

The “Wedge Document”: “So What?”

INTRODUCTION

In 1999 an early fundraising proposal for Discovery Institute’s Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture (CSC) was posted on the Internet by people claiming to have revealed a secret strategy. Dubbed the “Wedge Document,” this fundraising proposal soon took on a life of its own, popping up in all sorts of places and eventually spawning a kind of intellectual urban legend.

Darwinian activists and self-identified “secular humanists” claimed that the “Wedge Document” provided evidence of a great conspiracy by fundamentalists to establish theocracy in America and to impose religious orthodoxy upon the practice of science. One group claimed that the document supplied evidence of a frightening twenty-year master plan “to have religion control not only science, but also everyday life, laws, and education.” Barbara Forrest, a Louisiana professor active with a group called the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, similarly championed the document as proof positive of a sinister conspiracy to abolish civil liberties and unify church and state. Others have characterized it as an attack on science and an attempt “to replace the scientific method with belief in God.”

These claims were so confused that for a long time we simply ignored them, content to enjoy the notoriety that our somewhat hysterical opponents had conferred upon us. Not since the 1960’s, when the Council on Foreign Relations was called a communist front by the John Birch Society, has a think tank inspired such obsessive interest in its unreasonable foes.

Recently, however, the paranoia on certain websites has reached a fevered pitch and has begun to spread to mainstream media reports. And Professor Forrest has now published a whole book with biologist Paul Gross exploring the nefarious aspects of our supposed conspiracy. So we have decided to set the record straight.

1. BACKGROUND: AIMS OF THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND CULTURE

Discovery Institute is a public policy think tank founded in 1990 “to make a positive vision of the future practical” through transforming long-range research in such fields as transportation, regionalism, economics, and the environment (see <http://www.discovery.org>). Since its founding, Discovery has had a special interest in

science and technology and the way in which developments in these domains affect public policy, economics and culture.

In 1996 Discovery Institute established the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture (since named the Center for Science and Culture—CSC). Its main purposes were (1) to support research by scientists and other scholars who were critical of neo-Darwinism and other materialistic theories of origins, and to support those who were developing the emerging scientific theory of intelligent design; (2) to explore the larger philosophical or world-view implications of the scientific debate about design as well other philosophically-charged issues in modern science, and (3) to explore the cultural implications of competing philosophies of science and worldviews. With respect to (2) and (3), it has been a particular interest of the Center to counter the idea that science supports the unscientific *philosophy* of materialism.

From the beginning the Center has focused its attention on scientific discoveries and theories that raise larger philosophical, world-view or cultural issues.¹ For this reason, Center Fellows examined theories of biological and cosmological origins as well as theories in the social and cognitive sciences that raise questions about human nature. More recently, the Center has begun to address bioethical issues arising from developments in bio-medical technology.

It is in the context of our concern about the world-view implications of certain scientific theories that our wedge strategy must be understood. Far from attacking science (as has been claimed), we are instead challenging *scientific materialism*—the simplistic philosophy or world-view that claims that all of reality can be reduced to, or derived from, matter and energy alone. We believe that this is a defense of sound science.

With this in mind, we have supported research that challenges specific theories (such as neo-Darwinism, chemical evolutionary theory and various “many worlds” cosmologies) that provide support for the materialistic vision of a self-existent and self-organizing universe.

We also have supported research that challenges theories (such as behaviorism, strong AI (artificial intelligence) and other physicalist conceptions of mind) that have portrayed humans as completely determined animals or machines.

Naturally, many of our scholars and scientists are also working to develop competing hypotheses and theories, including theories of intelligent design and theories that defend the reality and irreducibility of human agency, responsibility and consciousness.

As it happens, many of these fellows think that new discoveries in science either support, or are consonant with, a “broadly theistic” world-view. The “Wedge Document” makes the philosophical significance of our work—its challenge to scientific materialism and its favorable implications for theism—known to potential

supporters. Even so, the case that our scientists have made against neo-Darwinism or for design is based on scientific evidence. Scientists of various (and no) religious persuasions have formulated such arguments (see below). Their work stands on its own.

In any case, the “Wedge Document” articulates a strategy for influencing science and culture *with our ideas* through research, reasoned argument and open debate. As our not-so-secret secret document put it, “without solid scholarship, research and argument, the project would be just another attempt to indoctrinate instead of persuade.”

We fail to see any scandal in this. Nor have we been able see how any fair-minded person who had actually read the “Wedge Document,” or who had any acquaintance with our actual work, could attribute to us the nefarious views and motives that Professor Forrest and others have assigned us. The “Wedge Document” articulates a plan for reasoned persuasion, not political control.

2. INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

So let us set the record straight.

Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture does not support theocracy. We should not have to say this, but apparently we do.

Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture rejects all attempts to impose orthodoxies on the practice of science as contrary to the spirit of the scientific enterprise. Indeed, our fellows have consistently contended for the right of scientists to follow scientific evidence wherever it leads and they have opposed *a priori* methodological restrictions on the interpretive freedom of scientists.

The Center for Science and Culture is not attacking science or the scientific method. It is challenging the philosophy of scientific materialism and the false scientific theories that support it (more on this below).

The Center for Science and Culture does not have a secret plan to influence science and culture. It has a highly and intentionally *public* program for “challenging scientific materialism and its destructive cultural legacies”—the preceding quotation, by the way, is from our very first statement of purpose that was prominently and publicly featured on our website.

Those who doubt these declarations might consider the following facts:

- Far from promoting a union between church and state, Discovery Institute actively supports pluralistic democracy. For several years during the 1990s, Center associate director Dr. John West sponsored a seminar for college

students, The George Washington Fellows Program, that advocated religious liberty and the *separation* of church and state.

- At the time the “Wedge Document” was being used by Darwinists to stoke fears about theocracy, the Chairman of Discovery Institute’s Board was Jewish. The present Chairman says he is “not religious,” and our various officers and fellows represent an eclectic range of religious views ranging from Roman Catholic to Presbyterian to agnostic—hardly a fundamentalist cabal!
- Discovery’s Center for Science and Culture advocates a science education policy that encourages open discussion of controversial issues in science and *rejects* attempts to insert the Biblical creation story into the public school science classroom. Center director Stephen Meyer and Center fellow John Angus Campbell (University of Memphis) have just edited a peer-reviewed volume with Michigan State University Press defending this “teach the controversy” approach as most consistent with American traditions of liberal tolerance and intellectual and religious pluralism.² Their philosophy of public education, which is classically liberal and self-evidently inconsistent with theocracy, is a direct expression of the policy of the Center itself.
- Most of the fellows of the Center for Science and Culture are professional Ph.D.-trained scientists or historians and philosophers of science. All have a high view of science and want to see it strengthened, not “attacked.”
- Our initial strategy for influencing science and culture (which was first articulated in the “Wedge Document”) has been repeatedly discussed at numerous conferences, in book and articles, on our website and in our brochure. Indeed, much of the offending text from the document had already appeared on our website and in our Center brochure. (So much for a secret conspiracy.) Further, Professor Phillip E. Johnson of the University of California at Berkeley published an entire book articulating his version of the wedge strategy in the year 2000.³ Yet Barbara Forrest and others have invented and then hyped a supposed secrecy surrounding the wedge strategy, characterizing the “wedge of intelligent design” as a “Trojan horse.” At one point Forrest claimed that the “Wedge Document”’s “authenticity...has been neither affirmed nor denied by the Discovery Institute.” Yet if Professor Forrest had wanted to know whether the document was authentic, all she had to do was ask. But she didn’t.

These facts alone suggest that our critics have badly misrepresented us.

3. SUMMARY AND COMMENT ON KEY PASSAGES

The best way to dispel the hysteria surrounding the wedge strategy is to actually look at the document in question. The “Wedge Document” simply doesn’t advocate the views that our detractors attribute to it.

In what follows we cite and discuss the document’s major points and offending passages, none of which support the claims that our opponents have made about us, and all of which we continue to affirm. (Text from the “Wedge Document” is highlighted in bold and the full text is provided below).

“The proposition that human beings are created in the image of God is one of the bedrock principles on which Western civilization is built. Its influence can be detected in most, if not all, of the West’s greatest achievements, including representative democracy, human rights, free enterprise, and progress in the arts and sciences.”

Comment: It may be disagreeable to Barbara Forrest, but as an historical matter, the above statement happens to be true. The idea that humans are created in the image of God *has* had powerful and positive cultural consequences, not least, on our conception of human rights as enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence. (“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are *endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights*. . .) Only a member of a group like the “New Orleans Secular Humanist Association” could find anything objectionable here.

(By the way, isn’t it strange that a think tank supposedly promoting “theocracy” would praise “representative democracy” and “human rights” as we do in the “Wedge Document”?)

Of course, what has aroused the suspicion of our detractors about this passage is its implication that we ourselves might believe that humans are created in the image of God. This, they say, establishes our hidden religious agenda. Entire websites have now been erected to publicize various evidences of our theistic beliefs⁴—as if such belief itself now constituted a scandal in our contemporary intellectual culture. We don’t think that it does, but we would like to spare our loyal opposition any more exhausting detective work. Here is the truth, whole and nothing but: Many—though not all—of our fellows believe in God. Most of them think that this belief has played a positive influence on the development of Western culture.

So what?

For all their sleuthing, our critics have failed to grasp some important but obvious distinctions.

One can believe in God and not want to impose theocracy on our culture.

One can reject theocracy and still think that religious believers, like all other citizens, have a right to contend for their views in the public square—whether in science, the humanities or politics.

