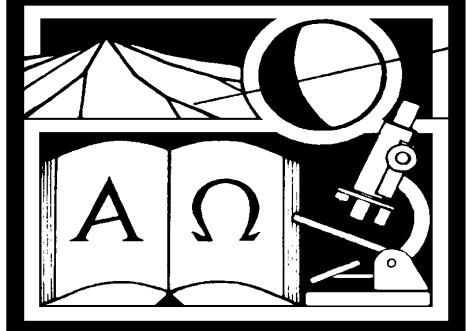


# Origins Insights

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CREATION SCIENCE FELLOWSHIP



April 2001

## The Terminology of the ID Controversy: A Preview to April's topic "Intelligent Design: Is It All We Need For The Debate?"

By James Hilston

Is the Intelligent Design (ID) movement synonymous with Creationism? The concept of "intelligent design" was the topic of William Paley's Natural Theology in 1802. Recent writings on the same topic by Michael Behe ("Darwin's Black Box," 1996), Michael Denton, William Dembski, and Phillip Johnson ("The Wedge of Truth," 2000) are viewed by many if not most creationists as positive contributions to the cause of scientific creationism. However, there is a hidden danger behind the ID movement that threatens to undermine creationism. At the April 17th CSF meeting we will examine the underpinnings of this movement, identify the dangers and errors therein, and assess how we may properly and most effectively make use of the evidence provided by ID proponents. As a preview and primer to this presentation, the following list of terms and definitions are offered:

Intelligent design (ID). The Access Research Network, an internet consortium of "intelligent design" proponents [[www.ARN.org/id\\_faq.htm](http://www.ARN.org/id_faq.htm)], describes ID thus:

"Design theory - also called design or the design argument - ... is the view that nature shows tangible signs of having been designed by preexisting intelligence."

"Called intelligent design (ID), to distinguish it from earlier versions of design theory (as well as from the

naturalistic use of the term 'design'), ... "

"Instead of looking for such vague properties as 'purpose' or 'perfection' - which may be construed in a subjective sense - it looks for the presence of what it calls 'specified complexity,' an unambi-

### MEETING INFORMATION

**Host:** James Hilston

**Topic:** "Intelligent Design: Is it All We Need for the Debate?"

Is the Intelligent Design (ID) movement synonymous with Creationism? The concept of "intelligent design" was the topic of William Paley's Natural Theology in 1802. Recent writings on the same topic by Michael Behe ("Darwin's Black Box," 1996), Michael Denton, William Dembski, and Phillip Johnson ("The Wedge of Truth," 2000) are viewed by many if not most creationists as positive contributions to the cause of scientific creationism. But is there a hidden danger behind the ID movement that threatens to undermine creationism? The aim of this presentation is to examine the underpinnings of this movement, identify the dangers and errors therein, and to assess how we may properly and most effectively make use of the evidence provided by ID proponents.

**DATE:** Tuesday, April 17, 2001

**TIME:** 7:30 PM

**PLACE:** Mars Alliance Church, 997 Route 228, Mars, PA, 16046  
Church Phone: (724)776-9400

(Continued from page 1)

guously objective standard. [[www.ARN.org/id\\_faq.htm](http://www.ARN.org/id_faq.htm)]

Specified complexity. According to the Access Research Network, "Specified complexity is displayed by any object or event that has an extremely low probability of occurring by chance, and matches a discernable pattern. According to contemporary design theory, the presence of highly specified complexity is an indicator or an intelligent cause." ID proponents claim this is an "unambiguously objective standard." [[www.ARN.org/id\\_faq.htm](http://www.ARN.org/id_faq.htm)] We will discuss why this is not the case.

Apologetics. From the Greek word, "defense" or "answer" (#626 #627) *Apologia*.

- 1) verbal defense, speech in defense,
- 2) a reasoned statement or argument [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Online Bible]. Biblical occurrences of the word: Lu 12:11 21:14 Ac 19:33 22:1 24:10 25:8,16 26:1,2,24 Ro 2:15 1Co 9:3 2Co 7:11 12:19 Php 1:7,17 2Ti 4:16 1Pe 3:15. Compare Ro 1:20 2:1 (#379) *anapologetos* i.e., "without an apologetic."

