence as merely an “appearance” of evolution is no different than when some Christians claim that God created the universe to “look” old when in fact it is young. Old earth creationists like ID theorists would never accept this appearance-of-age argument, and to be consistent, nor should they embrace an appearance-of-evolution argument. It is only an unquestioning precommitment to a concordist hermeneutic that leads to a belief in a Common Designer who recycles

biological features through God-of-the-gaps miraculous interventions.

Concordism: An Appropriate Biblical Hermeneutic?

The truly unique aspect of *Theistic Evolution* is that proponents of ID Theory for the first time openly reveal their concordist hermeneutic and how it undergirds their God-of-the-gaps antievolutionism. In the second chapter entitled “Biblical and Theological Introduction,” theologian and book editor Wayne Grudem correctly states that the debate about origins

is primarily about the proper interpretation of the first three chapters of the Bible, and particularly whether those chapters should be understood as truthful historical narrative, reporting events that actually happened.⁷⁷

In the final quarter of this 1,000-page book, Grudem and his theological colleagues come to the conclusion that “Genesis 1–3 should not be understood as primarily figurative or allegorical literature, but should rather be understood as historical narrative.”⁷⁸

Regrettably, Grudem’s contributions are marred by misinformation about so-called “theistic evolution.” He contends that according to theistic evolution, plants and animals

evolved over billions of years and new forms of life are the result of random mutations, not God’s commands. The driving force that brings about mutations in living things is randomness, not God’s command.⁷⁹

In dealing with natural revelation and citing Romans 1:20, Grudem claims that “theistic evolution says that *no living creature* in nature bears witness to God,” and that “theistic evolution completely nullifies the evidence for God’s existence, and therefore significantly hinders evangelism.”⁸⁰ With regard to hermeneutics, he asserts that a “nonhistorical reading of Genesis 1–3 does not arise from factors *in the text itself* [i.e., the Bible] but rather depends upon a prior commitment to an evolutionary framework of interpretation.”⁸¹ Finally, Grudem charges that “theistic evolution significantly undermines the doctrine of the atonement” and “theistic evolution undermines the effectiveness of the resurrection to give new life to all who are saved by Christ.”⁸²

Let me personally respond to these misrepresentations. As an evolutionary creationist, I wrote at the

beginning of this essay book review that “*the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit created the universe and life, including humans, through an ordained, sustained, and intelligently designed evolutionary process.*” Grudem’s attempt to yoke evangelical Christians who accept evolution with a dysteleological view of evolution based only on “random mutations” is not right and results in a misleading conflation (2 Cor. 6:14).

Regarding natural revelation, I stated earlier that “biological evolution is intelligently designed and creates intelligently designed creatures that ‘declare the glory of God’ (Ps. 19:1).” In fact, I consider antievolutionary views such as ID Theory to be a “stumbling block” between the Lord and non-Christians who have actually seen the evidence for evolution (2 Cor. 6:3). I must also emphasize that my shift away from a concordist (historical) reading of Genesis 1–3 was not due to “a prior commitment to an evolutionary framework of interpretation.” At that time I was a vociferous antievolutionist. It was evidence *within the Word of God itself* that made me realize that the Bible is not a book of science and that concordism fails (I will share some of this biblical evidence in the next section).

Lastly, Grudem’s claim that evolutionary creation undermines the doctrines of the atonement and resurrection is simply not true. Evangelical Christians like me, who accept biological evolution, believe that Jesus died for our sins and rose bodily from the grave. Salvation is only found in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9; Acts 4:12).⁸³

According to Grudem’s concordist hermeneutic, a “natural reading of the text of Genesis” and “simply reading the biblical text alone”⁸⁴ reveals twelve indisputable historical and scientific facts about origins that contradict theistic evolution:

1. Adam and Eve were the first human beings,
2. Adam and Eve were not born from human parents,
3. God acted directly or specially to create Adam out of dust from the ground,
4. God created Eve directly from a rib taken from Adam’s side,
5. Adam and Eve were at first sinless human beings,
6. Adam and Eve committed the first human sins,
7. Human death began as a result of Adam’s sin,
8. All human beings have descended from Adam and Eve,

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9. God acted directly in the natural world to create different “kinds” of fish, birds, and land animals,⁸⁵
10. God rested from his work of creation,
11. God created an originally “very good” natural world in the sense of a world that was a safe environment, free of thorns and thistles and similar harmful things, and
12. After Adam and Eve sinned, God placed a curse on the world that changed the workings of the natural world and made it more hostile to humankind.⁸⁶

Items 1–8 deal with the origin of Adam and humans; item 9, the origin of animals; and items 11–12, the cosmic fall.⁸⁷

Grudem’s concordist reading of the Bible is further demonstrated by his endorsement of John Lennox’s *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning according to Genesis and Science*. He writes,

Lennox favors the view (*which I find quite plausible*) that Genesis 1 speaks of “a sequence of six creation days; that is, days of normal length (with evenings and mornings as the text says) in which God acted to create something new, but days that might well have been separated by long periods of time” ... He [Lennox] also favors the view that the original creation of the heavens and earth in Genesis 1:1–2 may have occurred long before the first “creation day” in Genesis 1:3–5, which would allow for a very old earth and universe.⁸⁸

Grudem’s concordism is also the root of his God-of-the-gaps view of origins. Again, he approvingly quotes Lennox, “According to Genesis, then, creation involved not just one, but a sequence of several discrete creation acts, after which God rested.”⁸⁹ This antievolutionary understanding of origins falls in the camp of progressive creation (old earth creation and day-age creation), and it could be termed “days and ages creation.”

