

Phillip Johnson and the Origins of the Intelligent Design Movement, 1977–1991

Phillip Johnson is well known for his efforts to build a movement that opposes scientific naturalism and embraces the notion of intelligent design. Movements, however, do not emerge out of thin air, and rarely are they simply the product of one man's vision; they emerge out of an historical context. For intelligent design, that context was a loose collection of people, ideas, and organizations all sharing a desire to question an established scientific paradigm on primarily scientific and philosophical grounds rather than on the basis of biblical authority. Johnson arrived on the American intellectual cultural scene with an argument and strategy well suited to mold these various impulses into a movement that captured considerable attention in the origins debate of the mid- to late-1990s.



In 1991, a brilliant, pugnacious Berkeley law professor burst onto the scene. His book, *Darwin on Trial*,¹ was a surprise bestseller, and within a year or two after its publication, Phillip E. Johnson was a controversial fixture within American intellectual culture. He championed a “new” approach to the origins debate—dubbed intelligent design²—which, despite the academy’s firm commitment to the validity of naturalistic explanations and methodologies, has shown few signs of going away. Ten years after *Darwin on Trial*, design theory is making headlines, all but replacing creation science in the public discussion of origins. In April 2001, *The New York Times* ran a front-page story on the intelligent design movement that, according to prominent science writer Robert Wright, “granted official significance to the latest form of opposition to Darwinism.”³

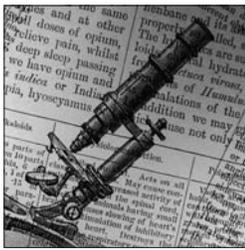
An indicator of the importance of intelligent design theory in the contemporary origins debate is the number of books and essays that have hit the presses in the last five years assessing the merits of design

theory.⁴ These assessments along with a growing body of literature by design advocates⁵ tend to focus on the scientific, philosophical, and even cultural merits and implications of design. Rarely, however, do writers addressing the design argument give sufficient attention to the historical account of the emergence of an intelligent design movement with Phillip Johnson in the forefront. Like so much of the remembered past, it is an interesting narrative, one that suggests the importance of human agency and the contingency of events.

Using the historian’s most powerful and potentially distorting device—hindsight,⁶ it is possible to detect at least three streams that fed into the contemporary intelligent design movement.⁷ During the 1980s, new concerns were expressed about the underdetermination of several aspects of evolu-

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tionary theory. At the same time, cosmologists were suggesting that a strong teleological thread seemed to be running through cosmic history. So-called anthropic arguments gave encouragement to those inclined to recoil from the stark materialist assumptions of some spokespersons of science. Also during the 1980s, there were a growing number of neocreationists whose objections to scientific naturalism and aspects of evolution were as much religious as they were scientific, but for whom the approach of creation science was woefully inadequate. In the 1990s, Johnson was able to bring these streams together under the banner of intelligent design.

In the mid-1980s, the neo-Darwinian synthesis of Dobzhansky, Mayr, and others came under attack, most notably in two books that provided impetus to a new approach in the creation-evolution debate. Charles Thaxton (a biochemist), Walter Bradley (a materials scientist), and Roger Olsen (a geochemist) wrote a seminal book, *The Mystery of Life's Origin*, which cast doubt that "simple chemicals on a primitive earth did spontaneously evolve (or organize themselves) into the first life." Moreover, they concluded that "the undirected flow of energy through a primordial atmosphere and ocean" is a "woefully inadequate explanation for the incredible complexity associated with even simple living systems."⁸ The authors noted that DNA is information or intelligence encoded in the biological structure. Such intelligence implies an intelligent agent. Their argument was not entirely novel; Henry Morris and A. E. Wilder-Smith had anticipated parts of it already.⁹ What was noteworthy, however, about this book is that the authors, while themselves Christians, attempted to argue against biogenesis not from biblical authority but exclusively on scientific grounds.

