

Physical Evidence of the Creator

By David Feddes

Antony Flew was one of the world's leading atheists. While teaching at Oxford and other universities, he wrote many articles and books arguing against belief in God. He took the atheist side in many public debates. But after decades of making a case for atheism, Flew gave up. He said that he must "go where the evidence leads." The evidence pointed to a Creator of enormous intelligence and power.

What changed his mind? "Recent scientific discoveries," explained Flew. New knowledge of cell complexity and genetic coding persuaded Flew that life required intelligent design. Even the simplest cell is so complex that it's almost impossible to see how the first living thing could have emerged by chance. Flew said, "What I think the DNA material has done is show that intelligence must have been involved."

When it was announced that Flew was no longer an atheist, many people thought it was a joke. It was like the pope saying he wasn't Catholic. But Flew really had changed his mind, and he said it was largely because of DNA.

Intelligent Design

Each human cell contains enough DNA information to fill at least 1,000 books of 500 pages each. Could such information be encoded and transmitted by an accidental process? If you found a library containing half a million pages of information, would you assume it was all written by accident without any intelligent author? It would take a huge leap of faith to believe such a thing.

Living cells are marvels of design. Molecular biologist Michael Behe writes, "The cell is essentially a completely automated factory, so all assembly has to be done by highly sophisticated robots, not by magic." If a single cell can be compared to a factory with robots, imagine the complexity of a body made up of billions of cells and the kind of information needed to produce such a body.

Behe speaks of "irreducible complexity." By this he means something that can't even begin to work until all of its parts are present and working together. Behe uses a mousetrap as an example. You can't take part of a mousetrap, such as the wooden base, and catch a few mice, then add a spring and catch a few more, add a hammer and catch a few more, and so on. The mousetrap needs to be designed and built with each part in place and connected to the other parts before it can catch its first mouse. In the same way, an irreducibly complex system in the body must be assembled all at once before it can do its job. It can't appear gradually, piece by piece.

An example of this is the eye. The eye has a lens, an adjustable focus, light sensors, a variable diaphragm which controls the amount of light, and so forth. No part can do its job unless the other parts of the eye are also present. Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory claimed natural selection as the force that drives evolution without any designer. However, living things that evolved only some parts of an eye would have no adaptive advantage over their relatives. The various parts of an eye would be useless in natural selection until all parts were present and

working together. Darwin himself wrote, "When I think of the eye, I shudder. To suppose that the eye could have been formed by natural selection seems absurd in the highest degree."

Darwin didn't know the half of it. In his time, little was known about biochemistry. The more we discover about what's inside the organs and cells of living things, the more complex and intricate the design turns out to be. It's easier to believe that mousetraps evolve by accident than to believe that complex organs and cells and biochemical processes evolved by accident. Even the simplest living cell requires over 200 complex enzymes. British scientist Sir Fred Hoyle estimated the likelihood of those 200 enzymes being produced and combined by chance as 1 with 40,000 zeroes behind it. Hoyle said that life popping into existence by chance was as improbable as a tornado blowing through a junkyard and producing a jet aircraft.

Could living things come from dead matter as the result of a purposeless process? Has anyone ever observed such an event? Never. In fact, scientists have completely discredited spontaneous generation, the notion that living things spring up from dead matter. It never happens. Scientists and educators know this. Yet some cling to their faith that somehow, long ago, spontaneous generation did take place, that dead matter did somehow produce living things. Scientists have run all kinds of experiments, trying to produce a living cell from non-living material. They've spent a great deal of research, time, and money trying to show how it could happen. They still haven't succeeded.

But just suppose they eventually did succeed. Suppose they somehow produced a living cell from dead matter. What would that prove? That life is an accident, with no creator or intelligent designer? Far from it! Obviously, any life form that resulted from many decades of work by thousands of scientists would be the product of intelligent design, not proof that life evolved by accident. Meanwhile, no such experiment has worked. If so many brilliant scientists still haven't been able to produce even the simplest life form from non-living matter, doesn't it make sense to conclude that it would take someone with power and intelligence far greater than ours to design and create the fantastically complex forms of life that we see on our planet?