However, hermeneutical problems abound in Grudem’s approach to the opening chapters of the Word of God. First, he betrays his own “natural reading of the text of Genesis” and “simply reading the biblical text alone.” Such a reading would never result in Lennox’s interpretation that the days of Genesis 1 are literal days describing God’s actual creative events separated by periods of time hundreds of millions of years long. Moreover, the order in which living organisms are created in Genesis 1

does not align with the appearance of living organisms in the fossil record. Scripture presents the creation of land plants on creation day 3, sea creatures (fish and whales) and birds on day 5, and land animals and humans on day 6. But the sequence in the fossil record reveals fish, land plants, land animals (amphibians, reptilians, and mammals), birds, whales, and humans. Obviously, this concordist hermeneutic fails.

Items 11 and 12 in Grudem’s list of twelve creative events in Genesis 1–3 “that actually happened” deal with the cosmic fall. He contends that in judgment for the sin of Adam, God cursed the ground (Gen. 3:17) and introduced thorns and thistles into the world (Gen. 3:18). As a result, the “very good” creation (Gen. 1:31)⁹⁰ was dramatically changed (Rom. 8:20–22) and became hostile to humans. Grudem explains,

Indeed, the kind of earth we have today, with frequent earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, droughts, poisonous snakes and venomous scorpions, malaria-spreading mosquitoes, and man-eating sharks and lions, can hardly be thought to be the best kind of creation that God could make, a creation that would cause God to say, “and behold, it was very good” ... God’s statement that the ground would now produce “thorns and thistles” is best understood as a synecdoche, a common feature in biblical speech by which two or three concrete examples represent an entire category of things. Taken in this way, God’s words of judgment mean that the earth would not only produce thorns and thistles, but would also harbor insects that would destroy crops (such as locusts, Deut. 28:38; Amos 7:1), diseases that would consume them (see Deut. 28:22), foraging animals that would eat crops before they could be harvested, and floods and droughts, tornadoes and hurricanes that would make farming difficult and life precarious (see Eccles. 11:4).⁹¹

There is one simple and fatal problem with Grudem’s belief in the cosmic fall. If indeed human sin is the reason that God launched the cosmic fall, then humans should appear in the fossil record *before* the appearance of the many deleterious and deadly events and creatures listed by Grudem above. However, the first human fossils appear at the very top of the geological record hundreds of millions of years *after* “earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, droughts, poisonous snakes and venomous scorpions, malaria-spreading mosquitoes, and man-eating

sharks and lions.” Using the Bible to draw out modern scientific information always fails.

The concordist interpretation of scripture outlined in *Theistic Evolution* also suffers from a serious hermeneutical asymmetry (or inconsistency). Grudem’s list of twelve “events that actually happened” in Genesis 1–3 is limited to living organisms only.⁹² He makes no mention of the creation of the inanimate world. But a “natural reading” of Genesis 1 definitely states that God created the heavens on creation day 2, the earth and seas on day 3, and the sun, moon, and stars on day 4. And by “simply reading the biblical text alone,” Genesis 1 asserts that the Creator made these inanimate structures through dramatic miraculous interventions—just like those divine creative events used to create different “kinds” of living creatures.

It is worth adding that ID theorists also have a problematic scientific asymmetry. Being old earth creationists, they believe that God initiated the Big Bang about 14 billion years ago and that he used the natural process of cosmological evolution to create suns, planets, moons, and so forth. But for 10 billion years after the Big Bang, he did not intervene in the universe until 4.1 billion years ago when he miraculously made living cells.⁹³ Since the Creator formed the inanimate world through a natural process and did not use God-of-the-gaps interventions as stated in Genesis 1, does it mean that proponents of ID Theory are liberal theists? Or worse, for the first 10 billion years after the Big Bang, are they in effect deists?

By completely overlooking statements in Genesis 1 regarding the creation of the heavens and the earth, the theologians of *Theistic Evolution* squandered an opportunity to reconsider whether concordism is a feature of the Word of God.⁹⁴ Let me explain in the next section.

Moving Beyond Concordism

To the surprise of most evangelical Christians, the structure of the world that appears in the Bible is a 3-tier universe as depicted in figure 3. The creation of the heavens in Genesis 1 is the best evidence *within scripture itself* that undermines concordism. On the second day of creation, God creates a solid firmament to separate the heavenly seas (“waters above”) from the earthly seas (“waters below”).⁹⁵ The Creator on the fourth day places the sun, moon, and stars in the firmament. From an *ancient* phenomenologi-

cal perspective, this conception of the structure of the heavens made perfect sense.⁹⁶ The dome of the sky looks like an inverted bowl holding back a blue body of water; and the sun, moon, and stars appear to be positioned in the surface of the firmament. This ancient science was the astronomy-of-the-day in the ancient Near East.⁹⁷ In addition, the 3-tier universe is mentioned in one of the most important passages in the Bible—the Kenotic Hymn (Phil. 2:6–11). The apostle Paul writes in verses 9–10, “Therefore God exalted him [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, [1] in heaven and [2] on earth and [3] in the underworld.”⁹⁸

The Word of God features an ancient astronomy, and it is only consistent that it also has an ancient biology. Scripture presents living organisms as *immutable*. Ancient people saw that wheat produced seeds that when sown gave rise to only wheat plants. Similarly, the seeds found inside fruit grew into trees that always produced the same fruit. The ancients also observed that hens laid eggs that hatched only chicks, female sheep continually gave birth to lambs, and women were always the mothers of human infants. From an ancient phenomenological perspective, plants and animals never changed. It becomes evident why the inspired ancient writer of Genesis 1 referred ten times to God creating plants and animals