The Mystery of Life's Origin was followed in 1986 by Michael Denton's *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*. Denton, an Australian molecular geneticist and an agnostic, provided further ammunition for those whose objections to evolution were as much philosophical and cultural as scientific. He presented a bold and controversial anti-evolutionary thesis that life might very well be a "discontinuous phenomenon," rather than a continuum. Denton was well aware

that this assertion challenged the whole thrust of modern biological thought. But he concluded that the fundamental axioms of macroevolution—the idea that there is a "functional continuum of all life forms linking all species back to a primitive cell" and the belief that blind random processes are the author of biological design—have never been substantiated by direct observation or empirical evidence and remain matters of scientific faith.¹⁰

Invoking Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Denton charged the scientific community with embracing the evolutionary paradigm to the exclusion of mounting evidence to the contrary in his field of molecular biology. The reasons for this were clear, he argued. There are no scientific alternatives to Darwinism; it has dominated biology more by default than merit. And, more importantly, evolution forms the keystone of the entire modern world view. Consequently, evolution holds tremendous cultural importance as "the centrepiece ... of the naturalistic view of the world."¹¹ Darwin's theory of evolution has become the foundation for the materialism of the twentieth-century West. And it now served as a "great cosmogenic myth" satisfying modern humanity's need for an explanation of origins. Denton's conclusion clearly warmed the hearts and emboldened the spirits of those who had been looking for a different approach with which to combat Darwinism.¹²

In 1955, G. J. Whitrow published a paper in the *British Journal of the Philosophy of Science* in which he argued that a "variety of astronomical conditions must be met if a universe is to be habitable." Over the next decades, other cosmologists extended this line of thinking so that by 1986 British astronomer John Barrow and American mathematical physicist Frank Tipler could publish a dense book entitled *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. In it, Barrow and Tipler suggested that there were a surprising number of physical features of the universe—brute contingent facts—that cooperate to make life possible. While many leading scientists rejected the argument that the finely-tuned structure of the universe could be taken as evidence that there was some purpose or *telos* behind it all, others saw a compatibility between so-called "anthropic

coincidences" and the view that the universe was in fact designed.¹³

In 1977, well before *The Mystery of Life's Origin, Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* and *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* were written, a group at the University of California at Santa Barbara founded Students for Origins Research (SOR) as "an alternative viewpoint" to that of Henry Morris's Institute for Creation Research (ICR), on the one hand, and the prevailing science establishment, on the other. The founders of SOR, according to Dennis Wagner, editor of its journal *Origins Research*, disagreed with the ICR and other creationist groups primarily over the issues of authority and style. In addition to its marriage to only one model for the age of the earth, creation science argued on the basis of the authority of Scripture. This stance would never permit a genuine dialogue over origins since biblical authority was not accepted by the secular academy. Too frequently, creationists were attempting to advance "a fiat creation alternative" without sufficient attention to the type of scientific evidence needed to engage the academic and scientific communities. Beyond that, SOR founders wanted to be less polemical and to adopt a stance more marked by dialogue than debate. SOR launched *Origins Research* as a forum wherein proponents of both sides could put forth their best arguments "leaving readers to draw their own conclusions."¹⁴ While *Origins Research* attempted to focus attention on the scientific evidence and major arguments in the literature of the evolution/creation debate, SOR was self-consciously engaged in what Wagner termed the "struggle of world views between the theist and the materialist" that was at the heart of the "large scale 'world view' war in our society."¹⁵ What this neocreationist perspective craved was credibility in the marketplace of ideas. Clearly, the ICR had no standing in the academy, but the newer, more irenic stance of the SOR needed some way to break out of the creationist ghetto.

Enter Phillip E. Johnson. He quickly became the spokesperson for a new approach, which drew from this loose collection of ideas, thinkers, and organizations that had been percolating during the 1980s. Wagner claims that SOR, for example, "wandered around" in the 1970s and 1980s attempting to refine its approach and focus. But "things really came together in the early [19]90s with the emergence of Phil Johnson, a strong, recognized voice in the secular university who was a strategic thinker and able to focus the discussion around a few key issues."¹⁶ Within a couple of years, Johnson had galvanized various elements into a self-proclaimed "movement," rallying behind the banner of the intelligent design argument. Books and articles appeared in increasing numbers; an institutional infrastructure was created; bright young scholars were brought into the fold; and a movement was born or, at least, announced.

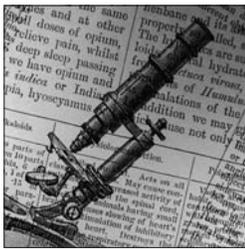
In the late 1980s, Johnson was a recognized authority in criminal law, a tenured professor at Boalt Hall, the law

school of the University of California, Berkeley. Born in 1940 in a small midwestern town, he had received a B.A. in English Literature from Harvard and a J.D. from the University of Chicago. He had been a clerk for United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren. But he was a mid-career professional, somewhat restless with the standard trajectory of a law professor's career. A decade earlier a personal crisis prompted a profound change in his life. Johnson became a committed Christian (Presbyterian) and gradually found that his intellectual interests were changing.

