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The Case for a Creator

A Journalist Investigates Scientific Evidence that Points Toward God

A Quick Focus

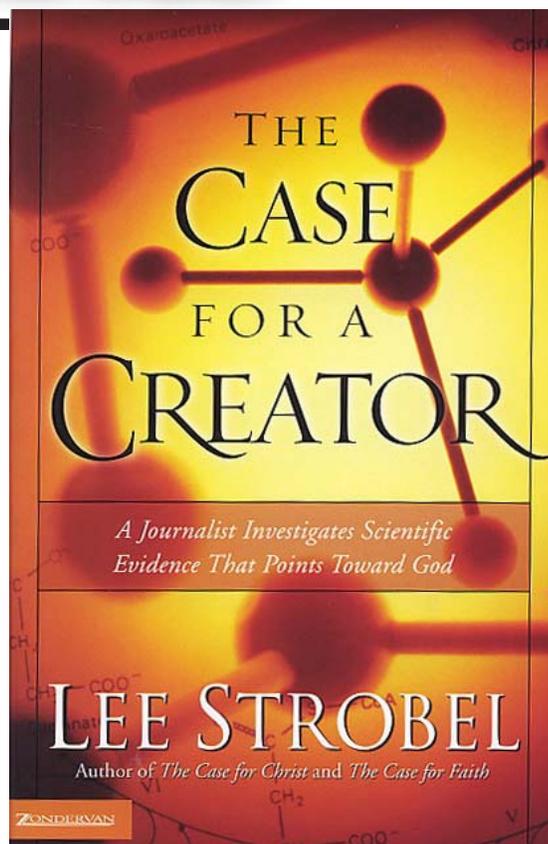
The Book's Purpose

- Present a convincing case for intelligent design
- Reveal the fallacies of Darwinian views
- Demonstrate the compatibility of science and faith
- Give evidence that increasing numbers of scientists reject naturalism as a plausible explanation for the origin of the universe

The Book's Message

For decades Darwin's evolutionary views have been deemed as the "gospel" when it comes to the universe's origin. However, the number of reputable scientists using modern research and technology who are moving away from these naturalistic theories and toward an acceptance of intelligent design is ever-increasing. However, these emerging trends have yet to find their way into today's school and university classrooms.

New research from the fields of cosmology, physics, astronomy, biochemistry and biological information demonstrates over and over that evolutionary views are



by Lee Strobel

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too far-fetched to be credible. These same disciplines provide a mounting case that an Intelligent Designer created the universe and that this Designer did so with a magnificent purpose in mind.

Eight Main Points

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evolutionary ICONS on trial

Looking back on my high school experience of the 1960s, I can still remember the visual images that promoted evolution and confirmed my atheistic beliefs.

Four Visual Images of Evolution

The first image came from the experiment of Stanley Miller who, in 1953, artificially produced a red goo consisting of amino acids. The implication? God was out of a job if natural processes could explain the origin of life.

The second image came from Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. The only illustration in the book depicted a tree whose trunk represented an ancient ancestor. The tree grew upwards into limbs and branches, illustrating how millions of species of organisms evolved over a magnificent expanse of time.

The third image was Ernst Haeckel's drawings of embryos, found in practically every book on evolution. He placed embryonic pictures of various vertebrae side-by-side showing how strikingly similar they are at the beginning stages of development. His conclusion was that we have a common ancestry.

The fourth was the archaeopteryx, the famous fossil from a bird-lizard-like creature dating back 150 million years. Scientists hailed it as the missing link between modern birds and reptiles.

A New Journey

It was the spiritual conversion of my wife, Leslie, and the obvious positive changes in her life that motivated me to begin an intensive investigation into the claims of Jesus Christ. This quest led me to explore the validity of the scientific information that had been ingrained in my mind. Can faith and science be compatible?

The Images of Evolution Exposed

Evolutionists continue to use these four images to support their views. In fact, these images still appear in most science textbooks. But do they represent truth? In an interview with Jonathan Wells, senior fellow with the Discovery Institute Center for Science and Culture, he claimed that each image is either false or misleading.

The validity of the **Miller experiment** hinges on how well he was able to simulate with accuracy the atmosphere of the early earth. He wasn't able. He used a hydrogen-rich mixture that included methane and ammonia. There is no evidence at all that this was the makeup of early earth's atmosphere. If you do Miller's experiment today with a more accurate simulation, the result is formaldehyde and cyanide and certainly not amino acids.