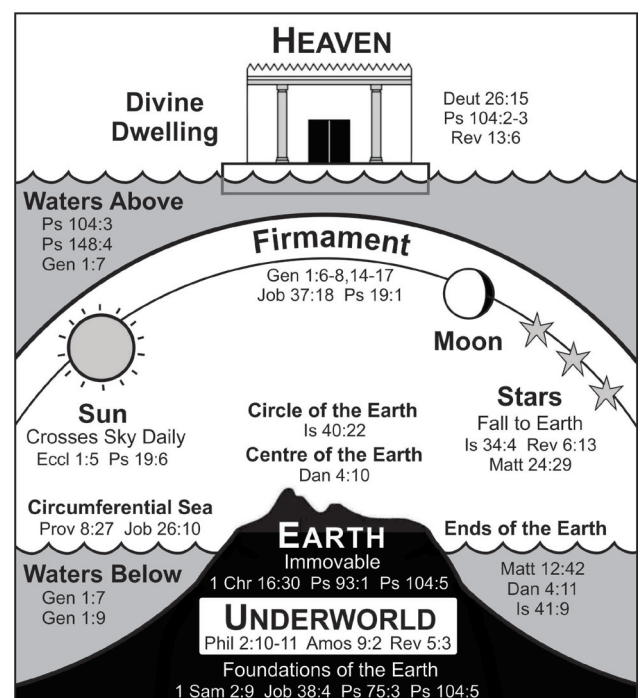


Figure 3. The 3-Tier Universe in Scripture.

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“after their/its kind/s.” Ancient individuals saw that living organisms were immutable, and it made perfect sense for them to think that God had created each different kind of plant and animal quickly and fully formed. This ancient understanding of origins is termed “*de novo* creation.” It appears in most ancient accounts of origins and features a Creator/s who act/s dramatically through miraculous interventions.⁹⁹ In this way, God’s creative action in Genesis 1 is filtered through this ancient view of the origin of living organisms. The Holy Spirit accommodated and descended to the intellectual level of the inspired biblical writer and allowed him to use his ancient biology.

Therefore, the *de novo* creation of plants and animals as recorded in the Bible is not to be “understood as historical narrative.” More specifically, Grudem’s item 9—God acted directly in the natural world to create different “kinds” of fish, birds, and land animals—fails to identify the ancient biological notions of immutability and *de novo* creation. The phrase “after their/its kind/s,” which is so foundational to ID Theory, is rooted in an ancient biology. This interpretive error is no different from failing to recognize the ancient astronomy in Genesis 1 and then claiming that God really created a domed firmament overhead. The ancient biology in Genesis 1 is clear evidence that the Bible does not reveal how the Lord actually created plants and animals.

The ancient concept of *de novo* creation has a crucial implication for Grudem’s items 1–8 and the origin of Adam and humans. The dramatic and miraculous creation of humans in Genesis 1:26–27, and in particular the formation of Adam from the dust of the earth in Genesis 2:7, is an ancient biological understanding of human origins. Similar to the origin of plants and animals, scripture does not reveal how God actually created humanity. Therefore, the origin of humans recorded in the Bible is not to be “understood as truthful historical narrative, reporting events that actually happened.”¹⁰⁰ In the same way that the Holy Spirit accommodated and allowed the biblical writers to employ an ancient understanding of astronomy in the creation of the heavens, the Lord also permitted an ancient biology in conceptualizing the origin of men and women. The *de novo* creation of humans in Genesis 1 and 2 is an incidental ancient vessel that delivers the inerrant spiritual truths that the Lord created us and that we bear the image of God.

The biblical scholars in *Theistic Evolution* completely overlook the ancient understanding of origins *within scripture itself*.¹⁰¹ In particular, theological editor Wayne Grudem and New Testament scholar Guy Prentiss Waters cite dozens of passages from throughout the Bible in an attempt to justify that Genesis 1–3 is a “historical narrative.” However, should anyone be surprised that the biblical writers accepted the *de novo* creation of the universe and life, including humans? No. This was the origins science-of-the-day in the ancient world. And, of course, the apostle Paul believed in a historical Adam as stated in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15.¹⁰² However, does this apostle’s belief that Adam was a real person mean that Adam actually existed? No. If one attempts to use this argument, then consistency demands that Paul’s belief in a 3-tier universe in Philippians 2:10 must also be accepted as a scientific truth. I doubt that any of the contributors to *Theistic Evolution* believe that the world has three levels. Paul’s belief in the historicity of Adam as stated in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 is based on an incidental ancient origins science that delivers inerrant spiritual truths: (1) humans are sinners, (2) God judges humans for their sins, (3) Jesus died for sinful humans, (4) Jesus rose physically from death, and (5) Jesus offers humans the hope of eternal life. These five items summarize the Gospel, and they are passionately embraced by evolutionary creationists like me.

Final Thoughts

In 1998 the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute outlined a plan called “The Wedge.” Five-year objectives included “ten [Discovery Institute] Fellows teaching at major universities” and “two universities where design theory has become the dominant view.”¹⁰³ Two twenty-year goals envisioned “intelligent design theory as the *dominant* perspective in science” and “design theory permeat[ing] our religious, cultural, moral and political life.”¹⁰⁴ By the writing of this essay book review in 2018, none of these objectives or goals has materialized. I think it is fair to say that “The Wedge” plan has failed.¹⁰⁵ But was this unexpected? No. The history of science and the history of biblical interpretation offer a consistent pattern. God-of-the-gaps views of divine action and concordist readings of the Word of God have always failed.