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During the 1987-88 academic year, Johnson left Boalt Hall to become a visiting professor at University College in London, where he found himself in an academician's heaven. He headed into his office three days a week and traveled with his wife the rest of the time. The route to his London office took him past a scientific bookstore, wherein he encountered Richard Dawkins' polemic *The Blind Watchmaker*. Johnson concluded that Dawkins' argument was carried by the same kind of brilliant rhetorical devices that gifted lawyers employ to overcome insufficient evidence. With ample time to devote to reading whatever caught his fancy, Johnson began devouring other popular scientific accounts of evolution by Denton, Stephen Jay Gould, and John Maynard Smith. As Johnson recounts it, he told his wife one evening that "I think I understand the problem with this whole field. But, fortunately, I'm too sensible to take it up professionally or to write about it. I'd be ridiculed. They would say, 'You're not a scientist, you're a law professor.' It would be something once you got started with it, you'd be involved in a lifelong, never-ending battle." Johnson, however, found the temptation irresistible. He began writing the next day.¹⁷

Upon his return to Berkeley, Johnson continued to read and write, soon creating a manuscript that would undergo steady revision and appear three years later as the influential manifesto of the intelligent design movement, *Darwin on Trial*.¹⁸ The process of refining his thoughts and searching for a publisher gave exposure to Johnson's ideas in anti-evolutionary¹⁹ and neocreationist circles. Two events prior to the appearance of *Darwin on Trial* were particularly important in the emergence of Phillip Johnson as chief spokesperson for this group: a gathering in late 1989 at the Campion Retreat Center in Weston, Massachusetts, and another in Portland, Oregon, in 1990.



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In the wake of the 1987 United States Supreme Court decision of *Edwards v. Aguillard* which banned the teaching of creation science in science classes, a small ad hoc group of concerned individuals began a dialogue about how to ensure that science and religion had appropriate places in the secondary curriculum of American public education.²⁰ The group noted that there were fears that scientific creationists might attempt to mount end-runs around *Edwards v. Aguillard*, while the scientific community might try to expel religious world views from school curricula altogether. So they organized a private conference, "Science and Creationism in Public Schools," and invited some of the top scholars in the United States to discuss these matters in December 1989 at a Jesuit retreat center run by Boston College geologist and Jesuit priest, James Skehan.²¹ Participants included University of Chicago paleontologist David Raup, University of Chicago theologian Langdon Gilkey, Harvard astronomer Owen Gingerich, Cornell geologist E-an Zen, biochemist Charles Thaxton, first amendment lawyer Michael Woodruff, Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, and Phillip Johnson.²²

While the gathering focused on the implications of *Edwards v. Aguillard*, there was also some discussion of Johnson's critique of evolution.²³ Several participants recall a spirited exchange between Johnson and Gould. According to Johnson, Gould had read his paper attacking Darwinism, and the two of them squared off at the urging of the assembled group.²⁴ It would be tempting to depict the ensuing encounter as something of a culture wars *High Noon*, but several participants consider such a characterization hyperbolic. According to Johnson, Gould was literally shaking; he was so upset at his argument. From Johnson's perspective, Gould had attempted to overwhelm him "with a full court press of intimidation." Johnson recalls little else about the details of the exchange other than that Gould assailed him on his lack of scientific sophistication. He does remember, however, that David Raup intervened at one point and stated that while one could certainly disagree with Johnson's conclusions, he had gotten the science right.

The exchange ended apparently in a draw. While it must have been a colorful event to witness, the specific outcome of the

Johnson-Gould encounter at the Campion Retreat Center was fairly unimportant. What in hindsight was truly significant, however, was that, in the estimation of those at the Campion meeting who were sympathetic to his arguments, Johnson had demonstrated that he could hold his own in debate with arguably the most prominent evolutionary scientist in America. Perhaps now the critics of a reductionistic scientific materialism had an eloquent champion who could engage the scientific establishment on its own terms. But there was as yet no strategic plan or infrastructure in place to enable Johnson-type arguments to gain even a modest level of credibility in American intellectual culture.

While Johnson was on sabbatical in England, a mutual acquaintance introduced him to a young American working on a doctorate in philosophy at Cambridge University, Stephen C. Meyer. Meyer was writing a thesis that analyzed methodological issues in origins sciences. The two were kindred souls and hit it off famously. Meyer later noted that in Johnson he had "encountered a man of supple and prodigious intellect who seemed in short order to have found the central pulse of the origins issue."²⁵ Johnson not only impressed Meyer with his grasp of the issues, but also with his ideas about how to get their notions a more successful hearing. Meyer was connected with a group in the Northwest which, according to Johnson, was attempting to forge a stance and organization based upon Thaxton, Bradley, and Olsen's, *The Mystery of Life's Origin*.