Darwin's tree of life accurately represents his views. But Darwin himself admitted that fossil records failed to support his tree of life image. He concurred that there was a major group of animals (phyla) that suddenly appeared on the record. He trusted that future discoveries would substantiate his views. But actually the opposite is true. After the Cambrian explosion more than 540 million years ago, fully developed animals appeared with no semblance of evolutionary processes.

What about **Haeckel's embryos**? Haeckel lined up drawings of various embryos (including fish, tortoise, chicken, human) to demonstrate their striking similari-

ties and he concluded that we all have common ancestry. But modern embryonic photographs look vastly different from Haeckel's drawings. Actually, his depictions are fake. He doctored them up to make them appear to be similar. Moreover, he chose only the embryos that had similarities, purposefully omitting those not supporting his theory.

Does the archaeopteryx provide Darwin's missing link? Hardly. Darwin admitted his theory depended on future fossil discoveries to authenticate his views. Oddly, only two years after he published *The Origin of the Species*, the archaeopteryx was discovered. Today, most paleontologists agree that it is not a half-bird, half-reptile. They believe it simply represents an extinct member of the bird family.

“The evidence for Darwinism is not only grossly inadequate, it's systematically distorted.

I'm convinced that sometime in the not-too-distant future...people will look back in amazement and say, ‘How could anyone have believed this?’”

~Jonathan Wells

can SCIENCE and FAITH be compatible?

Many say that it is destiny that science and Christianity will always be at war. Others say that science and Christianity are two completely different realms that never interact with one another. But there is a third view—that science actually supports Christian doctrine. Stephen Meyer, one of the most convincing voices in the Intelligent Design movement, indicates that in the last fifty years science has been moving in a steady theistic direction.

“Science, done right, points toward God.”

~Stephen Meyer

Scientific Examples of Compatibility

Meyer points out several examples to give credence to his case. First, in the new cosmology, theories of Big Bang and general relativity point to a certain beginning of the universe. These theories provide a scientific rationale for the Christian's view of *creation ex nihilo*.

Another example lies in the realm of physics. For, all the laws and constants of the universe working together to initiate life is mathematically incredible. Life on earth could not be possible if the universe's expansion rate increased or decreased by one part in a trillion trillion trillion trillion.

The origin of life and the necessary information stored in DNA to make life possible represents a third example of how science points toward God.

Finally, the Cambrian explosion which introduced twenty to thirty-five brand new body plans provides a compelling defense for intelligent design.

How Much Evidence for God Is Needed?

History has handled this question in one of two extremes. One extreme denies any objective basis and asserts that only faith is necessary. The other extreme uses deductive proofs to substantiate God's existence. All these proofs are faulty. Simply stated, one cannot prove the existence of God.

Meyer proposes a third option that he calls “inference to the best explanation.” With this method one performs exhaustive analyses of every plausible explanation and keeps adding information until only one explanation is left that covers all the available data.

Scientists, lawyers and detectives use this method everyday. When one considers the recent discoveries of cosmology, biology, and physics, he can infer that intelligent design is the best explanation for the origin of the universe.

Three Probing Questions

Why aren't more scientists Christians if the evidence for intelligent design is so compelling? Much of the scientific evidence is relatively new. And it takes a great deal of time for the implications to be fully assimilated. On top of that, a materialistic worldview has dominated the scientific arena for more than 150 years. That does not change overnight.

Since most in the Intelligent Design movement are believers, does that minimize the credibility of their science? Those who espouse Darwinism are mostly naturalists. That doesn't negate their credibility, does it? Arguments for or against a view must be weighed in light of their own merits, regardless of who

holds the view. We must let the evidence speak for itself. Please note, however, that there are many intelligent design scientists who do not profess Christ.

If scientists ever consider the possibility of the miraculous, does that negate the need for further scientific research? Of course not. In fact, just the opposite is true. Ruling out the possibility of intelligent design stifles scientific inquiry. Naturalists don't have a monopoly on science. We need a historical period in which scientists strive for truth wherever that truth might lead them.

“More and more people are going to find themselves open to God as a result of new findings that make theistic belief the best explanation for the evidence of nature.”



evidence from COSMOLOGY

Where did the world come from? The Hebrews, thousands of years ago, answered the question with the biblical words, **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** What do cosmologists, scientists who study the universe's origins, have to say about the issue? The question at hand is not *when* it happened, but *how* it happened.