**Classical apologetics.** This apologetic method "stresses rational arguments for the existence of God and historical evidence supporting the truth of Christianity." It is characterized by two basic steps: (1) "... establish valid theistic arguments for the truth of theism apart from scripture, (2) ... compile historical evidence to establish such basic truths of Christianity as the deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible." [p. 154, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Norman L. Geisler, 1999] We will demonstrate why this approach to apologetics is insufficient, inherently flawed, and most importantly, unbiblical.

**Pretended neutrality.** This refers to the erroneous idea that a person can

be entirely objective or neutral in their reasoning, perceptions, and most importantly, in their evaluation of evidence. It is not possible for anyone to be neutral, and anyone who claims to be so is only pretending. This type of thinking is the underpinning of such phrases as "just let the facts speak for themselves ..." and is the foundation of classical apologetic and ID arguments.

**Epistemology.** (Theory of knowledge) This is a branch of philosophy that asks the question "how do we know what we know?" The scriptural position is that only the Biblical worldview provides a coherent epistemology. We will consider how the ID arguments not only fail in epistemological coherence, but do more to support Darwinian epistemology.

**Circular argument.** Also called circular reasoning, but for the purposes of my discussion, I will make a distinction between a circular argument and circular reasoning (i.e., question-begging, see below). The reason I make a distinction is because there are true arguments that are circular in structure, and in fact ALL worldviews are ultimately circular. However, not all worldviews are coherent or intelligible.

**Atheist.** An atheist may be defined as (1) someone who doesn't believe in God or (2) someone who denies the existence of God. According to Romans 1:18-20, there is no such thing as someone who does not believe in God. Those who claim they do not believe in God are self-deluded or lying because the scriptures say that everyone knows God exists. While there are those atheists who openly deny that God exists, most atheists prefer to take the high road and say, "I don't believe in God because I haven't yet seen sufficient evidence that proves His existence."

**Chance.** Chance can be defined various ways. Dictionary definitions include:

1. Something that happens without apparent cause.
2. The unpredictable element in existence : luck, fortune
4. The likelihood of a particular outcome in an uncertain situation: probability
5. Risk

[The New Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1989]

When evolutionists talk about "chance," they will use any one or a combination of the above definitions interchangeably, which is partly why creationists continue to lose ground in this debate. We should never have let them get away with this. When creationists use the term, they typically are speaking in terms of probabilities. Probabilities are merely descriptions of our own uncertainties, or "ignorance management," if you will. Probabilities have no causal force; one cannot add or take away amounts of "chance" in order to effect a different outcome. The importance of this common Darwinian equivocation will be addressed, as well as why creationists must be careful in their use of this term.

**Question-begging** (circular reasoning). This is probably the most important term in this presentation because it is precisely the point with which we can prove the evolutionist's worldview to be absurd. But more germane to this topic will be a demonstration of how the ID argument commits the very same error. "Question-begging" is a logical fallacy that I've distinguished from the circular argument. While question-begging is a kind of circular argument, it more specifically refers to the fallacy of assuming one's conclusion as part of one's proof. "Murder is wrong because it is the intentional taking of another person's life." This is basically saying, "Murder is murder." Nothing has been proven. The typical fallacy is

committed by both evolutionists and ID proponents in their appeal to strict empirical observation. When asked to prove their methodology, that is, to justify their trust in their senses and reasoning faculties according to their worldview, they cannot prove them without already assuming them to be true. This is question-begging. We will examine this more closely and provide a method of argument that does not commit this error.

**Autonomous reasoning.** Similar to "pretended neutrality," this refers to the idea of using logic and reason as if one were one's own authority, standard and arbiter of truth. All reasoning depends on some authority, whether one presumes to be one's own authority, or appeals to that of another. The validity of one's reasoning will depend on the verity of the authority to which one appeals. When one asks an evolutionist to "look and see," one is asking him to reason autonomously.

