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Intelligent Design? Does the Identity of the Creator Really Matter?

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The Intelligent Design (ID) movement has gained increasing recognition and national publicity over the last several years, especially in educational realms where it is heralded as an alternative to Darwinism/naturalism.

ID is a theory holding that “certain features” of living and nonliving things were designed by an “intelligent cause” as opposed to being formed through natural causes. The ID concept does not name the “intelligent cause,” or claim that everything is designed – with some ID proponents it allows for evolution/natural causes to play a role.

The historic roots of the ID movement lie in the philosophical arguments from the natural theology movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Currently, however, proponents use scientific evidences for a designer drawn from biology, chemistry and physics.

The idea behind ID is the concept of irreducible complexity -- for something to function, it requires a certain number of parts. For example, human vision is a complex system where sight is impossible if some of the vision components are missing. During the gradual steps of evolution, the critical components would have evolved at different time points. Evolution, by its nature, would have eliminated them because it only keeps that which is immediately functional and vision only occurs if all the components are present.

The question of whether or not a feature of a living organism displays irreducible complexity is answered by using what is called an “explanatory filter.” The filter has three modes of explanation:

- Necessity: Did it have to happen?
- Chance: Did it happen by accident?
- Design: Did an intelligent agent cause it to happen?

This is a very logical, common-sense approach used by individuals every day to deduce cause and effect. A feature of the universe or a living organism must be designed if the first two modes of explanation are answered as no.

Positives and Problems with ID

The ID movement has several positives. For example, ID may be useful in gaining an audience uncomfortable with the mention of the Bible. Since the movement does not associate itself with any formal religion, some think it might be accepted as an alternative to Darwinism in schools. Also, the movement has produced many resources that have assisted the biblical creationist viewpoint.

ID's major problem, however, is that it divorces the Creator from creation, and focuses more on what is designed rather than who designed it. As a result, leaders in the movement are able to accept an old age for the earth and allow the question, "Who is the designer - a Great Spirit, Brahman, Allah, God, etc.?"

Most proponents of ID fail to understand that a belief in long ages for the earth formed the foundation of Darwinism. If God's Word is not true concerning the age of the earth, it may not be true concerning other events, and maybe God was not a necessary part of the equation for life after all.

Since the theory of ID does not recognize the God of the Bible, one cannot understand evil entering the world through man's actions (Genesis 3). People ask why God is unable to prevent evil from thwarting His plans, instead of understanding that because of Adam's sin there is now a cursed world. As a result, ID does not acknowledge God as Redeemer and there seems to be no final solution for the evil in this world.

However, by trusting the Bible, we read that Jesus conquered death with the Resurrection (Romans 6:3-10) and one day, death will no longer reign (Revelation 21:4).

Romans 1:20, states that all men know about God through His creation. The Creator and His creation cannot be separated, so knowledge of God comes through general revelation (nature) and special revelation (the Bible). Theologian Louis Berkhof said, "... since the entrance of sin into the world, man can gather true knowledge about God from His general revelation only if he studies it in the light of Scripture."

As will be explained in the Creation Museum, scientific evidence supports the Bible when studied through the lens of Scripture; therefore, the identity of the Creator is very important.

References

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