Clearly seen

The Bible says, "What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For 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 are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20). Clearly seen!

If you listen to some of the foremost atheists, they admit that things appear to be designed for a purpose. Atheist George Gaylord Simpson says, "An eye, an ear, or a hand is a complex mechanism serving a particular function. It looks as if it had been made for a purpose. This appearance of purpose is pervading in nature." Clearly seen! Appearance of purpose! But Simpson then spent his life trying to show that there was no design and no Designer.

Atheist Francis Crick said, "The cell is thus a minute factory, bustling with rapid, organized chemical activity." Has anybody ever seen an undesigned factory? Crick won a Nobel Prize for his discoveries in the structure of DNA. After studying genetic codes, Crick did not think that

random evolution could ever produce DNA from scratch. So did he conclude that God was involved? No, instead he said that perhaps aliens from outer space sent primitive life forms to earth in a spaceship, and things evolved from there. For him, almost any theory would be better than admitting that God is real. Still, Crick knew the information embedded in DNA had to originate with some kind of superior intelligence, although his commitment to atheism kept him from crediting that intelligence to God.

Listen to popular atheist writer Richard Dawkins: "Biology is the study of things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." Living things look like they were designed by someone really smart. But Dawkins declares, "All appearances to the contrary, the only watchmaker in nature is the blind forces of physics... Natural selection, the blind, unconscious automatic process ... which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind."

Notice the wording. Dawkins says "all appearances to the contrary," so he admits that his faith in the blind forces of physics goes against what looks like obvious design. He speaks of the "apparently purposeful form of all life," thus admitting that his faith in a purposeless process goes against what seems apparent. He rejects purpose and design, not because he can't see it, but because he refuses to believe what he sees. His faith commitment to atheism matters more than observed evidence.

This is what the Bible means by saying that the Creator's reality is "clearly seen in the things that are made." Go down the list of big-shot atheists. They say, "Living things certainly look like they were designed, but contrary to appearances, we know there is no Designer."

Atheist Faith Commitment

You might get the impression from some experts and educators that if you stick to facts and evidence, you won't believe in God. If you're smart, you'll realize that the world and all its creatures come from a natural process, not from a Creator. The National Association of Biology Teachers issued a statement declaring that all life arose by an "unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable, and natural process." A widely used biology textbook insists, "Evolution is random and undirected... without either plan or purpose." A leading encyclopedia states that natural selection is "automatic, with no room for divine guidance or design."

This is not a conclusion based on evidence; it is a faith commitment. It takes a lot of faith to believe that the universe and everything in it came into being without a Creator. With evidence of design and complexity all around them, atheists trust in the miraculous powers of chance, and they take a leap of faith. By faith they believe that nothing produced something, randomness produced design, dead matter produced life, mindlessness produced minds, and blind accident produced eyes. Their faith ignores all evidence to the contrary. Their commitment is absolute.

Richard Dawkins insists, "Even if there were no actual evidence in favor of the Darwinian theory, we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." That's faith! Trusting an atheist theory to be true, even if there were no evidence. Regardless of whether the theory fits the facts, it fits his faith commitment to atheism.

Atheist scientist Richard Lewontin freely admits that his rejection of a Creator is not based on evidence. It's where he starts. Before considering any facts or evidence, Lewontin rules out all "supernatural explanations of the world." He admits that scientists who deny God sometimes clash with common sense, but he still sides with their atheistic approach. Why? "Because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism." By materialism he means the belief that "we exist as material beings in a material world, all of whose phenomena are the consequences of material relations among material entities." Even before we study any evidence, we must rule out God and make an up-front commitment to materialism. "That materialism is absolute," Lewontin explains, "for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door." Some schools and universities might give students the impression that if a scientific theory denies the Creator, the denial is based on evidence. But it's not based on evidence; it's based on a prior commitment to materialism and an absolute refusal to consider the Creator.

