

Former Atheist Says God Exists

By: Cliff Kinkaid
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It didn't make news, on the front or back pages of leading American newspapers, but Professor Antony Flew, a prominent British philosopher who is considered the world's best-known atheist, has cited advancements in science as proof of the existence of God. This is comparable to Hugh Hefner announcing that he is becoming a celibate.

At a symposium sponsored by the Institute for Metascientific Research, Flew said he has come to believe in God based on developments in DNA research. Flew, author of the book, *Darwinian Evolution*, declared, "What I think the DNA material has done is show that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements together. The enormous complexity by which the results were achieved look to me like the work of intelligence."

Associated Press distributed a December 9 story by religion writer Richard N. Ostling about Flew's conversion. Flew told AP that his current ideas had some similarity with those of U.S. "intelligent design" theorists, who believe the complexity of life points to an intelligent source of life, rather than the random and natural processes posited by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Flew's statements have been covered in Britain, where he is a professor, but we found nothing about his transformation in major American newspapers such as USA Today, the Washington Post, and the New York Times. Ostling's status as a religion writer may help explain why. The secular press considers this a religion story.

To its credit, however, the Seattle Times permitted Jonathan Witt of the Discovery Institute to write a column noting Flew's conversion in the context of discussing the usually taboo subject of the holes in Darwinian theory.

Witt noted that Darwin and his contemporaries thought a single cell was a simple blob of protoplasm and that it wouldn't have been difficult for nature to randomly produce something so simple. "In those days the cell was a black box, a mystery. But in the 20th century, scientists were able to open that black box and peek inside," he notes. "There they found not a simple blob, but a world of complex circuits, miniaturized motors and digital code. We now know that even the simplest functional cell is almost unfathomably complex, containing at least 250 genes and their corresponding proteins."

"Darwin's Black Box" is the title of Michael J. Behe's 1996 book. Behe, a professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, emphasizes the complexity of molecular systems such as the bacterial flagellum. Identified by electron microscopes, it is what Behe calls an "irreducibly complex system" that is necessarily composed of at least three parts—a paddle, a rotor, and a motor. He argues that Darwinian theory cannot account for it.

But those who believe in intelligent design or find gaping holes in the theory of evolution frequently encounter a hostile press. The Discovery Institute recently provided to Accuracy in Media a thick file of complaints about the way their representatives have been treated by the media, especially National Public Radio. The Discovery Institute focuses on the issue of whether there is any evidence of design in nature, rather than whether there is a designer. Still, its representatives tend to be portrayed in religious terms by the media.

Such a tactic is common operating procedure by the ACLU, which is determined to portray any alternative to evolution as religious and therefore not allowed to be taught or even discussed in the public schools.

Back in 2001, when the Public Broadcasting Service aired the seven-part series, *Evolution*, financed by Microsoft co-founder and billionaire Paul G. Allen, it asked Discovery Institute scientists to appear on the last segment dealing with God and religion. It was a trick. The institute rejected this ploy, saying that its representatives had scientific objections to evolution and that they should be included in the scientific episodes.

PBS went ahead with its one-sided program anyway. In response, the Discovery Institute produced a 152-page viewers guide, noting that the series distorts the scientific evidence, ignores scientific disagreements over Darwin's theory, and misrepresents the theory's critics. Because the PBS series is still being marketed to high schools around the country, the Discovery Institute critique continues to be helpful and relevant. You can find it at: www.reviewevolution.com

PBS and the rest of the media would be well-advised to follow the lead of Antony Flew, who said that his life has been guided by the principle of Plato's Socrates: "Follow the evidence, wherever it leads." Journalists can begin their investigation of the Socratic principle by simply reporting the facts surrounding Flew's amazing evolution and the implications that his statements have for a questionable theory that continues to be taught as the Gospel in the public schools.

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