Before ending this review of *Theistic Evolution*, two questions might have arisen in the mind of readers

that need to be addressed. First, why has ID Theory been so popular within evangelical Christianity over the last twenty-five or so years? I believe there are two contributing factors. Everyone experiences the impact of intelligent design in nature as affirmed by Psalm 1:1–4 and Romans 1:18–20. And everyone enjoys the fruits of science daily through medicine, engineering, computer science, and so on. The moment ID theorists juxtaposed the religious term “intelligent design” and the scientific term “theory,” they created an incredibly powerful polemical device. The idea that design in nature is scientifically detectable instantly captured evangelical Christians, both personally in affirming their faith and apologetically in defending it. But as I have argued, this purportedly scientific view of natural revelation and intelligent design is unbiblical because it lacks the essential element of faith. The Lord cannot be placed in a test tube.

Secondly, why are ID theorists in *Theistic Evolution* betraying their longstanding tradition of distancing their view of origins from religion? I submit the fol-

lowing speculation. ID Theory has made no inroads within universities, whereas evolutionary creation is currently growing within evangelicalism.¹⁰⁶ In an attempt to salvage their theory and institutions, proponents of ID are appealing directly to the evangelical community by revealing the theological and biblical foundations of their model of origins. Since most evangelicals embrace various forms of concordism and antievolutionism, many will be captured by the God-of-the-gaps view of origins and concordist hermeneutic in *Theistic Evolution*. But will this strategy work? For a short time, yes, but in the long term, no. Again, history is our teacher. As Christians we came to terms with Galileo and astronomy in the seventeenth century, and I fully expect we will come to terms with Darwin and biological evolution in the future. *

Acknowledgment

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Appendix: Evangelical Christian Views of Origins

	YOUNG EARTH CREATION Six Day Creation	PROGRESSIVE CREATION Day-Age Creation	EVOLUTIONARY CREATION
Intelligent Design	Yes Nature reveals God	Yes Nature reveals God	Yes Nature reveals God
Age of the Universe	Young 6,000 years	Old 14 billion years	Old 14 billion years
Evolution of Life	Rejects macro-evolution Accepts micro-evolution	Rejects macro-evolution Accepts micro-evolution	Accepts macro-evolution
God's Activity in the Origin of the Universe and Life	Yes Miraculous interventions over six days	Yes 1. Miraculous interventions for “kinds” of living organisms across millions of years 2. Natural processes for inanimate universe	Yes God uses ordained and sustained self-assembling natural processes
God's Activity in the Lives of Men and Women	Yes God acts miraculously with people	Yes God acts miraculously with people	Yes God acts miraculously with people
Interpretation of Genesis 1	Accepts spiritual truths Accepts concordism Creation days = 24 hrs Bible is a source of scientific information	Accepts spiritual truths Accepts concordism Creation days = millions of yrs Bible is a source of scientific information	Accepts spiritual truths Rejects concordism Recognizes ancient science Bible is NOT a source of scientific information

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Notes

¹J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017). Cited hereafter as *TE*.

²The best example of attempting to teach ID Theory in public schools was during 2004 in Dover, Pennsylvania. A legal trial ensued and the teaching of intelligent design was deemed to violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. See “Decision in *Kitzmiller v. Dover*” by Judge John E. Jones, December 20, 2005, accessed February 20, 2018, https://ncse.com/files/pub/legal/kitzmiller/highlights/2005-12-20_Kitzmiller_decision.pdf. Recently, ID theorists have shifted their science education policy. See endnote 105.

³Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 166. For my critique of Johnson’s acceptance of the God-of-the-gaps, see Phillip E. Johnson and Denis O. Lamoureux, *Darwinism Defeated? The Johnson-Lamoureux Debate on Biological Origins* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Press, 1999), 37–40.

⁴It is important to underline that the God-of-the-gaps is limited to divine action in the origin and operation of the natural world. This notion does not extend to the Lord’s miraculous acts in the personal lives of men and women.

⁵This openness to the possibility of God-of-the-gaps events makes it clear that I am not uncritically committed to methodological naturalism. But Stephen Dilley complains that “this version is not a meaningful type of methodological naturalism” (*TE*, 620). Of course, ID theorists like Dilley need to cast methodological naturalism in a secular light in order to set up their false dichotomy between biological evolution and intelligent design. For example, Stephen Meyer and Paul Nelson claim, “Methodological naturalism asserts that, to qualify as scientific, a theory must explain all phenomena by reference to purely physical or material—that is, *non-intelligent*—causes or processes” (*TE*, 564; italics added). Again, this is a conflation of science and secularism. In contrast, as a Christian who practices science, I fully embrace that all natural mechanisms reflect intelligence and the mind of God.

⁶A classic example of the God-of-the-gaps is catastrophism in geology at the beginning of the nineteenth century. See Davis A. Young, *The Biblical Flood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 98–117.

⁷For a history of concordist interpretations dealing with the creation of the inanimate world in the first four days of Genesis 1, see Stanley Jaki, *Genesis 1 through the Ages* (New York: Thomas More, 1992). Jaki notes,

Around 1900 or so, two leading Catholic exegetes, Lagrange and Hummelauer, admitted that none of the countless interpretations of Genesis 1 that had been offered during the previous eighteen hundred years could carry conviction. The source of that debacle was concordism, or the belief that Genesis 1 was cosmogenesis in a scientific sense, however indirectly. (Quoted from back cover)

⁸Of course, the question must be asked, why do the facts in scripture align with the science of *our* generation? To me, this seems rather self-serving.