A scientist can do excellent scientific research regardless of whether he or she believes in God. Indeed, some of the greatest scientists in history pursued their scientific inquiry because they believed in God.

A scientist can make arguments for the intelligent design of life or the universe without making God a premise in the argument—that is, a scientist can argue for intelligent design based upon scientific evidence (as some of our scientists are doing) without basing that argument on a prior belief in God.

So, again, we ask: where is the scandal?

“Yet a little over a century ago, this cardinal idea [that humans were created in the image of God] came under wholesale attack by intellectuals drawing on the discoveries of modern science. Debunking the traditional conceptions of both God and man, thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud portrayed humans not as moral and spiritual beings, but as animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by purely impersonal forces and whose behavior and very thoughts were dictated by the unbending forces of biology, chemistry, and environment.”

Comment: This statement highlights one of the animating concerns of Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture: the worldview of scientific materialism. We think this worldview is false; we think that the theories that gave rise to it (such as Darwinism, Marxism and Freudian psychology) are demonstrably false; and we think that these theories have had deleterious cultural consequences. (Consider, for example, the eugenics crusade pushed by Darwinist biologists early in the twentieth century or the present denial of personal responsibility endemic in our legal system and therapeutic culture).

“Discovery Institute’s Center... seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies.”

Comment: We admit it. We think the materialistic world-view that has dominated Western intellectual life since the late 19th century *is false* and we want to refute it. We further want to reverse the influence of such materialistic thinking on our culture.

We certainly are not concealing these views. We are proud of the case that our scholars are marshalling against scientific materialism. Materialism is a dehumanizing philosophy that has been used to justify genocide, infanticide and eugenics, among other evils. We want to see it discredited.

Still, we have been misinterpreted.

Some, for example, have claimed falsely that this passage shows that Discovery Institute is orchestrating an attack *on science*.

But the document doesn't say, or even imply, that. Instead, we are doing two things.

First, we are challenging the truth of particular scientific theories (such as neo-Darwinism and the theory of chemical evolution) using appropriate scientific methods, canons of reasoning and evaluation and, most importantly, scientific evidence. To say that challenging a particular scientific theory constitutes an attack on science itself is to misunderstand science profoundly. Science advances precisely by such challenges.⁵ Reasoned argument about how best to interpret scientific evidence is, and always has been, essential to the practice of science—indeed, in a real sense it *is* science.

Second, as noted, we are challenging the *philosophy* of scientific materialism, not science itself. Our detractors fail to make this critical, but obvious, distinction. We don't know why. But we suspect that some scientists have so equated science with their own materialistic worldview that they regard any challenge to that worldview, or any challenge to the theories that give it plausibility, as tantamount to an attack on science itself.

Others suggest that our discussion of an “overthrow of materialism” shows that Discovery Institute is pursuing an illegitimate political agenda. But materialism is not a political party or government. It is a system of thought. We are not planning to “overthrow” a political regime by force or otherwise. We are not asking anyone to impose our perspective on anyone else, or to make our perspective a condition of employment. In contrast, many of our scholars and scientists have been pressured to affirm neo-Darwinism and other materialistic ideas as a condition of *their* employment. Our challenge is not to overthrow a political regime or to make our perspective a condition of employment. It is to make clear that we are advancing an *intellectual* challenge to a philosophical perspective and to a set of theories that previously have made that perspective seem credible. The kind of “overthrow” we are seeking is an intellectual one, a shift in perspective that can only be achieved by *as neo-*, writing and reasoned argument — as the document itself makes clear. Our intellectual interlocutors may disagree with our perspective (and we respect their right to do so), but we do not see how they can reasonably object to our methods or to the facts that we have a plan to persuade and influence science and culture *with our ideas*.

And, who doesn't try to persuade others with their ideas? Certainly, any group that contends for a point of view in the public square—whether the Darwin-only lobby at the National Center for Science Education, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association for the Advancement of Science or the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association—wants to see its ideas influence others. And most such groups

have plans about how they want to achieve such influence. So again: Where is the scandal?

“Without solid scholarship, research and argument, the project would be just another attempt to indoctrinate instead of persuade.”

Comment: Precisely because we affirm the importance of open debate and reasoned argument—and because we reject attempts to manipulate or indoctrinate—the “Wedge Document” identified the “essential” component of our program as support of scholarly “research, writing and publication.” The document makes clear that the primary goal of Discovery Institute’s program in this area is to support scholars working in scientific and philosophical fields so they can engage in research and publication. Accordingly, the largest program in the Center’s budget has been the awarding of research fellowships to scholars in such fields as biology, biochemistry, physics, mathematics, and philosophy and history of science. These fellowships have been granted to enable our scholars to engage in research and writing.