Natural Causes?

Atheists can't deny that living things give a strong impression of design. They admit that cells, organs, and bodies operate as interconnected, complex systems and appear to be designed. But appearances are deceiving, they say, and what appears to be designed can all be explained as the result of random, undirected evolution. Not only can it be explained that way; it must be explained that way. No other explanation may even be considered. Intelligent design, they say, is an unscientific concept, unworthy to be researched by scientists or discussed in schools.

Picture a crime scene. A dead body is found with a knife in its chest. The knife is covered with the killer's fingerprints. The victim's hand is still grasping a clump of hair pulled from the head of the killer during a struggle. Investigators are told to gather the evidence and to explain what happened. But they are also ordered ahead of time to rule that this person died of natural causes. They are not permitted to investigate whether another person might have caused the death by some sudden action. Their only job is to explain how natural causes produced the death and the knife in the chest. They are not allowed to speak of homicide or to search for a killer. Even if they find someone whose fingerprints match those on the knife and whose DNA matches the hair in the victim's hand, the investigators are not allowed to explore whether this person killed the victim. The death must be explained by natural or accidental causes.

Those are the naturalistic, materialistic, atheistic ground rules for looking at the created world. God's fingerprints are all over the created world, and evidence of who created the universe is in our grasp as surely as hair in the hand of a crime victim. But any God-talk is declared "unscientific." No matter how exactly physical processes fit mathematical formulas, it is forbidden to speak of a Genius who designed matter in mathematical patterns and gave us minds to do math. No matter how much information is encoded in DNA, it is forbidden to speak of intelligence behind the information. No matter how ridiculous it is to say that something came from nothing, that life sprang from dead molecules, that mind emerged from mindless matter, this is the position of secular scientists and educators. The Creator must not be mentioned. Everything comes from natural causes.

Not everyone is willing to play by their rules, however. Scientists in the intelligent design movement look at DNA information or at a bacterial flagellum and see design. The intelligent

design movement isn't revealing a secret unknown to ordinary people. It is merely stating the obvious, using more technical language and in-depth analysis. Any parent looking at a baby's face can see divine design. Any child looking at a starry sky can see divine design. Intelligent design scholars just explore deeper levels and use more careful reasoning to help scientists admit what is already obvious to almost everyone else: the universe, the earth, and living things appear to be products of divine design.

The world is brimming with marvels that enchant little children and astound learned scientists. Underlying the almost magical qualities of various creatures are mechanical designs that display God's mind-boggling wisdom. Can anyone imagine the intelligence of the divine designer of DNA who packed such incredible amounts of information into such a small space? Can anyone fathom the power of the Lord who brought into being living creatures and vast galaxies without having any raw material to start with except his own boundless power? Can anyone grasp the artistic genius of the God who dreamed up all the different creatures with no prompting or pattern but his own creativity?

One kind of physical evidence for the Creator is intelligent design. There are other kinds of physical evidence as well.

- Intelligent design
- Being and life
- Stunning wonders
- Daily delights

Being and Life

Why is there something instead of nothing? Where does life come from?

Atheists used to say, "The universe has existed forever." But now very few scientists believe that. The Big Bang theory says everything that exists came from something smaller than a point. Some don't like the Big Bang theory because it entails a beginning to everything, but there is strong evidence to support an absolute beginning.

Christians call this "creation ex nihilo," creation out of nothing. Once there was nothing except God. Starting from nothing, God made everything that exists. That required vast power and great intelligence. Something doesn't come from nothing. Everything comes from God.

Atheism claims that something can come from nothing, that life can come from what is not living, that intelligence can emerge from what is unintelligent. But these are not science; they are doctrines of atheistic faith, which are used to suppress the obvious reality of the Creator.