⁹For example, progressive creationist Hugh Ross claims there is an alignment between Genesis 1 and the scientific record of origins. He concludes,

Obviously, no author writing more than 3,400 years ago, as Moses did, could have so accurately described and sequenced these events, plus the initial conditions,

without divine assistance ... [This is] powerful evidence of the scientific soundness of the Bible ... the book of Genesis must be supernaturally inspired. (Hugh N. Ross, *Creation and Time* [Colorado, CO: NavPress, 1994], 153–54)

¹⁰John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 19 (italics added). See also Kyle Greenwood, *Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible between the Ancient World and Modern Science* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015).

¹¹The BioLogos Foundation is an invaluable resource of scientific and theological information explaining evolutionary creation. For an introduction to this evangelical view of evolution, see Denis O. Lamoureux, “Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution,” accessed February 20, 2018, https://biologos.org/uploads/projects/Lamoureux_Scholarly_Essay.pdf.

¹²Stephen Meyer dedicates a chapter to criticizing my acceptance of teleological evolution, which he simply writes off as “the difference it doesn’t make” (*TE*, 217–36). I find it incredible that as a philosopher he fails to appreciate the far-reaching implications of an evolutionary process that is teleological and intelligently designed. Such a view of evolution completely undermines every secularist worldview.

¹³Denis O. Lamoureux, “Do the Heavens Declare the Glory of God? Toward a Biblical Model of Natural Revelation,” *Faith and Thought: The Journal of the Victoria Institute* 59 (October 2015): 18–38.

¹⁴Theological editor Wayne Grudem objects to the term “evolutionary creation” and deems it “misleading.” He argues that the “ordinary sense” of the word “creation” refers to “God’s direct activity” in forming plants, animals, and humans (*TE*, 65). But Grudem overlooks the fact that most ID theorists accept cosmological evolution, and therefore, they do not understand the “creation” of the inanimate world in the “ordinary sense.” We will explore these hermeneutical and scientific asymmetries later in this essay book review.

¹⁵It is unfortunate that throughout *Theistic Evolution* the views of Charles Darwin are presented as being dysteleological. For example, Stephen Meyer writes, “As Darwin himself insisted, ‘There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course in which the wind blows’” (*TE*, 39). This passage comes from Darwin’s 1876 *Autobiography* in a twelve-page section entitled “Religious Belief.” What Meyer fails to report to his readers is that Darwin then offers two intelligent design arguments in response. In what could be termed his “rational design argument,” Darwin states,

Another source of conviction in the existence of God, connected with the reason and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wondrous universe, including man with his capacity of looking backwards and far into futurity, as a result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I *deserve* to be called a Theist. This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the *Origin of Species*. (Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles*

Darwin, 1809–1882, ed. Nora Barlow [1876; London: Collins, 1958], 92–93; italics added)

In other words, Darwin believed in intelligent design and a personal God when he wrote his most famous book. Note the present tense of the term “feel” and “deserve” in this passage, indicating that he held these two beliefs late in life (he died in 1882). Also see endnote 58 and Denis O. Lamoureux, “Darwinian Theological Insights: Toward an Intellectually Fulfilled Christian Theism—Part I: Divine Creative Action and Intelligent Design in Nature,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 64, no. 2 (2012): 108–19.

¹⁶Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 34–40.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 49–50.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*, 41. To claim that in Genesis 1 “God has caused change over time” and to assert that this is a form of evolution is surely stretching the meaning of the term “evolution” far beyond its normal understanding. I suspect that Meyer is doing this to make his theory more palatable to the scientific community.

²²*Ibid.*, 36.

²³*Ibid.*, 41, 45 (italics original).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 39; and Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: Norton, 1986), 1.

²⁵Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 40; and Francis Crick, *What Mad Pursuit* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 138.

²⁶Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 40; and George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 345.

²⁷Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 42; Kenneth R. Miller and Joseph S. Levine, *Biology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 658. In defining theistic evolution in a similar way, John West quotes Miller who asserts that “mankind’s appearance on this planet was not preordained, that we are here ... as an after-thought, a minor detail, a happenstance in a history that might just as well have left us out” (*TE*, 770–71); and Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 272.

²⁸Kathryn Applegate’s four-part “Endless Forms Most Beautiful: Understanding Randomness” is an excellent series explaining the notion of randomness in nature from an evangelical Christian perspective, accessed February 2, 2018, <https://biologos.org/blogs/kathryn-applegate-endless-forms-most-beautiful/series/understanding-randomness>. In particular, the video in Applegate’s “That’s Random! A Look at Viral Self-Assembly,” <https://biologos.org/blogs/kathryn-applegate-endless-forms-most-beautiful/thats-random-a-look-at-viral-self-assembly> (March 16, 2013), was critical in the development of my understanding of how God uses randomness.

²⁹I thank Justin Lorieau for his assistance in explaining some of the nuances of Brownian motion.

³⁰In the “General Index” of *Theistic Evolution*, the term “intelligent design” does not include “definitions of,” as it does for the term “evolution.” At best, Matti Leisola offers a cursory definition of “design,” and states, “Merriam-Webster [dictionary] defines ‘design’ as ‘deliberate purposive planning’” (*TE*, 141). Of course, such a definition includes a teleological and intelligently designed view of evolution as promoted by evolutionary creation. C. John Collins, in his chapter, distinguishes between “large scale” and “small scale” design. An example of the former is the fine-tuning of the universe. The latter

includes God-of-the-gaps miraculous events in the origin of life and the human mind (*TE*, 670–72).

³¹Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 141, 364–65, 757.

³²*Ibid.*, 67, 566, 583, 599, 600, 620, 624, 625, 626, 649, 650, 663, 784, 812, 946, 947, 951.

³³*Ibid.*, 48 (italics original).