In 1990, Meyer invited Johnson to Portland and introduced him to his associates, the nucleus of the future Discovery Institute. Johnson's engaging and confident personality and his advocacy of a new approach won the group over, and ever since he has been the public leader of the intelligent design movement. Like many anti-evolutionists and neocreationists, Johnson believed that the fossil evidence did not substantiate the Darwinists' claims. But he challenged them to ditch the notion that this was essentially a scientific problem. Rather, Johnson advocated the strategy of an aggressive assault on the materialist philosophy underpinning the scientific theorizing. In his own words, he brought a "big case litigation point of view" to the issue. Those who would challenge

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the scientific establishment must not fool themselves into thinking that evolutionists or even theistic evolutionists would welcome an open exchange about the scientific evidence. Their minds were already set, Johnson claimed. Attack the jugular: the materialist philosophical assumptions!²⁶

In 1991, Regnery Gateway published Johnson's *Darwin on Trial*, a milestone in the emergence of the intelligent design movement. In it Johnson put forth with aggressive eloquence his thesis that Darwinism was essentially applied materialist philosophy. He had attempted to get it into print with a major trade publisher, but he was told that evolution was a dead issue in America. Nothing more needed to be said about it, especially from a law professor. The Christian publisher InterVarsity Press and the conservative-oriented Regnery Gateway Inc., however, expressed interest in the project. Johnson decided to go with Regnery, since he believed that it was important for the book to be published by a secular press. The book took off, and Regnery sold 50,000 copies. Regnery and InterVarsity reached an agreement whereby InterVarsity bought the rights to distribute the book in the evangelical Christian market. It has since been translated into several languages and has sold hundreds of thousands of copies.²⁷

The unexpected success of *Darwin on Trial* catapulted Johnson, who had heretofore been a behind-the-scenes voice, to national prominence. But his initial success was only one of a series of developments that contributed to the emergence of the intelligent design movement out of the various intellectual currents of the 1980s. That story—which includes the development of an institutional framework (Access Research Network and the Discovery Institute and its Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture), the formulation and articulation of Johnson's "Wedge strategy," and the subsequent work of Michael Behe, William Dembski, Stephen Meyer, et al.—is beyond the modest purview of this article. Moreover, we lack the distance to be able to determine whether the intelligent design argument warrants being considered a bona fide scientific movement. To be such, it must be able to sustain a rigorous research program or, at the very least, inform empirical research in a demonstrable way. Much hard theoretical and empirical work remains to be done, and the jury is still out.

But what is indisputable at this point is that *Darwin on Trial* and the events leading up to its publication were crucial in the transformation of a loose collection of scholars and their ideas into a nascent movement based upon anti-materialistic and design notions. Johnson provided that movement not only with a manifesto and a strategy but also with a powerful voice. Movements, however, do not emerge out of thin air, and rarely are they simply the product of one person's vision; they emerge out of an historical context. For intelligent design, that context was the grow-

ing awareness in the 1980s that continuing the origins debate in American intellectual culture from the stance of biblical authority was unlikely to be effectual. Johnson arrived on the scene with an argument, strategy, and temperament well suited to mold these impulses into a movement that captured considerable attention in the origins debate of the mid- to late-1990s. More than any one person Phillip Johnson shaped the course of the origins debate in the 1990s.²⁸ ◇

