Christianity took root and developed because of the *Pax Romana*, established by Augustus (p. 19). Constantine established Christianity as the official state religion which led to its rapid spread because “Individuals quickly learned that by converting to this new religion there were more opportunities for advancement and wealth” (p. 21). Even so Christians were sometimes persecuted because they were part of a group, and “The Romans had a sort of national paranoia; they distrusted any gathering of people,” even a volunteer fire department (p. 39).

There were many contemporary Roman religions, but they offered little hope for life after death. This was one reason why Christianity and the mystery religions were so popular, with Christianity winning out eventually (pp. 43–4). This topic is explored in the chapter entitled “Afterlife.”

The last chapter, “Impact of Christianity,” explains how Christianity shaped and influenced its buildings, organizations, papacy, pilgrimages, and tourist economy. The author concludes that some practices and attitudes of Christianity evolved (divorce, dietary laws, vernacular services), but others continue to be a vital contemporary part of Christian experience (fasting, prayer, and communion).

James W. Ermatinger, professor and chair of the Department of History at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO, is the author of *Economic Reforms of Diocletian and The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.


Why this book? To explore the differences and similarities in daily life between Christians and pagans, to examine how Christianity developed and identified itself in an unfriendly world, and to place Christianity within the structure of Roman society. In the author’s words: “The central aspect of this book examines Christians’ daily life during the Roman world, especially in the city of Rome and before the legalization of Christianity” (p. ix). The author’s information comes from literary and archaeological sources.

This ten chapter book includes a glossary, bibliography, chronology, photographs, drawings, images, and an index. The book’s three main sections describe, in the Roman world, the uniqueness of Christianity, the uniqueness of Christians, and what it meant to be a Christian. Ermatinger presents a brief biography of two saviors of the world: Augustus was seen as political savior of the Roman world; Jesus would be seen as the religious savior of the whole world (p. 6). “These two individuals, Augustus and Jesus, living nearly contemporaneously with each other in the same political system, influenced the future of Christianity and the Roman world” (p. 7).
Intelligent Design Is Not Natural Science

The Intelligent Design (ID) movement has insisted that intelligent design is scientific. William Dembski, a prominent spokesperson for ID, wrote that intelligent design is “a fruitful scientific concept,” “a full-fledged scientific theory,” and “a scientific research program.”

In his article, “Is Intelligent Design ‘Scientific’?” (PSCF 59, no. 1 [March 2007]: 55–62), Loren Haarsma twice points out that most people equate science with natural causes. Even so, he concludes his article by stating that ID is “partly science.”

The intelligent manipulation of known characteristics of the physical universe is the hallmark of engineering and technology. The intelligent design (Lower case ‘i’ and lower case ‘d’) and the intelligent assembly of the components of biological origins are synonymous with supernatural genetic engineering and supernatural biotechnology. Whether they are the result of a supernatural design placed within the singularity, the result of supernatural intermittent activity within the physical universe or the result of a creative act cannot be determined scientifically.

The intelligent design and the intelligent assembly of biological entities reside totally outside natural science. They are antithetical to natural events having natural causes. However, once existent, the components of biological origins function naturalistically and do not require ongoing supernatural intervention. Scientists can do their experiments and obtain results consistent with methodological naturalism.

The ID movement would be better served by dropping or ignoring all associations with “science” and, instead, assimilate the language of engineering and technology where intelligent activity is normative. The relationship between evolution and intelligent design is not one of science vs. religion but, rather, one of natural science vs. technology.

How should one respond to the question: “Is intelligent design scientific?” A reasonable response would be: “The classification of intelligent design within science is irrelevant. Let me explain why intelligent design belongs within engineering and technology.”

The formal concept of Intelligent Design (Upper case ‘I’ and upper case ‘D’) is a totally different matter. ID is a process, which differentiates intelligent causation from naturalistic causation. Therefore, it lies wholly outside the natural sciences, outside technology and outside engineering. ID is based in the field of logic.

Proponents of ID use a logical algorithm to determine the probable causative agency, which gave rise to individual biological components. This algorithm, the Explanatory Filter, has three junction points where consecutive decisions are made concerning contingency, complexity and specificity. This Filter is used to differentiate intelligent causation from natural causation. An activity or structure that is contingent, complex and specified is most likely due to intelligent design and activity. The origin of a specific biological component, which is contingent, complex and specified, lies within biotechnology and/or genetic engineering rather than within natural science.

Lastly, a scientific research program unique to Intelligent Design is a myth. Promoting such a program is counter productive. Intelligent design is advanced through quality scientific research, through the scientific method and through sound reasoning. Neither Michael Behe, author of Darwin’s Black Box, nor Jonathan Wells, author of Icons of Evolution, based their books on an Intelligent Design scientific research program. Rather, both relied on quality research within natural science. A scientific research program from an alien culture should be able to determine that the Pioneer Space Craft is the result of intelligent causation rather than naturalistic causation. No special research program need be set up. The same can be said for the investigation of causative agency concerning biological origins.

Notes
1W. Dembski, The Design Revolution (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 34.
2Ibid., 37.
3Ibid.

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Kudos for the March 2007 Issue

I have just read through the March 2007 issue of PSCF. It was the best edition yet. The article-response-author reply pattern added greatly to the clarity and quality of the discussions. I hope that pattern will be continued as much as possible.

Thanks.

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Change in Manuscript Submission

Beginning July 1, 2007, submit all manuscripts (except book reviews) to:

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