

Points of contact between Science and Christianity

Psalm 8

"We are all amateur scientists and theologians."

"We share the common ground of reason."

Romans 1

"We see God's power and glory in creation."

"We share the common ground of nature."

Genesis 1-2

"We see man as the crown of God's creation."

"We share the common ground of earthiness."



Richard Dawkins

(British evolutionary biologist)

"I stand in awe of the wonder of life and can but offer humble thanks for the gift of being a part of the cosmos."

To whom can he give thanks?

Science can lead us to a sense of "awe" before nature and humanity but it leaves us with a mystery **that only Biblical revelation can solve.**

Acts 17:23

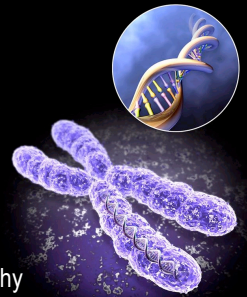
"23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and all things in it, . . . 25 . . . He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;"

Genetics (Information)



Bernd-Olaf Koppers

(Professor of natural philosophy at Friedrich Schiller University of Jena)



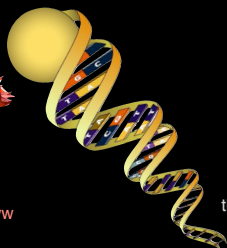
"The problem of the origin of life is clearly basically equivalent to the origin of biological information."

Three types of material observed in nature.



Random

oirwlk kjwlekru lklkern eww



Information

(specified & complex)

This sequence of letters contains a message.



Ordered

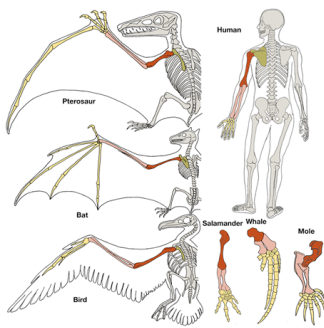
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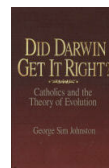
Richard Dawkins

"You don't need to be mathematician or a physicist to calculate that an eye or a hemoglobin molecule would take from here to infinity to self-assemble by sheer luck."

**If not random chance what—
natural selection, anthropic principle,
intelligent design, . . . ?**



Do similar body structures & DNA point to common descent or also common design?



Dr. George Sim Johnson
(Writer, *Did Darwin Get It Right?*)

1998

“Human DNA contains more organized information than the Encyclopedia Britannica. If the full text of the encyclopedia were to arrive in computer code from outer space, most people would regard this as proof of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence, but when seen in nature, it is explained as the workings of random forces.”

Are naturalistic presuppositions too restrictive?



James A. Shapiro

(Biochemist and molecular biologist at University of Chicago)

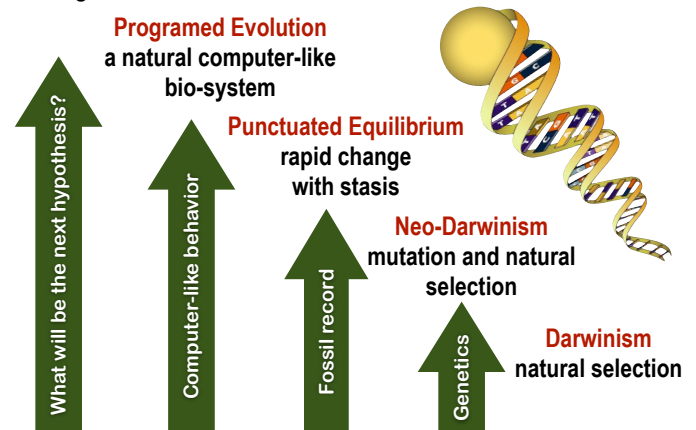
"A Third Way" in Boston Rev. 22 (1) (1997): 32-3

“There are far more unresolved questions than answers about evolutionary process, and contemporary science continues to provide us with new conceptual possibilities.”

How certain are our present conclusions?

?
Design

Where might this lead?



DNA - the building block of life

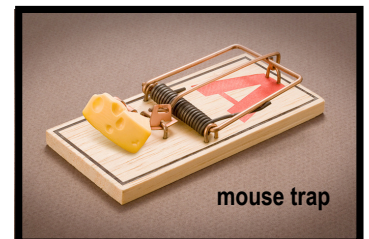
- Humans share 98% of their DNA with chimpanzees.
- We share 60% of our DNA with a fruit fly.
- We share 40-50% of our DNA with cabbages.
- Researchers at Cambridge University are convinced that the mud worms not only share DNA with humans but that they are also our closest invertebrate relatives.
- 90% of mutations are harmful, the rest are neutral or weakly beneficial.

The question

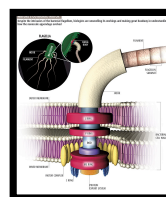
What is the source information in the DNA?
Can mutation and natural selection be the whole answer?

Are some forms irreducibly complex?

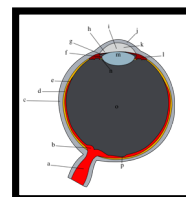
Some things seem to have practical function only when they are fully developed.



mouse trap



bacterial flagellum



eye



watch



Michael J. Behe
(Biochemist at Lehigh University)

“The question for evolution is not whether you can take a mousetrap and use its parts for something else; it’s whether you can start with something else and make it into a mousetrap.”

Is the mousetrap scenario really valid?

Darwin’s insightful acknowledgment.

“To suppose that the eye, (with so many parts all working together) . . . could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.”

Charles Darwin

Darwin’s insightful acknowledgment.

“If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”

Charles Darwin



Franklin M. Harold

Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Colorado State University.

2001. *The way of the cell: molecules, organisms and the order of life*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 205.

“We should reject, as a matter of principle, the substitution of intelligent design for the dialogue of chance and necessity; but we must concede that there are presently no detailed Darwinian accounts of the evolution of any biochemical system, only a variety of wishful speculations.”

Are we dealing with speculation or fact?



Richard Dawkins
(British evolutionary biologist)

“Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.”

Is the appearance of design just that - appearance, or could it reflect God’s design?

“This earth of ours was finished millions upon millions of years ago; It circled round and round silently in the dark—inert, forgotten, dead; until something, groping its way through the blackness, found earth’s face, and stayed, and played upon it. The light had come; and with it everything that mattered came; color and beauty and life itself. So God, who once shone out of darkness, has in the face of Jesus Christ shone into my poor heart. The difference between that dead ball spinning in perpetual night, and this earth teeming with its wonders—that’s the difference Christ has made for me.”

Paul Scherer, Love is a Spendthrift