³⁴*Ibid.*, 110 (italics added).

³⁵*Ibid.*, 48–49 (italics added).

³⁶In a stunning admission regarding the power of intelligent design in nature, atheist Richard Dawkins confesses,

The problem is that of complex design ... The complexity of living organisms is matched by the elegant efficiency of the *apparent* design. If anyone doesn’t agree that this amount of complex design cries out for an explanation, I give up ... Our world is dominated by feats of engineering and works of art. We are entirely accustomed to the idea that complex elegance is an indicator of premeditated, crafted design. This is probably the most powerful reason for the belief, held by the vast majority of people that have ever lived, in some kind of supernatural deity. (Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* [London: Penguin, 1991], xiii, xvi; italics added)

In addition, the impact of natural revelation led to the shocking conversion of famed philosopher Antony Flew from atheism to a belief in a Creator. He argues,

Biologists’ investigation of DNA has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved ... The only satisfying explanation for the origin of such “end-directed [teleological], self-replicating” life as we see it on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind. (Antony Flew, *There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* [New York: HarperOne, 2007], 123, 132)

³⁷The notion of human accountability also appears in Wisdom 13:8–9: “Yet again, not even they are to be excused. For if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?”

³⁸Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 49.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 88–89.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 547, 548 (twice), 549, 556, 559. This dichotomy is also prominently displayed in the title of Tapio Puolimäki’s chapter “The Origin of Moral Conscience: Theistic Evolution versus Intelligent Design” (*TE*, 731–53).

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 107.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 404.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 257.

⁴⁴It amazes me that antievolutionists like ID theorists repeatedly attack the views of Charles Darwin. He was a nineteenth-century biologist and the academic discipline of biology has moved well past his ideas. Criticizing Darwin’s biology is similar to attacking Galileo’s heliocentric astronomy with heavenly spheres causing the motion of planets, and then claiming we do not live in a solar system. I do not know of any biologist who accepts Darwin’s tree of life as outlined in his famed 1859 *Origin of Species*. For a diagram of this tree, see *TE*, 379. Paleontologist Robert Carroll asserts,

Progressive increase in knowledge of the fossil record over the past hundred years emphasizes *how wrong Darwin was* in extrapolating the pattern of long-term evolution from that observed within populations and species. (Robert L. Carroll, *Patterns and Processes of Vertebrate Evolution* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 8; italics added)

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⁴⁵Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 351–53, 358. Figure redrawn from Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 35.

⁴⁶Meyer contends, "According to neo-Darwinian theory, new genetic information arises first as random mutations occur [*sic*] in the DNA of existing organisms. 'Random' here means 'without respect to functional outcome,' entailing that there can be no inherent directionality or *telos* [i.e., teleology] to mutational events." (*TE*, 112). Like most of his ID colleagues, Meyer paints a dysteleological view of evolution with no plan, no purpose, and no end goal. Of course, this entrenches the false dichotomy of "theistic evolution versus intelligent design" found throughout *Theistic Evolution*.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 579.

⁴⁸Peter W. H. Holland, "Did Homeobox Gene Duplications Contribute to the Cambrian Explosion?," *Zoological Letters* 1, no. 1 (2015): 1–8; N. Soshnikova et al., "Duplications of Hox Gene Clusters and the Emergence of Vertebrates," *Developmental Biology* 378 (2013): 194–99.

⁴⁹Diagram based on G. Panopoulou and A. J. Poustka, "Timing and Mechanism of Ancient Vertebrate Genome Duplications," *Trends in Genetics* 21 (2005): 559–67; Peter W. H. Holland, "Evolution of Homeobox Genes," *WIREs Developmental Biology* 2 (2013): 31–45; and Alison Heffer and Leslie Pick, "Conservation and Variation in Hox Genes: How Insect Models Pioneered the Evo-Devo Field," *Annual Review of Entomology* 58 (2013): 161–79. I am grateful to Bruce Hemming for this last citation.

⁵⁰Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 356.

⁵¹Personal communication with paleontologist Michael W. Caldwell, February 23, 2018. See also T. S. Kemp, "The Origin and Early Radiation of the Therapsid Mammal-Like Reptiles: A Paleobiological Hypothesis," *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* 19 (2006): 1231–47. I am grateful to Aaron R. H. LeBlanc for this citation.

⁵²Robert L. Carroll, *Vertebrate Paleontology and Evolution* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1988), 390.

⁵³Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 473.

⁵⁴Richard Potts and Christopher Sloan, *What Does It Mean to Be Human?* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2010), 11.

⁵⁵Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 299.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 303 (italics added). To offer an example from my scientific specialty of dental development and evolution, the formation of just one tooth takes about 15,000 genes! Shijia Hu, Joel Parker, and John Timothy Wright, "Towards Unraveling the Human Tooth Transcriptome: The Dentome," *PLOS One* (April 7, 2015): 1–13. Such developmental orchestration is mind numbing and leads me to believe that these natural processes are intelligently designed.

⁵⁷Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 290.

⁵⁸In assisting Christians to understand evolution as God's method of creation, evolutionary creationists often point to our development in the womb. No one thinks that the Lord comes out of heaven and miraculously intervenes to attach an entire leg or arm to our developing bodies. Instead, we believe that God creates every person using intelligently designed embryological mechanisms that he ordered and upheld during each moment of our development. As Psalm 139:13–14 states, "For you [God] created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Similarly, God "knitted together" every

living organism through his ordained and sustained natural process of evolution, creating plants and animals that are "fearfully and wonderfully made." Notably, Charles Darwin used this analogy between developmental biology and evolution in his most famous book, *Origin of Species*. He writes,

Authors of the highest eminence [i.e., progressive creationists] seem to be fully satisfied with the view that each species has been independently created. To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator, that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes like those determining the birth and death of the individual. (Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* [1859; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964], 488)

⁵⁹Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 331–32.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 340–51.