Stunning Wonders

I've talked about studies in DNA and studies of various complex organs like the eye. Most of us, even if we were not scientists at all and are little children, already see intelligent design. We already see splendor. We can't help it.

Whittaker Chambers was a noted atheist. He did not believe in God. But when he became a father and gazed at the ear of his little baby, he quit being an atheist. It wasn't complicated. He just looked at that ear and thought, "Atheism is a false. The Creator is real."

It's good that intelligent design theorists study things at a sophisticated level, in dialogue with others scientists. But you don't need to know all the designs of biochemistry to recognize the stunning wonders produced by the Creator. Look around you. Look within you. There is a Maker, and a great Maker at that.

God is not just a great engineer and designer and genius. Look at the stunning wonders he has made, whether it's Victoria Falls or Iguazu Falls, the Matterhorn or the other magnificent mountains of the world. Look at the starry skies.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." (Psalm 19:1-4) God is speaking in what he has made.

Scripture says that God's eternal power and divine nature are seen in things he has made. He has made vast galaxies. The more you know, the more staggering it gets. With the naked eye you can see maybe 10,000 stars on a very clear night in the right location. With the telescopes that we have, and the telescopes keep getting better, we see the vastness of the universe, the billions of galaxies. "These are but the outer fringe of his power." (Job 26:14).

It's not just the power and the design. When people look into outer space, seeing sights that have never been seen before by the naked eye, they see things like the nebulae. There are people who aren't even believers who say it is the greatest artwork in the universe. You see this tremendous splendor and beauty and artistry, and this too is telling us something about the Maker of all things.

Then look at the vast variety of life that God has made, all the different animals that he has created. Look at plant life also. The wonder, the beauty, the complexity, again it is a witness to the Creator and to who he is.

God's revelation in creation is not just that he is a stupendously brilliant engineer or an extremely powerful person who can make something as vast as all those galaxies, but that he is a beautiful and splendid artist.

You learn something of the great artists when you see their masterpieces, even if you've never seen them personally. You hear the music of some of the great masters, or you see the paintings of some of the great masters, and you think to yourself, "What beauty! What genius!"

The physical evidence that you find in these stunning wonders doesn't even require intelligent design theory. When you stand before a mountain or a waterfall, or when you're out under the night sky, when all that comes upon you, it is the voice of God.

Daily delights

There are also everyday experiences that are physical evidence of the Creator. The Bible says that the Creator fills your stomach with food and your heart with joy. He does this so that people will reach out for him and find him (Acts 14:17; Acts 17:27).

Every time you lick an ice cream cone, you're getting a message from God. Every time God puts food in your stomach, you're getting a message from God. You might use the message wrongly or twist it, but the message is being sent.

Every time you spend time with family and enjoy people you love, you are receiving blessings from God. Whenever you feel satisfaction from accomplishing something in your work, you are experiencing God's goodness. We are not meant to worship food or pleasures or family or friendship or work. We are meant to worship the Source of these blessings. They are a testimony to the Creator.

Intelligent design, being and life, stunning wonders, and daily delights are all physical evidence of the Creator.

Mice and Music

God's creation displays something of his wisdom, power, and glory, but God himself remains invisible to us. This does not make him unreal. It just means that he is not part of his creation. God made all things, but he transcends the things he has made. Physical evidence points to God, but God himself is not physical. God is spirit, and we should not expect to find him as just one more item in the physical universe.

British author John Young told a parable about a community of mice. These mice lived in a place that opened into a music room with a grand piano. Sometimes, through the door of their home, they could hear beautiful music coming from the piano. They sighed in amazement at the beauty of the music. Soon, however, the mice got into a disagreement.

Some said, "There couldn't be music like that without a musician." But other mice said, "Nonsense. There is no musician." Still others were agnostics: "We'll never know whether there is a musician or not. Now get on with sharing the cheese."