What caused the universe to explode suddenly into existence? Bill Bryson in *A Short History of Nearly Everything* indicates that

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98 percent of everything that has been produced was made in three minutes. At one moment there was nothing; then suddenly there was something. William Craig, research professor at the Talbot School of Theology, helps us explore these issues.

The Kalam Argument

The *Kalam* (from Arabic, “doctrine”) Argument presents a three-step case for the existence of God. First, whatever begins to exist has a cause. Second, the universe had a beginning. Third, the universe has a cause.

Nothing just pops into being without a cause behind it. Atheists counter by saying that this statement cannot be scientifically proven. But we have to admit that there is better reason to see the statement as true instead of false.

What is the proof that the universe had a beginning? Mathematically speaking, the possibility of actual infinity is conceptual only, existing only in our minds. Infinity cannot happen in the real world. Consequently, the universe cannot have an infinite number of past events, meaning that it must have had a beginning.

Scientifically speaking, Einstein’s theory of relativity does not allow for a static universe. Friedman and Lemaitre, in the 1920s, using Einstein’s theory, predicted that the universe is constantly expanding. If so, then to go backward in time would lead to a single point in time before which nothing existed.

Astronomer Fred Hoyle was the first to call this concept the Big Bang. The Big Bang phenomenon points to a methodical, designed event not an accidental, chaotic explosion. Logic provides us with some clues about the cause’s identity. Craig notes that the identity of this cause is timeless, immaterial, spaceless, and magnificently powerful. Then he adds, “**And that is a core concept of God.**”

Are There Legitimate Alternatives?

Scientists naturally have trouble accepting the notion that the first cause requires a Creator. So they explore theories that sidestep the Big Bang idea.

One alternative is the Oscillating Model, made popular by Carl Sagan on his *Cosmos* television series. He says the universe needs no Creator because it operates on a cycle that repeatedly contracts then expands. But his theory violates the general principle of relativity. No known physical law allows for the reversal of a contracting universe. Laws of physics demonstrate a continuous expansion, which means that if you keep going back and back in time, eventually you come to the smallest cycle representing the beginning of the universe.

Another alternative, proposed by Stephen William Hawking, uses a model combining quantum theory with general relativity to show that the universe is like the rounded end of a badminton birdie. It has no singular point that would signify a precise beginning. However,

Hawking admittedly substituted imaginary numbers (square root of negative one) for real numbers and refused to convert them into real numbers. Why? Real numbers point to singularity, a true beginning to the universe.

The last 100 years have demonstrated a great reversal. A century ago Christians stayed on the defensive, trying to justify the biblical view of creation despite all the evidence to the contrary. Today, scientists are on the defensive, trying to overturn the convincing evidence that a personal Creator does exist.

“There has never been a time in history when the hard evidence of science was more confirmatory of belief in God than today.”



evidence from PHYSICS

The Anthropic Principle

The Anthropic Principle essentially says that all the arbitrary constants in physics represent the precise values needed in order for the universe to produce and sustain life. Is it purely coincidence that the laws of nature work together to make life possible? This principle has led many scientists in the last thirty years to agree that the universe is not some cosmic accident. One of the most persuasive voices on the anthropic principle is professor, physicist, philosopher Robin Collins.

The Fine-Tuning of the Universe

The universe possesses the exact balance of initial conditions and the laws and parameters of physics to sustain life. It is fine-tuned beyond human comprehension. Take gravity for example. Imagine a linear radio dial that spans the universe. It is broken down into one-inch increments resulting in billions upon billions of inches, each representing a possible setting for the force of gravity. If you were to move the setting only one inch, the force of gravity would increase by a billion-fold. All living creatures would be crushed in an instant.

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Another parameter giving credence to the fine-tuning of the uni-verse is called the cosmological constant, the energy density of empty space. Had this constant been large and negative, the resulting force would reverse the uni-verse's expansion and cause it to collapse. Had it been large and positive, the resulting force would have prevented matter from clumping together. Amazingly the constant is quite small, baffling even the most avowed skeptics and atheists.

The cosmological constant is so fine-tuned that it is beyond imagination. It would be like being far out in space, throwing a dart toward earth and hitting a bull's eye that measures one trillionth of a trillionth of an inch in diameter. That's staggering.