⁶¹Precise dates were not included by Bechly and Meyer. They merely referred to "Late Silurian and Early Devonian" (*TE*, 345).

⁶²*Ibid.*, 354 (italics added).

⁶³For an introduction, see "Patterns of Radiation" in Carroll, *Patterns and Processes*, 340–61.

⁶⁴See quotation with endnote 23.

⁶⁵Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 336 (italics added).

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 376–77 (italics added).

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 377 (italics added).

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 377–78 (italics added). This analogy fails because it is structured on an engineering analogy and mindset. Cars, airplanes, and computer codes do not give birth to cars, airplanes, and computer codes. Engineers have to intervene directly to make these things and to change their features in later versions of them. In contrast, living organisms have the ability to replicate and modify through their own natural processes.

⁶⁹A. E. W. Miles and Caroline Grigson, eds., *Colyer's Variations and Diseases of the Teeth of Animals* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 101.

⁷⁰Dennis R. Venema and Scot McKnight, *Adam and the Genome* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2017), 37.

⁷¹Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 72.

⁷²Yoav Gilad, Orna Man, and Gustavo Glusman, "A Comparison of the Human and Chimpanzee Olfactory Receptor Gene Repertoires," *Genome Research* 15, no. 2 (2005): 224.

⁷³Graeme Finlay, "Homo Divinus: The Great Ape that Bears God's Image," *Science and Christian Belief* 15 (2003): 24.

⁷⁴Venema and McKnight, *Adam and the Genome*, 32. Two accessible introductions to evolutionary genetic evidence are Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006) and Daniel J. Fairbanks, *Relics of Eden: The Powerful Evidence of Evolution in Human DNA* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2010).

⁷⁵Zhaolei Zhang and Deyou Zheng, "Pseudogene Evolution in the Human Genome," *Wiley Online Library eLS* (February 2014): 1.

⁷⁶Moreland et al., eds., *TE*, 336.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 828.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 830 (italics original). Grudem adds, "But according to theistic evolution, unbelievers have a gigantic excuse, for they could say that all living things can be explained as a result of the properties of matter without any spe-

cial creative action by God" (TE, 831). See my comments regarding human accountability associated with endnote 37.

⁸¹Ibid., 76 (italics added).

⁸²Ibid., 835, 836.

⁸³As I wrote in a recent book, "Jesus loves us so much that he died for us (John 3:16)" and "The Gospels are eyewitness accounts of actual historical events, including the Lord's teaching and miracles, and especially his physical resurrection from the dead." Denis O. Lamoureux, *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 20, 120 (italics original). Moreover, BioLogos is the leading evolutionary creationist organization in the world and its fourth article of faith states:

We believe in the historical incarnation of Jesus Christ as fully God and fully man. We believe in the historical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, by which we are saved and reconciled to God. ("What We Believe," accessed February 2, 2018, <https://biologos.org/about-us/our-mission>)

⁸⁴Moreland et al., eds., TE, 73–74. Note that I have turned this list of theistic evolution negations into biblical affirmations upheld by Grudem's concordist hermeneutic.

⁸⁵Grudem inexplicably overlooks the creation of plants in item 9.

⁸⁶Moreland et al., eds., TE, 72–73; also 785.

⁸⁷To buttress this list of purported historical and scientific events, theologian Gregg Allison contributes a chapter entitled "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with Historical Christian Doctrine." He concludes that "the early church affirmed that God the Father created, out of nothing, the heavens and the earth and all that is visible and invisible, through God the Son, in six days, a few thousand years ago" (TE, 934). In summarizing "Protestant doctrinal standards," Allison notes that they affirm "Adam and Eve were created as the first human beings and as the progenitors of the entire human race" (TE, 943).

But no one should be shocked that the formulators of Christian doctrines embraced young earth creation and a historical Adam and Eve. Scientists only discovered that the earth was older than six thousand years in the eighteenth century, and in the following century that living organisms had evolved. If antievolutionists like Allison want to appeal to the views held by Christians in history, then to be consistent, they should also include their views on astronomy. For example, Martin Luther claimed that "the earth is the center of the entire creation." Similarly, John Calvin confidently stated, "We indeed are not ignorant, that the circuit of the heavens is finite, and that the earth, like a little globe, is placed in the center." I doubt Allison and his ID Theory colleagues are geocentrists. And the fact that Protestant reformers Luther and Calvin believed the earth was at the center of the entire universe should raise concerns and doubts regarding their understanding of biology, and in particular, the origin of living organisms and humans. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1–5*, ed. J. Pelikan (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1958), 35; John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, 2 vols (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2007 [1554]), I: 25–26, accessed February 22, 2018, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.pdf>.

⁸⁸Moreland et al., eds., TE, 63 (italics added). See John C. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning according to Genesis and Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 53–54.

⁸⁹Moreland et al., eds., TE, 817.

⁹⁰The word limit of this review does not allow me to deal in detail with the notion of the term "good" (Hebrew *tōb*) in Genesis 1. Suffice it to say that the use of this term is utilitarian. In other words, the creation functions the way the Creator intended. This Hebrew word also carries a nuance of beauty. In this way, the world created by God works beautifully for his intended purposes. See Denis O. Lamoureux, "Beyond the Cosmic Fall and Natural Evil," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 68, no. 1 (2016): 51–53.