This passage underscores our commitment to influencing science and culture by reasoned persuasion, not indoctrination or intimidation. We don’t quite know how we could be misunderstood on this point. But we wonder. Could it be that many intellectuals in the universities are themselves so accustomed to imposing their own ideological perspective on their colleagues—through tenure committees, the peer-review process and the granting system—that they reflexively assume that anyone challenging their intellectual dominance must intend to use the same tactics as they themselves have used?

“The best and truest research can languish unread and unused unless it is properly publicized.”

Comment: It’s shocking but true—Discovery Institute actually promised to publicize the work of its scholars in the broader culture. What’s more, we expressed our desire to engage our Darwinist colleagues in academic debates at colleges and universities! We are happy to say that we still believe in vigorous and open discussion of our ideas, and we still do whatever we can to publicize the work of those we support. We are especially happy about the public debates and university conferences and symposia in which our fellows have participated, though our detractors often avoid such debates.

“Discovery Institute’s Center. . . wants to reverse the stifling dominance of the materialist worldview, and to replace it with a science consonant with Christian and theistic convictions.”

Comment: For many the scandal of the “Wedge Document” is nothing more and nothing less than its mention of “Christian and theistic convictions” and our stated intention to support scientific research that is “consonant” with such convictions.

But why should this be upsetting?

Please note first, that “consonant with” means “in harmony with” or “consistent with.” It does *not* mean the “same as.” Recent developments in physics, cosmology, biochemistry, and related sciences may lead to a new harmony between science and religion. Many of us happen to think that they will, and we are not alone in that. But that doesn’t mean we think religion and science are the same thing. We don’t. Nor do we want to impose a religious agenda on the practice of science.

This passage instead was referring to our conviction that science, rather than supporting a materialistic philosophy, is at least consistent with theistic belief, including Christian belief. In fact, some of our fellows actually go further than this. They think that new developments in science may actually *support* a theistic world-view or have “theistic implications,” even though they do not think that science can “prove” the existence of God or specific religious doctrines.

Two of our fellows, William A. Dembski and Stephen C. Meyer, have developed these distinctions in some carefully argued philosophical essays.⁶ We commend the essays to those who want to develop a responsible understanding about the relationship between science and religious belief. Dembski and Meyer have argued that certain evidences from the natural world provide what they call “epistemic support” for theism even though (we have to repeat) such evidences can’t “prove” the existence of God or a specific religion.

These are important philosophical distinctions and we can understand how some of our critics might have misunderstood us and our intellectual agenda, especially if their first encounter with our ideas was reading the “Wedge Document” out of context on a hostile atheistic website. Nevertheless, that some of our fellows think some aspects of science may support theistic belief, or that science is consonant with theism, does not constitute a threat to the practice of science. Nor is it a kind of a modern thought crime. In fact many of the founders of modern science—such as Boyle, Kepler and Newton—held precisely this same view.

In any case, the “Wedge Document” does not propose replacing “science” or the “scientific method” with “God” or “religion,” as one reporter claimed. Still less does it advocate imposing a particular conclusion on scientists as a condition of their practicing science—something that would be absurd. Instead, it advocates open debate and argument (see below). Proponents of intelligent design have long insisted⁷ that all scientists must be free to follow evidence wherever they think its leads. It happens that many (though not all) of our fellows think that a considerable body of evidence now points to the intelligent design of life and the universe. Most of these scientists and scholars think that this evidence supports, or is at least consonant with, a theistic view of the world. The “Wedge Document” does nothing more sinister than announce our intention to support the research of such scientists—among others.

Even so, our critics insist that the “Wedge Document” shows that the *case* for intelligent design is *unscientific* because it is *based on* religious belief. But here again

they fail to grasp an obvious distinction—the distinction between the *implications* of a theory and the *basis* for a theory.

Contemporary theories of intelligent design are not *based upon* theistic beliefs. They are based upon scientific evidence and analyses. In his groundbreaking book, *Darwin's Black Box*, Lehigh University biochemist Michael Behe *bases* his case for design on the presence of the “irreducibly complex” miniature motors and circuits now found in cells.⁸ Center fellows Stephen Meyer (philosopher of science)⁹, Charles Thaxton (chemist)¹⁰ and Dean Kenyon (biophysicist)¹¹ have made a case for intelligent design *based upon* the presence of encoded information in DNA. Other Center scientists and philosophers are now making arguments for intelligent design *based upon* evidence of the “fine tuning” of the laws of physics and/or the parameters that make Earth friendly to life and scientific discovery.¹²

These arguments have evidential, not theological premises. As CSC director Stephen Meyer has said, intelligent design is “an inference from biological data, not a deduction from religious authority.”¹³ Or, as geneticist Michael Denton has observed, the contemporary argument for design “may have religious implications, but it does not depend on religious presuppositions.”¹⁴

Thus, someone cannot refute design arguments simply by asserting that such arguments are “religiously-motivated.” In fact, many contemporary design arguments have been advanced by scientists (such as Paul Davies, Michael Denton and John Leslie) who are not personally religious. But even if this were not the case, science-based design arguments would still need to be assessed independently of any consideration of motives or personal beliefs. Motives don't matter in science. Evidence does.