Gravity and the cosmological constant represent only two of more than 30 parameters that must be precisely calibrated in order for life to exist in the universe. Let's say you walk into a dome representing the universe. It contains 12 dials, each with an incredibly large number of settings. You leave the dials at random with no evidence of life in the dome. In one year you come back and each dial is precisely calibrated, allowing life to thrive. Would you conclude that something randomly happened causing the precise calibration? No, you would assume that some Grand Designer came and calibrated the dials.

The Skeptic's Response

To refute the notion of some Designer creating the universe, skeptics have concocted counter theories. One popular theory

proposes the existence of millions and millions of universes. With such a large number, certainly the odds become more favorable that at least one of them would result in the precise calibrations needed for life to exist. We just happened to be the lucky recipients.

These theories are purely metaphysical at their roots. There is no scientific evidence whatsoever that parallel worlds exist.

“The very fact that skeptics have to come up with such an outlandish theory is because the fine-tuning of the universe points powerfully toward an intelligent designer~and some people will hypothesize anything to avoid reaching that conclusion.”
~William Lane Craig



evidence from ASTRONOMY

New findings are confirming the notion that Earth is an especially unique place, that it possesses qualities which make it an inhabitable place like no other. Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Wesley Richards, co-authors of *The Privileged Planet*, explain the evidence.

The Copernican Principle

The Copernican Principle stresses that there is nothing exceptional about Earth. Most scientists agree with this assertion, holding that life abounds throughout the universe.

The problem with this principle is that it goes beyond pure science and assumes a metaphysical position claiming we have no purpose or uniqueness. This view came to represent the ongoing conflict between science and religion. Propo-

nents have presented a history of science indicating how unimportant we are.

Not only are these views based on faulty historical data, but there is now a wide range of scientific information that indicates why Earth is a uniquely inhabitable place and has actually been designed for discovery. Gonzalez states, **“Frankly, I think they were so deluded by their complete belief in the metaphysical Copernican Principle~that life was just going to be everywhere in the galaxy~that they overlooked the facts.”**

Our Safe Galaxy

Basically, our universe contains three types of galaxies: spiral, elliptical, and irregular. Our elliptical galaxy provides safe zones which optimize habitability. Our location

between the Sagittarius and Perseus spiral arms protects us from dangerous explosions of supernovae. We are also situated far from our galaxy's nucleus, away from the dangerous black hole.

A location further in on the spiral would cause threats from radiation. A location further out would not be conducive to life because of the absence of sufficient heavy elements. There is a narrow safe zone on the spiral, and that is where Earth is positioned.

Most galaxies are of the elliptical type. Life is not likely on these galaxies because they are much less massive and luminous than our Milky Way. Furthermore, frequent supernovae explosions make life even less possible in the irregular galaxies. Among all other heavenly bodies, Earth is in the position that is most conducive to life.

Other Factors Making Earth Habitable

Location: Jupiter shields the Earth from the impact of comets. Other planets shield us from being

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bombarded by asteroids. A concept called the Circular Habitable Zone explains how our position, in relation to the sun, makes Earth habitable. If our distance from the sun were to be altered in either direction by as little as five percent, life would not be possible.

The Sun: For years there has been a near consensus among scientists that the sun is merely a common star. Recently, however, new discoveries point to the fact that the sun is unusual after all. These discoveries are finding their way into astronomy textbooks.

The Earth's sun, as opposed to other stars, has the right mass, the right balance of red and blue, and the right metallicity which makes it unusual. It is highly stable, thereby preventing wild swings of climate on Earth.

“It would take a star with the highly unusual properties of our sun~the right mass, the right light, the right composition, the right distance, the right orbit, the right galaxy, the right location~to nurture living organisms on a circling planet. That makes our sun, and our planet, rare indeed.”

The Moon: Recent discoveries have shown that the moon actually supports life~ours, that is. The stability of our climate is due to how the moon stabilizes the tilt of the Earth's axis. The moon is also largely responsible for our tides, serving the important role of transporting nutrients from the continents into the oceans. If it were larger than its existing size, strong tides would generate serious difficulties.



bar. And each part must be precisely matched to the other parts. Take away any one of the parts, and the mousetrap doesn't work at all.

The same principle applies to the cell. It requires all the complex parts to be in precise relationship with the other parts. The parts could not have evolved because that would have rendered the cell useless since it requires each part to be fully operative.

“Evolution can't produce an irreducibly complex biological machine suddenly, all at once, because it's much too complicated. The odds against that would be prohibitive.”
~Michael Behe

The Extraordinary Cilium

One example of irreducible complexity is the cilia, the whiplike hairs on the cell's surface. Each cell has about 200 cilia. They work in synchrony to help the human body expel foreign particles. They also help row the cell through fluid. How can they do this?

