

# Intelligent Design

by

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“Intelligent Design” should promote intelligent discussion. It therefore grieves me greatly that it has been so misrepresented by the media as to create sensationalist stories claiming it will teach our kids that the Earth was built by God in six 24 hour days. This is not so. Such misrepresentations simply return the debate to the trench warfare that existed between science and faith in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The fierce reaction to intelligent design by some, should not be allowed to gag discussion, any more than the 16<sup>th</sup> century church should have been allowed to gag discussions about science. Education includes allowing open enquiry, and exploring the edges of knowledge, when there is reasonable cause to do so. Enquiry must not be prevented by ideologically driven humanists on one hand ... or hijacked by Biblical literalists on the other.

Is it scientifically reasonable to ask why the universe is so remarkably suited to allow intelligent life to develop on at least one planet? There are infinite ways our universe could have been chaotic but ours is not. Our universe runs according to ordered, understandable laws, which have a mathematical beauty. To dismiss this by saying that ours is probably a chance existence from an infinite number of possibilities, is an intellectually lazy response to the extraordinary, ordered reality that actually exists.

Is it also scientifically reasonable to ask how extraordinarily complex biological molecules develop? Some of these molecules are structured in such a way that they carry codes, which are the blueprint for building a specific life form. How did these first develop? It cannot be by evolution, as it is commonly understood, because evolution can only work at the level of an existing living organism.

Logic, rather than ideology, must allow scientists to posit the possibility of Intelligent Design, if there is indeed evidence of highly unlikely order, that is both widespread, and understandable. However, care needs to be taken that we do not lazily ascribe to God, all those things we do not understand in science. Science does have a habit of gradually discovering how things work, causing the need to invoke God to continually retreat.

Outside the extreme fringe, the Christian faith is scientifically reasonable. There are many Christians believe the Genesis accounts of creation are timeless stories designed to tell us theology's “who and why” rather than science's “how and when”. The great reformer John Calvin had this understanding. Many Christians also recognise that evolution is a remarkably good and well attested theory that explains how the diversity of living forms came to be. However, what if it fails to explain the order of the cosmos, or the order that exists at a molecular level?

It must be remembered that over 70% of the population of Australia believe in some sort of God. Most Australians believe that creation is a purposeful act, i.e. intelligently designed at least to some degree.

This position shared by:

?á Charles Darwin “*I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God*”.

?á Prof. Albert Einstein: “*Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.*”

?á Prof. Paul Davies: “*I belong to a group of scientists who do not subscribe to a conventional religion but nevertheless deny that the universe is a purposeless accident. Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strongly that the universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as brute fact.*”

Dr. Stephen Hawking: *“The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous. I think there are clearly religious implications”*.

I suggest it would be unwise for anyone to consign these famous scientists to the lunatic asylum reserved for religious fundamentalists.

Intelligent Design raises serious issues that deserve serious debate. You may not agree with all that is claimed by some proponents of Intelligent Design. I don't. But I welcome the debate, a debate that touches on the core issues of our identity and meaning.