⁹¹Moreland et al., eds., TE, 818, 820. Interestingly, another contributor in *Theistic Evolution* offers a *Satan-of-the-gaps* view of the origin of natural evil. Garrett DeWeese claims,

Thus it is plausible that at least some natural evil is the result of the activity of *Satan and his hordes* [italics added]. Consider just one example, the movement of tectonic plates. Plate subduction recycles greenhouse gases, and contributes to the relative stability of the earth's surface temperature by conducting away the heat generated in the earth's radioactive core. While it seems to us today that such activity inevitably produces volcanism and earthquakes, it is certainly possible that, as God created the earth, the process of subduction was smooth, only later being subjected to forces, produced or directed with malevolent intent by *Satan's hordes* [italics added], that made the movement chaotic. It is also possible that such reasoning could apply to ecosystemic interactions such as predation, to weather events, and so on. (TE, 701)

⁹²To be more accurate, Grudem limits his list to animals only and completely overlooks plant life.

⁹³For Bechly and Meyer's list of miraculous divine interventions in the origin of life, see the list on page 120.

⁹⁴I think that it is significant that the terms "concordism" or "concordist" do not appear once in the 1,000 pages of *Theistic Evolution*. Lacking awareness of this hermeneutical category, ID proponents cannot possibly deal directly with it.

⁹⁵The word translated as "firmament" in Genesis 1 is the Hebrew noun *rāqīa'*. It is related to the verb *rāqā'* that has the meaning "to flatten," "hammer down," and "spread out." In particular, this verb has the sense of flattening something solid, and it is found in the context of pounding metals into thin plates. For example, Exodus 39:3 states, "They hammered out thin sheets of gold." The related noun *riqqūa'* refers to metal sheets. As Numbers 16:38 commands, "Hammer the [metal] censers into sheets to overlay the altar." The verb *rāqā'* is even found in a passage that refers to the creation of the sky, which is understood to be solid and similar to a metal. Job 37:18 asks, "Can you join him [God] in spreading out [*rāqā'*] the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze?"

⁹⁶It is important to distinguish between *ancient* and *modern* phenomenological perspectives. Observation in the ancient world was limited to unaided physical senses, and what ancient people saw with their naked eyes they believed to be real, such as the literal rising and setting of the sun. In contrast, we have the advantage of having scientific instruments like telescopes. When we see the sun "rising" and "setting," we know that this is only an appearance or visual effect caused by the rotation of the earth.

⁹⁷For images of the Egyptian 3-tier universe and the Mesopotamian heavenly sea and firmament, see Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 36, 174.

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⁹⁸English translations often refer to “under the earth” in verse 10. But the actual Greek word is *katachthoniōn*. It is made up of the preposition *kata* which means “down,” and the noun *chthonios* that refers to the “underworld” or “subterranean world.” Regrettably, Grudem fails to identify the apostle Paul’s acceptance of ancient science, and he unnecessarily incites evangelical Christian readers by repeatedly stating that theistic evolution forces us to believe that “Paul was wrong” (TE, 805, 806, 808, 810, 821 [twice]). But as Philippians 2:10 reveals, Paul believed in a 3-tier universe. Was Paul wrong? From our modern scientific perspective, he was wrong. Yet from his ancient phenomenological perspective, he was correct because this astronomy was the science-of-the-day. But more importantly, the inerrant spiritual truth in this verse transcends Paul’s incidental ancient science—Jesus is Lord of the entire world. It is worth noting that Grudem and theologians in *Theistic Evolution* do not once deal with Philippians 2:10 and the obvious ancient astronomy.

⁹⁹For an excellent overview of ancient creation accounts throughout the world, see David A. Leeming, *Creation Myths of the World: An Encyclopedia*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010).

¹⁰⁰Moreland et al., eds., TE, 61.

¹⁰¹Grudem is aware that evangelical theologians like me have argued that scripture features ancient science. But he quickly dismisses us and asserts that “standard evangelical commentaries contain reasonable, textually sensitive explanations that do not require us to conclude that the Bible anywhere affirms false statements about the natural world” (TE, 826). I would argue that recognizing the ancient Near Eastern science in scripture is without question “textually sensitive.”

¹⁰²To further explain the Apostle Paul’s belief in a historical Adam, see Denis O. Lamoureux, “Was Adam a Real Person?,” *Christian Higher Education* 10, no. 2 (2011): 79–96.

¹⁰³No Author, “The Wedge” (1998): 2. Published by the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute, accessed February 1, 2018, https://ncse.com/files/pub/creationism/The_Wedge_Strategy.pdf.

¹⁰⁴Ibid. (italics original).

¹⁰⁵In a dramatic strategic shift in July 2017, ID theorists now state,

Instead of recommending teaching about intelligent design in public K–12 schools, Discovery Institute seeks to increase [underline original] the coverage of evolution in curricula. It believes that evolution should be fully and completely presented to students, and they should learn more about evolutionary theory, including its unresolved issues. In other words, evolution should be taught as a scientific theory that is open to critical scrutiny, not as a sacred dogma that can’t be questioned. (Discovery Institute Staff, “Discovery Institute’s Science Education Policy,” July 3, 2017, accessed March 6, 2018, <https://www.discovery.org/a/3164>)

Of course, it is obvious what this strategic change is attempting to do. Since ID theorists now openly accept evolution as “change over time” (TE, 34), they will claim to be evolutionists and attempt, surreptitiously, to insert their God-of-the-gaps view of evolution into educational institutions. I thank James Stump for this link.

¹⁰⁶John Currid acknowledges that “the evolutionary creation movement is stronger than it has ever been and is making inroads into evangelical thought today” (TE, 842–43).

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