Each cilium consists of about 200 protein parts which can be broken down into a complex system of rods, linkers and motors. Each of these parts must be precisely connected to the others if the cilia are to function properly. No evolutionist has been able to demonstrate how these parts could have developed gradually.

The Efficient Flagellum

Flagella operate like rotary propellers. The flagellum receives its energy from an acid that flows through the bacterial membrane. Amazingly, its propellers can rotate ten thousand times a minute (compared to the Honda S2000's nine thousand rpms). More amazingly, the flagellum can instantaneously stop and start spinning in the opposite direction at the same speed.

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evidence of BIOCHEMISTRY

For generations, biochemists have marveled at how the natural selection process accomplishes the interlocking biological systems of amino acids, proteins, and DNA. But they never explained how these phenomena happened. It was this dilemma that motivated biochemist Michael Behe to devote his life to studying these issues because he knew if that if an Intelligent Designer existed, the cell would certainly reveal His fingerprints.

Behe's best-known work is *Darwin's Black Box*, a work that the *National Review* has classified as one of the twentieth century's most important non-fiction books.

The Black Box

Scientists use the term *black box* to refer to a system they find interesting but do not understand how it works. Darwin's black box

was the cell. Under the microscope one could see the cell divide and move around, but no one knew how it happened.

The cell serves as a challenging test that Darwin himself proposed. He indicated that his theory of evolution would fail if it could be proven that any existing complex organ could not have formed through processes of successive modifications.

The concept of irreducible complexity states that a system functions on the basis of individual components all working together to accomplish its task. Removing any one of the components will cause that system to fail.

Take, for example, the common mousetrap. Its components consist of a wooden platform, a metal hammer, a spring, a catch, and a metal

EVIDENCE OF BIOCHEMISTRY continued from page 5

The flagellum is extremely complex. But simply speaking, it needs a paddle, a motor, and a rotor in order to operate. If you eliminate any of the parts, you don't get a slower flagellum. It simply doesn't work at all.

Evolutionists are baffled at how the flagellum operates. They attack folks in the Intelligent Design Movement as making arguments from ignorance. But look what they are doing. They admit they have no idea how flagellum could have evolved. Yet they assume that somehow evolution did it.

“I believe that irreducibly complex systems are strong evidence of a purposeful, intentional design by an intelligent agent. No other theory succeeds; certainly not Darwinism.”
~Michael Behe



evidence from **BIOLOGICAL** information

In 1953, Francis Crick and James D. Watson discovered DNA, the six feet of genetic information that is coiled inside of our body's one hundred trillion cells. Scientists marvel at how it provides the information needed to create all of the proteins from which our bodies are constructed. Embedded in our 23 pairs of chromosomes are 30,000 genes that yield as many as 20,500 kinds of proteins.

“DNA serves as the information storehouse for a finely choreographed manufacturing process in which the right amino acids are linked together with the right bonds in the right sequence to produce the right kind of proteins that fold in the right way to build biological systems.” This process is mind boggling and could not have happened outside of intelligent design.

The DNA Library

The key to discovering the origin of life is to understand the origin of biological information. Scientists already know and agree that DNA provides the code for building the cell's components (mostly proteins). The issue is where this genetic information originated.

DNA stores the instructions for protein assembly in the form of a four-character code. These four characters are the chemicals adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine (represented as A, G, C, and T). The proper arrangement of these characters instructs the cell to build its sequences of amino acids, the building blocks of proteins.

Using the analogy of a library helps describe the process the DNA uses to build protein molecules. There are long rows of A, C, G, and T's meticulously arranged to form protein structure. Anywhere from 1,200 to 2,000 letters are needed to build one protein. That is a lot of information!

Where did all this information originate? This essential question has led to the breakdown of all naturalistic explanations.

Are There Other Options?

In 1871, Darwin speculated that the origin of life stemmed from the chemical formation of a protein compound in a little pond consisting of ammonia, phosphoric salts, light, heat, and other ingredients. Scientists refer to this as prebiotic soup.

What's interesting is that there is absolutely no evidence that this prebiotic soup even existed. Yet most origin of life theories are based on its existence, and scientists talk about this ancient ocean as if it is a given. Even if this soup did exist and it contained amino acids, the reaction with the other chemicals would have actually interfered with the formation of life.

