

Worldviews, Science, and the Nature of Humanity

Vern Sheridan Poythress

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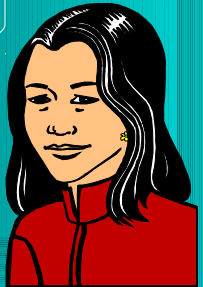
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A. Is Man an Ape?

What does DNA
imply?



Example: DNA Data

- ◆ Human DNA mapped
 - draft, 2000
 - finished, 2003
 - 3 billion nucleotides
 - about 8% still unsequenced (heterochromatin)
- ◆ Chimpanzee DNA mapped
 - draft, 2005

Press: Cornell News

Chimpanzees and humans share a common ancestor, and even today 99 percent of the two species' DNA is identical.

– Cornell University News Service, May 15, 2005.

Select Aligned Genes

The chimpanzee and human versions of each gene were aligned, and on average they differ at only slightly more than 1 percent of the positions in the DNA.

– Cornell University News Service, May 15, 2005.

Substitutions

DNA 1: A – T – G – G – T – C – T – A

|

DNA 2: A – T – G – G – A – C – T – A



~ 1%

substitution

Indel (Gap)

DNA 1: A - T - G - G - T - C - T - A
DNA 2: G - G - T - A - A - G - C - T - A



~ 3%

indel

Nonmatching

DNA 1: A - T - G - G - T - C - T - A

DNA 2: ? (can't find anything parallel)

~ 20%

– Fujiyama, *Science* 295
(2002) 131-134.

Nonmatching Unique

about regions on chr21 that do not match
any primates:

these loci might correspond to
insertions that are specific to the
human lineage.

– Fujiyama, *Science* 295 (2002) 133.

Confirm Darwinism

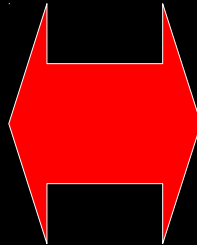
Charles Darwin was right and
chimp gene map proves it

– News Medical, Aug. 31, 2005.

Explanation of Matches

Mainstream Media

matches confirm
Darwinism:
man is an
advanced ape



Alternative

features of
common
design

Explanation

Mainstream Media

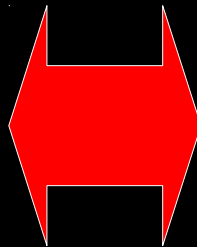
Darwinism:
man is an
advanced ape

mechanical

Alternative

features of
common
design

personal

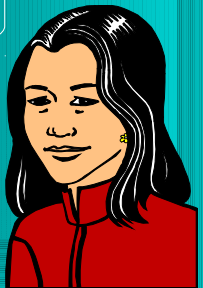


What Is New?

- ◆ We always knew we are like monkeys
- ◆ Now, quantitative confirmation
- ◆ Cultural preference for materialist explanation
- ◆ Hidden assumption!

B. Presuppositions

What assumptions
are underneath?



Science Depends on Assumptions

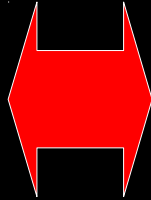
- ◆ Not magic
- ◆ Not data speaking for itself
- ◆ Framework of assumptions, seldom discussed

Science within Frameworks

- ◆ Data are not self-interpreting
- ◆ Scientists have foundational assumptions (framework of a worldview)

Two Competing Worldviews

Materialism



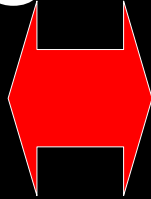
Biblical Theism

- ◆ Impersonalist
- ◆ Matter and motion
- ◆ Bottom-up explanation
- ◆ Reductionist

- ◆ Personalist
- ◆ God
- ◆ Top-down and bottom-up
- ◆ Enriching

Competing Worldviews (2)

Materialism

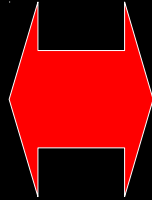


Biblical Theism

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ◆ Human mind normal | ◆ Mind fallen |
| ◆ Autonomous reason | ◆ God's speech as guide |
| ◆ Human sufficiency | ◆ Need remedy in Christ |
| ◆ Commitment to self | ◆ Commitment to Christ |
| ◆ Quick conclusion | ◆ Wait |

Interpretations of Humanity

Materialism



Biblical Theism

- ◆ Man as atoms
- ◆ Man as animal
- ◆ Unborn as tissue
- ◆ No ethical responsibility
- ◆ Basic problem is bodily malfunction

- ◆ Man as person
- ◆ Man as image of God
- ◆ Unborn as human
- ◆ Responsibility to God
- ◆ Basic problem is sin

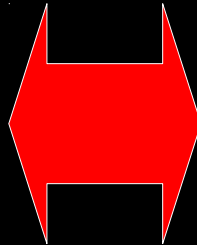
Apologetics

- ◆ The Christian treats evidence within a biblical framework.
- ◆ Unbelief secretly relies on God.