Consider a parallel example. Noted Darwinist Richard Dawkins has praised Darwin's theory because it allows one “to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.”¹⁵ In Dawkins's view Darwinism explains “the appearance of design” without having to invoke a designer—something as an atheist he wants to avoid. Does Dawkins's anti-religious motive disqualify his scientific argument against design? Does it disqualify Darwinian evolution from consideration as a scientific theory? Clearly not. But then the same rule should apply when considering the case for design. It's not what motivates a scientist's argument that determines its validity; it's the quality of the evidence and analysis that the scientist uses to support the argument.

4. WHERE WE STAND

And this is where we want to leave the matter. In the end, the “Wedge Document,” like the motives of an individual scientist, is irrelevant to assessing the questions that we are raising and the arguments that we are making. It is now long past time that our intellectual opponents addressed the evidential case that we are making and the challenges that now face neo-Darwinism and other similarly simplistic materialistic theories. The nearly obsessive focus in some quarters on our sources of funding, our

motivations, and our allegedly sinister plans betrays a deep intellectual insecurity in the Darwinist community. Those who have scientific arguments make them. Those who do not, change the subject and speculate about motives, conspiracies and personal associations. We talk about evidence and ideas; our opponents want to talk about us. Indeed, our Darwinist colleagues and some sympathizers in the media have developed a penchant for avoiding discussion about real scientific and philosophical issues. Instead, they have come to rely upon *ad hominem* attacks, motive-mongering, conspiracy theories, guilt by association and other tactics of intimidation—thus distracting attention from a failing system of thought.

Neo-Darwinism is a theory in deep crisis. It envisions, among other implausible scenarios, the transformation of complex functionally integrated living systems into other complex and different functionally-integrated systems with no intervening functional loss—something for which we have no analogue in our own high-tech world and something that, from an engineering point of view, lacks plausibility on its face. Neo-Darwinism similarly relies on an undirected mechanism that can only operate after the fact of an advantageous biological change. Natural selection “selects” for functional advantage. But with the advent of modern biochemistry, embryology, physiology and molecular biology, scientists now realize that the structures that confer functional advantage on organisms are exquisitely complex and finely-tuned both spatially and temporally. Living things depend upon hugely improbable arrangements of matter: information-rich genes, complex three-dimensionally specified proteins, functionally-integrated molecular machines and hierarchically-organized physiological systems and body plans. Yet, according to the logic of orthodox neo-Darwinian theory, these entities and systems must arise *before* natural selection can act to preserve them. But if this is so, how do these complex biological systems, subsystems and components originate in the first place?

The neo-Darwinian answer to this question—random mutations—now lacks all credibility in the face of the astronomical improbabilities associated with the structures that such mutations must build. Chemical evolutionary theories of the origin of life have likewise failed to explain how the complexity and information necessary to the very first life might have arisen from non-living chemicals. Advocates of Strong AI (artificial intelligence) have for their part failed to give a satisfactory account of the origin and nature of human cognition; we are not “computers made of meat” as strong AI advocate Marvin Minsky has asserted. AI advocates have utterly failed to reduce the functioning of the human mind to a “computational algorithm,” nor do they show promise of doing so anytime soon. We could go on. But suffice to say that the theories that have supported scientific materialism are increasingly and demonstrably bankrupt.

Against this intellectual backdrop, fellows of the Center for Science and Culture are researching and developing new theories of origins and deeper and richer understandings of human nature and consciousness. We think that our ideas will stand the test of experience. And we invite careful and rigorous scrutiny of our work on that basis. We reject—although we find strangely amusing—attempts to dismiss our work on the basis of factors that are irrelevant to assessing the theories and arguments that

we are developing. We regard the recent paranoia and near-panic over a now nearly five year-old fund-raising document as precisely one such irrelevancy.

5. WHAT THE DOCUMENT ACTUALLY SAYS (FULL TEXT)

NOTE: The five-year plan described in the following document is now out of date. Many of its goals were reached or exceeded, but some were not.

CENTER FOR THE RENEWAL OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE
DISCOVERY INSTITUTE (1999)

INTRODUCTION

The proposition that human beings are created in the image of God is one of the bedrock principles on which Western civilization was built. Its influence can be detected in most, if not all, of the West's greatest achievements, including representative democracy, human rights, free enterprise, and progress in the arts and sciences.