What about random chance? Rejected by most scientists, it is still in vogue at the popular level. The probability of a protein molecule forming by chance is about the same as throwing scrabble letters down and generating a book.

For a protein molecule to be formed by chance you need the right bonds between the amino acids and only the left-handed ones. And then they must link up in a specified sequence. Calculate the probability and you will come up with a 10 with 25 zeroes on it. That's just for one molecule. And even the simpler cells need 300-500 protein molecules.

What about natural selection? Darwinists suggest that nature provides chance variations, and then the natural selection process picks the most advantageous ones. Over long periods of time, these small variations can result in major differences.

Here's the problem with that theory. Whether biological evolution is possible might be open to debate, but it certainly doesn't work at the chemical level. In other words, Darwinists admit that natural se-

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lection needs a self-replicating organism to work. But reproduction requires cell division, which in turn requires the existence of information-filled DNA and proteins. And we have already explained how improbable it is for one protein molecule to evolve.

Intelligent Design?

No naturalistic theory has even come close to explaining the origin of life. That doesn't mean we accept intelligent design just because all other theories fail. We accept it because it is the best explanation.

“We should not be looking for only the best naturalistic explanation, but the best explanation, period. And intelligent design is the explanation that’s most in conformity with how the world works.”
~Stephen Myer



evidence from CONSCIOUSNESS

Will the computer of the future ever exceed the intelligence of the human brain? Will it possess the capacity of having spiritual experiences? Darwinist scientists think so. They believe that the physical world is all that exists and that the brain evolved in its complexity to the point that people suddenly developed the ability to think, feel, and be aware.

Today, more and more scientists are claiming that such notions are absurd, that the laws of chemistry and physics will never be able to explain human consciousness.

A Soul Separate from the Brain

Studies have shown that consciousness can exist after the brain has stopped functioning and after a person has been declared clinically dead. Such findings indicate the strong possibility that there is a soul which exists as a separate entity from the brain.

Physicalists, those scientists who believe that everything has a purely physical answer, admit they do not know how the brain spawns consciousness. But they believe that science will ultimately reveal a purely naturalistic explanation.

What are the implications if the physicalists are correct? If they are right, then there is no such thing as consciousness, and there is no free will. Everything is predetermined. But deep inside, we know that we have a free will and that we're more than just a physical brain.

Evidences for the Reality of Consciousness

What evidences are there that consciousness is a separate entity from the brain? First, there is experimental data. For example, neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield reached such conclusions in his experiment of electrically stimulating the brains of patients with epilepsy. Roger Sperry's study of the right and left hemispheres of the brain shows that the mind has causal power apart from brain activities.

There are philosophical arguments as well. There are things true of my consciousness that have nothing to do with my physical body. What

I think is private and personal to me and is not available to anyone else. A scientist may know what's happening in my brain. But only I know what is happening in my mind.

We can't take a person apart cell by cell and say, "Look what that person is thinking." We can't determine one's beliefs or feelings. Nor will we ever be able to find that person's ego. Noted philosophy professor J.P. Moreland asserts, "I *am* a soul, and I *have* a body. We don't learn about people by studying their bodies. We learn about people by finding out how they feel, what they think, what they're passionate about, what their worldview is, and so forth."

The Problem with Evolution

The emergence of consciousness is a mystery. How can mere matter give birth to consciousness? If God does not exist, then what you have up until the appearance of living creatures is nothing but dead matter. Then how do you arrive suddenly at something totally different—living creatures with abilities to think, feel, and believe?

In the beginning there were either particles or there was an infinitely intelligent mind. If you begin with intelligence, then it's much easier to see how finite minds came into existence.

“Darwinism evolution will never be able to explain the origin of consciousness.”
~J.P. Moreland

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Darwin indicated that if there was anything that evolutionary theory could not explain, there would have to be an alternative explanation. Well, he can't explain how the mind originated. Any effort to show that consciousness evolved from the natural functions of the brain have proven to be false and inadequate.

Scientists must not give up on their quest for knowledge. However, they must be willing to examine all the evidence, regardless of where it leads.

“The vast mysteries of the universe should only confirm our belief in the certainty of its Creator. I find it as difficult to understand a scientist who does not acknowledge the presence of a superior rationality behind the existence of the universe as it is to comprehend a theologian who would deny the advances of science.”

~Werner von Braun, the father of space science




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