Notes

- ¹ Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, Inc., 1991).
- ² Nomenclature is a very contentious issue in the origins debate. According to author Larry Witham, the term intelligent design first appeared in 1989 in a book written by Percival Davis and Dean H. Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins* (Dallas: Haughton, 1989). Critics often associate intelligent design with creationism by adopting labels like *the new creationism* or *intelligent design creationism*. (See Robert T. Pennock, *Tower of Babel: The Evidence against the New Creationism* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999], xiv, 28–9.) Most advocates of intelligent design reject the label *neocreationism* as a condescending attempt to refute their position by linking it to a discredited creation science. They prefer *design theory*. I have opted to use the phrase *intelligent design movement* to refer to the maturing design argument and infrastructure of the mid-1990s. For the prior period covered in this essay, no one label accurately reflects the several streams that fed into what became the design movement. The term *nascent design theory* is general enough to be serviceable, but since it implies a measure of whiggish inevitability, I will use it sparingly.
- ³ James Glanz, "Evolutionists Battle New Theory on Creation," *The New York Times* (April 8, 2001); Robert Wright, "The 'New' Creationism," *Slate* (April 16, 2001) <<http://slate.msn.com/Earthing/01-04-16/Earthing.asp>>.
- ⁴ This rapidly expanding body of literature includes: Del Ratzsch, *Nature, Design, and Science: The Status of Design in Natural Science* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Michael Ruse, *Can a Darwinian Be a Christian? The Relationship Between Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 111–28; John F. Haught, *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground Between God and Evolution* (New York: Cliff Street Books/HarperCollins, 1999); Pennock, *Tower of Babel*; Phillip E. Johnson and Denis O. Lamoureux, *Darwinism Defeated? The Johnson-Lamoureux Debate on Biological Origins* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1999); Branden Fitelson, Christopher Stephens, and Elliott Sober, "How Not to Detect Design—Critical Notice: William A. Dembski, *The Design Inference*," *Philosophy of Biology* LXVI, no. 3 (September 1999): 472–88.
- ⁵ See William A. Dembski and James M. Kushiner, eds., *Signs of Intelligence: Understanding Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001); Phillip E. Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); Michael J. Behe, William A. Dembski, and Stephen C. Meyer, *Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000); William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science & Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999); William A. Dembski, ed., *Mere Creation: Science, Faith & Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998); William A. Dembski, *The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance Through Small Probabilities* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Phillip E. Johnson, *Objections Sustained:*

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Subversive Essays on Evolution, Law & Culture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Phillip E. Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997); Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 1996); Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