One day, when the music began to play, a particularly bold and curious mouse decided to venture into the music room and see for himself. He scurried across the floor and scrambled up the shiny black leg of the grand piano. He peered into the piano for a few moments, and then hustled back home to the other mice, breathless with excitement at his discovery: "I have seen how music is made. I saw many tiny hammers striking tight wires. But I saw no musician."

The atheist mice nodded and smiled with satisfaction. The agnostics shrugged and continued eating their cheese. Those who had believed in a musician were disappointed. At least they knew the truth now, but life seemed a lot less interesting.

The mice think their question has been answered. They know a bit more about hammers and wires, and they think they know everything. They know something of the way a piano makes music, and they think they've proved that nobody designed the piano and that the piano can play itself. Of course there's no designer or musician inside the piano, but does that mean he doesn't exist? No, it just means that the musician is not part of the piano.

When we look at creation, we don't see the Creator, but does that mean he doesn't exist? No, it just means he's not part of his creation. We don't see him, but the designs of creation are clear evidence of a Designer, and the music of creation is clear evidence of a Musician. If it takes great mechanical skill to make a piano and if it takes great artistry to play a piano well, then what shall we say of God's mechanical skill in designing the intricate structures of the universe and his artistry in making his universe sing with such splendor?

Educated fools

We are surrounded by physical evidence of this nonphysical, great, intelligent Being: the intelligent design of the universe, the fact that there's something instead of nothing, that there are living things and not just deadness, that there are stunning, fabulous, beautiful wonders, that there are daily delights like ice cream. All these good things are physical evidence of God. We cannot avoid it. We've got to do something with it. If we will not glorify him and if we will not give him thanks, we will do something else.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. (1:21-25)

"The cosmos is all that was or is or ever will be." That's what Carl Sagan said in his television program. That's called worshiping the cosmos, not the Maker of the cosmos. Satan was deliberately echoing the Gloria Patri: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit... as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Instead, Sagan declared, "The cosmos is all that was or is or ever will be."

You may be tempted to think, "Some of the great geniuses of the world do not believe in the Creator. Is creation only for morons to believe in?" Then you scratch a little below the surface, and you find that they're saying, "We start out by not allowing God in, no matter how obvious it is. We cannot allow a divine foot in the door." "We would be justified in preferring Darwinism even if there were no evidence for it." Those atheists take a blind leap of faith.

Don't be intimidated. "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools." They are suppressing obvious truth that any little kid can see, anybody looking at his daughter's ear can see.

General and special revelation

The Belgic Confession was written by Guido de Brès, a Reformer who was imprisoned for his faith and executed. He stated:

We know God by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: God's eternal power and divinity. All these things are enough to convict humans and to leave them without excuse. Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for God's glory and for our salvation. (Belgic Article 2)

What does the general revelation of God in creation do? It shows his glory, but it also leaves us without excuse. It doesn't save, because we suppress and mess it up. God's wrath is revealed against those who deny or twist his general revelation in creation.

General revelation isn't enough. We need special revelation. We need God to reveal himself more clearly in his Word, which tells of God's love and forgiveness and salvation through faith in Jesus. We need the gospel, which is God's power to save people who are in a world that shows his splendor but who do not thank him or glorify him. When we accept God's special revelation by believing the Bible and trusting Jesus, then we can glorify him and give him thanks for his handiwork as Creator.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." (Psalm 19:1) "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3) Psalm 104 goes through a whole list of things that God has made: light, skies, clouds, seas, rivers, plants, animals, people. The author exclaims, "O Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty... How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all" (Psalm 104:1, 24).

How do you respond to the physical evidence of the Creator? You cry out, "Glory! The whole earth is full of his glory. The heavens declare his glory." Then you say, "Thank you, God. Thank you for making such a universe. Thank you for making me. Now let me be who you intended me to be." Glorify God. Give him thanks.

Around us and within us are clues of the Creator. Many people throughout the world have known that there is a great and powerful and intelligent eternal Being. They have known it simply from the things that have been made. The Bible speaks more clearly, but creation itself speaks volumes.