*Starting in May, if you are on the e-mail list, you will only get the newsletter through e-mail. If you have any questions, contact Dennis Wert. Thank you!*

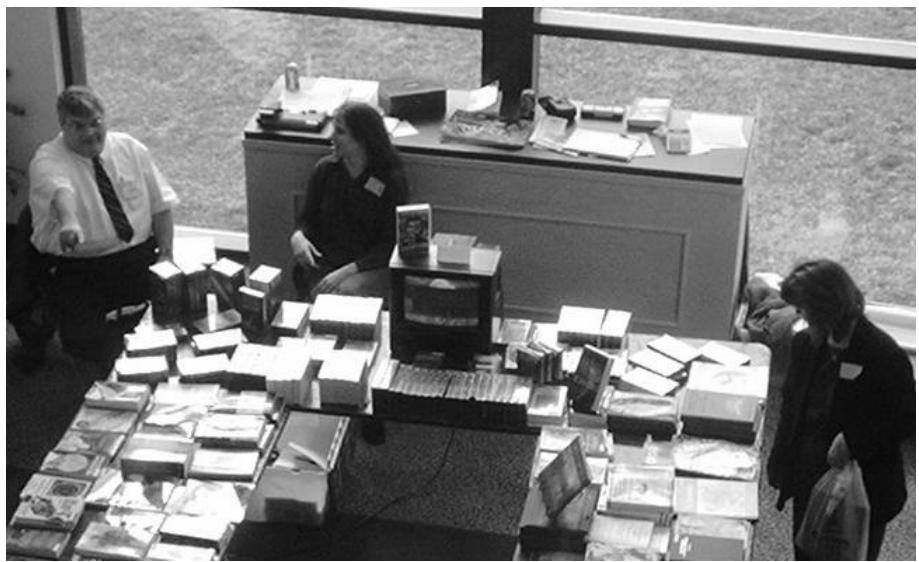
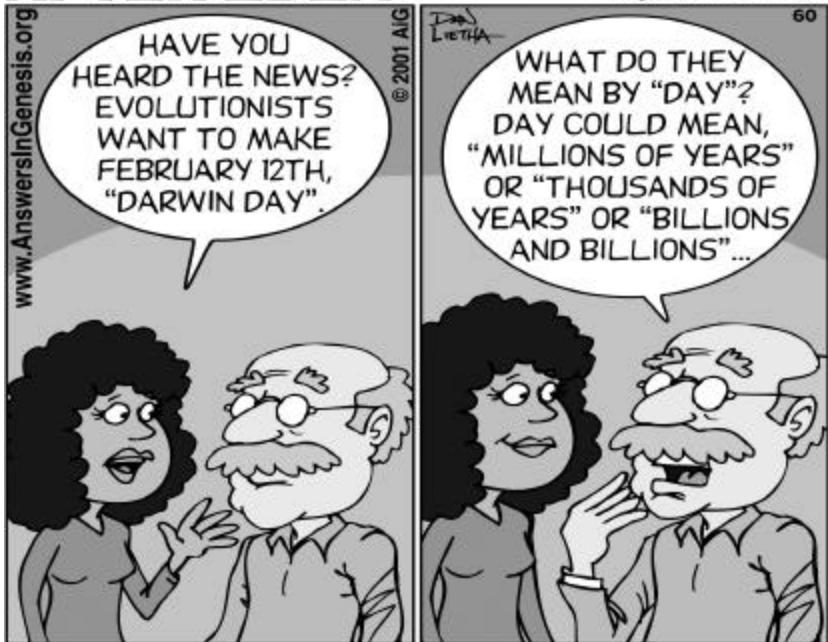
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*The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said." (Matthew 28:5,6a NAS)*

## 2001 MEETING TOPICS : SECOND QUARTER

- MAY 15** Natural Selection Assimilation Laboratory.  
Hands on for all ages. Presenter: Bob Harsh  
**JUN 19** America B.C.: Diffusionism. Presenter:  
Reid Moon

### AFTER EDEN



Creation Science Fellowship participated in the South Hills Home-Schooling Conference on March 10, 2001.

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Officers  
Circulation: 500

Purpose: The aim of Creation Science Fellowship is to inform and educate people of the biblical, philosophical, and scientific validity of creationism.

Creation Science Fellowship, Inc.  
newslette is published monthly.

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