Yet a little over a century ago, this cardinal idea came under wholesale attack by intellectuals drawing on the discoveries of modern science. Debunking the traditional conceptions of both God and man, thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud portrayed humans not as moral and spiritual beings, but as animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by purely impersonal forces and whose behavior and very thoughts were dictated by the unbending forces of biology, chemistry, and environment. This materialistic conception of reality eventually infected virtually every area of our culture, from politics and economics to literature and art.

The cultural consequences of this triumph of materialism were devastating. Materialists denied the existence of objective moral standards, claiming that environment dictates our behavior and beliefs. Such moral relativism was uncritically adopted by much of the social sciences, and it still under girds much of modern economics, political science, psychology and sociology.

Materialists also undermined personal responsibility by asserting that human thoughts and behaviors are dictated by our biology and environment. The results can be seen in modern approaches to criminal justice, product liability, and welfare. In the materialist scheme of things, everyone is a victim and no one can be held accountable for his or her actions.

Finally, materialism spawned a virulent strain of utopianism. Thinking they could engineer the perfect society through the application of scientific knowledge, materialist reformers advocated coercive government programs that falsely promised to create heaven on earth.

Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture [now named the Center for Science and Culture] seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies. Bringing together leading scholars from the natural sciences and those from the humanities and social sciences, the Center explores how new developments in biology, physics and cognitive science raise serious doubts about scientific materialism and have re-opened the case for a broadly theistic understanding of nature. The Center awards fellowships for original research, holds conferences, and briefs policymakers about the opportunities for life after materialism.

The Center is directed by Discovery Senior Fellow Dr. Stephen Meyer. An Associate Professor of Philosophy at Whitworth College, Dr. Meyer holds a Ph.D. in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University. He formerly worked as a geophysicist for the Atlantic Richfield Company.

THE WEDGE PROJECTS

Phase I. Scientific Research, Writing & Publication

Individual Research Fellowship Program

Paleontology Research program (Dr. Paul Chien et al.)

Molecular Biology Research Program (Dr. Douglas Axe et al.)

Phase II. Publicity & Opinion-making

Book Publicity

Opinion-Maker Conferences

Apologetics Seminars

Teacher Training Program

Op-ed Fellow

PBS (or other TV) Co-production

Publicity Materials / Publications

Phase III. Cultural Confrontation & Renewal

Academic and Scientific Challenge Conferences

Potential Legal Action for Teacher Training

Research Fellowship Program: shift to social sciences and humanities

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

The social consequences of materialism have been devastating. As symptoms, those consequences are certainly worth treating. However, we are convinced that in order to defeat materialism, we must cut it off at its source. That source is scientific materialism. This is precisely our strategy. If we view the predominant materialistic science as a giant tree, our strategy is intended to function as a "wedge" that, while relatively small, can split the trunk when applied at its weakest points. The very beginning of this strategy, the "thin edge of the wedge," was Phillip Johnson's critique of Darwinism begun in 1991 in

Darwinism on Trial, and continued in Reason in the Balance and Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds. Michael Behe's highly successful Darwin's Black Box followed Johnson's work. We are building on this momentum, broadening the wedge with a positive scientific alternative to materialistic scientific theories, which has come to be called the theory of intelligent design (ID). Design theory promises to reverse the stifling dominance of the materialist worldview, and to replace it with a science consonant with Christian and theistic convictions.

The Wedge strategy can be divided into three distinct but interdependent phases, which are roughly but not strictly chronological. We believe that, with adequate support, we can accomplish many of the objectives of Phases I and II in the next five years (1999-2003), and begin Phase III (See "Goals/ Five Year Objectives/Activities").

Phase I: Research, Writing and Publication

Phase II: Publicity and Opinion-making

Phase III: Cultural Confrontation and Renewal

Phase I is the essential component of everything that comes afterward. Without solid scholarship, research and argument, the project would be just another attempt to indoctrinate instead of persuade. A lesson we have learned from the history of science is that it is unnecessary to outnumber the opposing establishment. Scientific revolutions are usually staged by an initially small and relatively young group of scientists who are not blinded by the prevailing prejudices and who are able to do creative work at the pressure points, that is, on those critical issues upon which whole systems of thought hinge. So, in Phase I we are supporting vital writing and research at the sites most likely to crack the materialist edifice.

Phase II. The primary purpose of Phase II is to prepare the popular reception of our ideas. The best and truest research can languish unread and unused unless it is properly publicized. For this reason we seek to cultivate and convince influential individuals in print and broadcast media, as well as think tank leaders, scientists and academics, congressional staff, talk show hosts, college and seminary presidents and faculty, future talent and potential academic allies. Because of his long tenure in politics, journalism and public policy, Discovery President Bruce Chapman brings to the project rare knowledge and acquaintance of key op-ed writers, journalists, and political leaders. This combination of scientific and scholarly expertise and media and political connections makes the Wedge unique, and also prevents it from being "merely academic." Other activities include production of a PBS documentary on intelligent design and its implications, and popular op-ed publishing. Alongside a focus on influential opinion-makers, we also seek to build up a popular base of support among our natural constituency, namely, Christians. We will do this primarily through apologetics seminars. We intend these to encourage and equip believers with new scientific evidences that support the faith, as well as to "popularize" our ideas in the broader culture.