Apologetics

Secular

secretly
relies on
God



Christian

Treats evidence
within a
biblical
framework

C. One Worldview Is Wrong

Failure of Materialism

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. -- Romans 1:18-20

Failures of Materialism

- ◆ Circular: science looks at the material and finds it
- ◆ How can you trust your mind?
- ◆ Laws are immaterial
- ◆ Consciousness is immaterial
- ◆ “Emergence” is magic

Idea of Emergence

matter

+

complexity

=

new (emerging)
properties

matter

+

cells

=

big brain

consciousness

Stars

matter

+

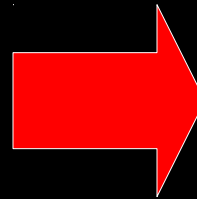
collapse
in gravity

=

shining stars

astronomer:

- ◆ laws of gravity
- ◆ laws of nuclear fusion
- ◆ laws of electrodynamics



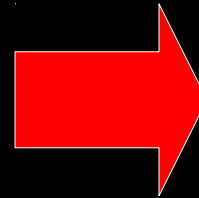
principles
for stars

The Hidden Emerges

What was hidden

Emerged

laws and
implications



principles
for stars

astronomer sees
meaning already there

God imparts meaning

Principle of Emergence

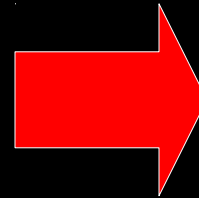
- ◆ Watch the magician, not the hat
- ◆ The rabbit emerged from hidden implications
- ◆ The principles for stars
- ◆ The principles for consciousness

Consciousness Emerges

What was hidden

Emerged

God's rule and
implications



human
consciousness

human explanation sees
meaning already there

God imparts meaning

Dialogue

- ◆ Be clear about presuppositions (worldviews)
- ◆ Present Christian view without apology
- ◆ Ask about assumptions, not just conclusions.
- ◆ Are assumptions sustainable?

Intelligent Design

Design in the Universe as:

evidence for
"neutral" reason?

OR

evidence in tension
with materialist
presuppositions

Christian
presuppositions

evidence part of
universal design

Dialogue on Old Testament

Does interpretation reckon with God?

- ◆ God ruling history
- ◆ God governing cultures
- ◆ God giving language

The image features a decorative border composed of multiple concentric rectangular frames. The outermost frame is teal, while the inner frames are black. The text is centered within the black inner frame.

D. One Worldview Is Right

Scientific Laws Show God

- ◆ Everywhere
- ◆ All times
- ◆ Immutable
- ◆ Immaterial
- ◆ Rational (personal)

We All Know God

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. – Romans 1:20-21

God Reveals Himself

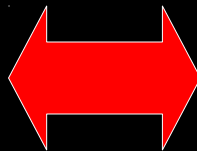
- ◆ In created things
 - stars
 - cells
 - human bodies
- ◆ In scientific laws
- ◆ In the thinking of astronomers, psychologists, biologists, etc.

E. Suppression of Truth

We Suppress the Truth

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. – Romans 1:18

[they] exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images – Romans 1:23



impersonalist law

Remedy in Christ

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son [Jesus Christ], much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. – Romans 5:10

The Holy Spirit sent by Christ,
not argument, is decisive

pray for non-Christians

F. Patience with Evidence

Changes in Human Knowledge

Earlier

- ◆ Human anatomy
- ◆ Neanderthals, 1829
- ◆ “junk DNA”
- ◆ MHC, 1994
- ◆ Population from recombination, 2007

Later

- ◆ Human genome, 2000
- ◆ Neanderthal DNA, 2010
- ◆ many functions
- ◆ MHC, 2006
- ◆ Recombination rate varies, 2011

Interpreting Evidence

Human chromosome 2 “matches” chimp
2A and 2B stuck together.