- ⁶ To mention the term "hindsight" in historical discussions these days is to raise the question of whether history ought to be presentist and whiggish (i.e., given insurmountable epistemological limitations, the historian should view the past in terms of the present or at the least should feel comfortable in asking "questions about the past inspired by the concerns of the present") or contextualist and priggish (i.e., the historian's task is to attempt to understand the past on its own terms). There are, of course, practical *via media* positions that most working historians adopt. I trust it will be apparent to the reader that my stance in this essay is pragmatically *via media*. For an interesting discussion of this matter from the perspective of the history of science, see Stephen G. Brush, "Scientists as Historians," *Osiris* X (1995): 215–31.
- ⁷ The history of the design argument would require a book-length examination. For my purposes, it is sufficient to note that the novelty of contemporary design theory can easily be overstated. Design arguments have been around since the time of Plato and Aristotle, and the core notions of the contemporary intelligent design movement have antecedents going back centuries, even millennia. See, for example, William L. Rowe, *The Cosmological Argument* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 7, 10–23; William Lane Craig, "Design and the Cosmological Argument," in *Mere Creation*, 332–33; Anna Case-Winters, "The Argument from Design: What is at Stake Theologically?" *Zygon* XXXV, no. 1 (March 2000): 69–70.
- ⁸ Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen, *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (Dallas: Lewis and Stanley, 1992, 1984), 186–87; Nancy R. Pearcey, "The Evolution Backlash: Debunking Darwin," *World* XI, no. 38 (March 1, 1997).
- ⁹ See, for example, Henry M. Morris, *Many Infallible Truths: Practical and Useful Evidences of Christianity* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974, 1996); A. E. Wilder-Smith, *Man's Origin, Man's Destiny: A Critical Survey of the Principles of Evolution and Christianity* (Wheaton, IL: H. Shaw, 1968).
- ¹⁰ Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1986), 344–47.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 355–57. Denton echoed in part the pathfinding work of historian John C. Greene in *The Death of Adam: Evolution and Its Impact on Western Thought* (Ames: University of Iowa Press, 1959).
- ¹² Denton, *Evolution*, 358. Denton later lamented the misuse of his work. To be sure, he finds the Darwinian model inadequate. But Denton considers himself a "philosophical naturalist," who flatly rejects special creationism and fully accepts that evolution is "driven entirely by natural processes and by natural law." Where he differs from many evolutionists is his teleological view that the naturalistic evolutionary process is "a designed whole with mankind as its end and purpose." See Michael Denton, "Comments on Special Creationism," in Johnson and Lamoureux, *Darwinism Defeated?* 152–53.
- ¹³ John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), especially 1–23; Ernan McMullin, "Fine-Tuning the Universe?" in *Science, Technology, and Religious Ideas*, ed. Mark H. Shale and George W. Shields (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 97–112; Karl W. Giberson, "The Anthropic Principle: A Postmodern Creation Myth?" *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* IX, no. 1/2 (1997): 63–90. McMullin notes that the phrase "anthropic principle" was first used by Brandon Carter in 1974.
- ¹⁴ Dennis Wagner, "Put Another Candle on the Birthday Cake," *Origins Research* XX, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1987): 3; personal correspondence, Dennis Wagner to Donald Yerxa, May 13, 1999.
- ¹⁵ Wagner, "Put Another Candle on the Birthday Cake," 3.
- ¹⁶ Wagner to Yerxa, May 13, 1999.
- ¹⁷ A composite of Johnson quoted in Russell Schoch, "The Evolution of a Creationist," *California Monthly* (November 1991) reprinted <<http://www.origins.org/pjohnson/testimony.html>>; Tim Stafford, "The Making of a Revolution," *Christianity Today* (December 8, 1997): 17–8.
- ¹⁸ Johnson circulated drafts of his work in progress to generate feedback and interest. Phillip E. Johnson, "Science and Scientific Naturalism in the Evolution Controversy" (typescript ms, August 1988); "Darwinism: The Faith and the Facts" (typescript ms, September 1989); memorandum, Phillip Johnson to Campion Center Participants, (November 30, 1989).
- ¹⁹ The phrase *anti-evolutionary* is somewhat problematic in this context since it implies a blanket rejection of evolutionary explanations. Most of the thinkers that have been attracted to the design movement accept evolutionary mechanisms at the micro-level. It is fair to say, however, that in general they are intensely skeptical that neo-Darwinian mechanisms (particularly the gene-centered approach of the so-called Darwinian "fundamentalists") can account for biological complexity.
- ²⁰ Charles Haynes, Project Director of Americans United Research Foundation and President of the National Council on Religion and Public Education; E-an Zen, Chair of the Committee on Precollege Geological Education of the Geological Society of America; Fr. James Skehan, Boston College Professor of Geology and Director of the Weston Observatory; Oliver Thomas, General Counsel, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and Michael Woodruff, Director of the Christian Legal Society's Center for Law & Religious Freedom.
- ²¹ Memorandum, "Provisional Agenda for Group Discussion: 'Science and Creationism in Public Schools'" (August 31, 1989).
- ²² The organizers invited Thomas Kuhn and Freeman Dyson, but these prominent scholars did not attend.
- ²³ This paragraph is based on the author's interview with Phillip Johnson (March 24, 1999) and the following personal correspondence: Skehan to Yerxa (October 7, 1999); Raup to Yerxa (October 4, 1999); Gingerich to Yerxa (October 19, 1999); Woodruff to Yerxa (October 29, 1999).
- ²⁴ Owen Gingerich recalls that neither he nor Gould had ever heard of Johnson prior to the Campion meeting, but that their exchange was lively. Gingerich to Yerxa (October 19, 1999).
- ²⁵ Stephen C. Meyer, "Darwin in the Dock," *Touchstone* XIV, no. 3 (April 2001): 57.
- ²⁶ Interview with Phillip Johnson (March 24, 1999).
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ The author would like to thank The John Templeton Foundation for a grant that underwrote some of the research evidenced in this article. He would also like to thank Michael Woodruff, Esq. for supplying him with documentation on the Campion meeting; Karl Giberson for his encouragement and fruitful collaboration; fellow participants in the John Templeton Oxford Seminars on Science and Christianity; and the anonymous reviewers for their careful reading on an earlier draft of this article.

Johnson popularized the term "intelligent design" in his book, *Darwin on Trial*. He remains one of the best known advocates for intelligent design, and is considered the founder of the intelligent design movement.Â Since Johnson is considered by those both inside and outside the movement to be the father and architect of the intelligent design movement and its strategies,[49] his statements are often used to validate the criticisms leveled by those who allege that the Discovery Institute and its allied organizations are merely stripping the obvious religious content from their anti-evolution assertions as a. Start by marking "Darwin's Nemesis: Phillip Johnson and the Intelligent Design Movement" as Want to Read: Want to Read savingâ€¦ Want to Read.Â With the publication of *Darwin on Trial* in 1991, Cal Berkeley legal scholar Phillip Johnson became the leading figure in the intelligent design movement. Exposing and calling into question the philosophical foundations of Darwinism, Johnson led the charge against this largely unquestioned philosophy of materialistic reductionism and its purported basis in scientific With the publication of *Darwin on Trial* in 1991, Cal Berkeley legal scholar Phillip Johnson became the leading figure in the intelligent design movement.