Phase III. Once our research and writing have had time to mature, and the public prepared for the reception of design theory, we will move toward direct confrontation with the advocates of materialist science through challenge conferences in significant academic settings. We will also pursue possible legal assistance in response to resistance to the integration of design theory into public school science curricula. The attention, publicity, and influence of design theory should draw scientific materialists into open debate with design theorists, and we will be ready. With an added emphasis to the social sciences and humanities, we will begin to address the specific social consequences of materialism and the Darwinist theory that supports it in the sciences.

GOALS

Governing Goals

- To defeat scientific materialism and its destructive moral, cultural and political legacies.
- To replace materialistic explanations with the theistic understanding that nature and human beings are created by God.

Five Year Goals

- To see intelligent design theory as an accepted alternative in the sciences and scientific research being done from the perspective of design theory.
- To see the beginning of the influence of design theory in spheres other than natural science.
- To see major new debates in education, life issues, legal and personal responsibility pushed to the front of the national agenda.

Twenty Year Goals

- To see intelligent design theory as the dominant perspective in science.
- To see design theory application in specific fields, including molecular biology, biochemistry, paleontology, physics and cosmology in the natural sciences, psychology, ethics, politics, theology and philosophy in the humanities; to see its influence in the fine arts.
- To see design theory permeate our religious, cultural, moral and political life.

FIVE YEAR OBJECTIVES

1. A major public debate between design theorists and Darwinists (by 2003)
2. Thirty published books on design and its cultural implications (sex, gender issues, medicine, law, and religion)
3. One hundred scientific, academic and technical articles by our fellows
4. Significant coverage in national media:

Cover story on major news magazine such as Time or Newsweek
PBS show such as Nova treating design theory fairly
Regular press coverage on developments in design theory
Favorable op-ed pieces and columns on the design movement by 3rd party media

5. Spiritual & cultural renewal:

- Mainline renewal movements begin to appropriate insights from design theory, and to repudiate theologies influenced by materialism.
- Major Christian denomination(s) defend(s) traditional doctrine of creation & repudiate(s) Darwinism.
- Seminaries increasingly recognize & repudiate naturalistic presuppositions
- Positive uptake in public opinion polls on issues such as sexuality, abortion and belief in God.

6. Ten states begin to rectify ideological imbalance in their science curricula & include design theory.

7. Scientific achievements:

- An active design movement in Israel, the UK and other influential countries outside the US
- Ten CRSC Fellows teaching at major universities
- Two universities where design theory has become the dominant view
- Design becomes a key concept in the social sciences Legal reform movements base legislative proposals on design theory

ACTIVITIES

(1) Research Fellowship Program (for writing and publishing)

(2) Front line research funding at the "pressure points" (e.g., Paul Chien's Chengjiang Cambrian Fossil Find in paleontology, and Doug Axe's research laboratory in molecular biology)

(3) Teacher training

(4) Academic Conferences

(5) Opinion-maker Events & Conferences

(6) Alliance-building, recruitment of future scientists and leaders, and strategic partnerships with think tanks, social advocacy groups, educational organizations and institutions, churches, religious groups, foundations and media outlets

(7) Apologetics seminars and public speaking

- (8) Op-ed and popular writing
- (9) Documentaries and other media productions
- (10) Academic debates
- (11) Fund Raising and Development
- (12) General Administrative support

THE WEDGE STRATEGY PROGRESS SUMMARY

Books

William Dembski and Paul Nelson, two CRSC Fellows, will very soon have books published by major secular university publishers, Cambridge University Press and The University of Chicago Press, respectively. (One critiques Darwinian materialism; the other offers a powerful alternative.)

Nelson's book, *On Common Descent*, is the seventeenth book in the prestigious University of Chicago "Evolutionary Monographs" series and the first to critique neo-Darwinism. Dembski's book, *The Design Inference*, was back-ordered in June, two months prior to its release date.

These books follow hard on the heels of Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* (The Free Press) which is now in paperback after nine print runs in hard cover. So far it has been translated into six foreign languages. The success of his book has led to other secular publishers such as McGraw Hill requesting future titles from us. This is a breakthrough.

InterVarsity will publish our large anthology, *Mere Creation* (based upon the *Mere Creation* conference) this fall, and Zondervan is publishing *Maker of Heaven and Earth: Three Views of the Creation-Evolution Controversy*, edited by fellows John Mark Reynolds and J.P. Moreland.

McGraw Hill solicited an expedited proposal from Meyer, Dembski and Nelson on their book *Uncommon Descent*. Finally, Discovery Fellow Ed Larson has won the Pulitzer Prize for Summer for the Gods, his retelling of the Scopes Trial, and InterVarsity has just published his co-authored attack on assisted suicide, *A Different Death*.

Academic Articles

Our fellows recently have been featured or published articles in major scientific and academic journals in *The Proceedings to the National Academy of Sciences*, *Nature*, *The Scientist*, *The American Biology Teacher*, *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications*, *Biochemistry*, *Philosophy and Biology*, *Faith & Philosophy*, *American*

Philosophical Quarterly, Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Analysis, Book & Culture, Ethics & Medicine, Zygon, Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith, Religious Studies, Christian Scholars' Review, The Southern Journal of Philosophy, and the Journal of Psychology and Theology. Many more such articles are now in press or awaiting review at major secular journals as a result of our first round of research fellowships. Our own journal, *Origins & Design*, continues to feature scholarly contributions from CRSC Fellows and other scientists.

Television and Radio Appearances

During 1997 our fellows appeared on numerous radio programs (both Christian and secular) and five nationally televised programs, *TechnoPolitics*, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, *Inside the Law*, *Freedom Speaks*, and *Firing Line*. The special edition of *TechnoPolitics* that we produced with PBS in November elicited such an unprecedented audience response that the producer Neil Freeman decided to air a second episode from the "out takes." His enthusiasm for our intellectual agenda helped stimulate a special edition of William F. Buckley's *Firing Line*, featuring Phillip Johnson and two of our fellows, Michael Behe and David Berlinski. At Ed Atsinger's invitation, Phil Johnson and Steve Meyer addressed Salem Communications' Talk Show Host conference in Dallas last November. As a result, Phil and Steve have been interviewed several times on Salem talk shows across the country. For example, in July Steve Meyer and Mike Behe were interviewed for two hours on the nationally broadcast radio show Janet Parshall's *America*. Canadian Public Radio (CBC) recently featured Steve Meyer on their *Tapestry* program. The episode, "God & the Scientists," has aired all across Canada. And in April, William Craig debated Oxford atheist Peter Atkins in Atlanta before a large audience (moderated by William F. Buckley), which was broadcast live via satellite link, local radio, and internet "webcast."

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

The *Firing Line* debate generated positive press coverage for our movement in, of all places, *The New York Times*, as well as a column by Bill Buckley. In addition, our fellows have published recent articles & op-eds in both the secular and Christian press, including, for example, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, *National Review*, *Commentary*, *Touchstone*, *The Detroit News*, *The Boston Review*, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Christianity Toady*, *Cosmic Pursuits and World*. An op-ed piece by Jonathan Wells and Steve Meyer is awaiting publication in the *Washington Post*. Their article criticizes the National Academy of Science book *Teaching about Evolution* for its selective and ideological presentation of scientific evidence. Similar articles are in the works.

¹ By the way, we do not think that all scientific research raises such worldview questions. Much experimental or "bench" science concerns more narrowly-focused and philosophically-neutral questions about the composition, structure and behavior of physical or biological systems.

² John Angus Campbell and Stephen C. Meyer, editors, *Darwinism, Design and Public Education* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2003).

³ Phillip E. Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

⁴ One website for example made much of the fact that a film company that made a film about the theory of intelligent design featuring many Discovery fellows had also previously made religious films about the Bible. This is a version of the tactic of guilt by association—if, that is, making films about the Bible now makes one culpable in our society.

⁵ Marcello Pera, *The Discourses of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁶ William A. Dembski and Stephen C. Meyer, “Fruitful Interchange or Polite Chit-Chat?: The Dialogue between Science and Theology?,” in *Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe*, Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), pp. 213-234; William A. Dembski and Stephen C. Meyer, “Fruitful Interchange or Polite Chit-Chat?: The Dialogue between Science and Theology?,” *Zygon*. September 1998, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 415-30.

⁷ Stephen C. Meyer, “The Scientific Status of Intelligent Design: The Methodological Equivalence of Naturalistic and Non-Naturalistic Origins Theories,” in *Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe*, Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), pp. 151-211.

⁸ Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

⁹ Stephen C. Meyer, “DNA and the Origin of Life: Information, Specification and Explanation,” in Campbell and Meyer, editors, *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*, pp. 223-285.

¹⁰ Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen, *The Mystery of Life’s Origin* (Dallas: Lewis & Stanley, 1992).

¹¹ Gordon Mills and Dean Kenyon, “The RNA World: A Critique,” *Origins & Design* 17:9-16.

¹² Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards, *The Privileged Planet: Why Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2004).

¹³ Stephen C. Meyer, “Let Schools Provide Fuller Disclosure,” *The Spokane Spokesman Review*, Opinion Section, March 29, 1998.

¹⁴ Michael Denton, *Evolution, A Theory in Crisis* (London: Burnett Books, 1985), p. 341

¹⁵ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 6.