

# Creationism's Trojan Horse

THE

WEDGE

OF

INTELLIGENT

DESIGN

*Barbara Forrest & Paul R. Gross*

**OXFORD**

UNIVERSITY PRESS

2004

# Contents

Introduction, 3

1. How the Wedge Began, 15

2. The Wedge Document: A Design  
for Design, 25

3. Searching for the Science, 35

4. Paleontology Lite and Copernican  
Discoveries, 49

5. A Conspiracy Hunter and  
a Newton, 85

6. Everything *Except* Science I, 147

7. Everything *Except* Science II, 179

8. Wedging into Power Politics, 215

9. Religion First—and Last, 257

Notes, 317

Index, 383

## Introduction

*It used to be obvious that the world was designed by some sort of intelligence. What else could account for fire and rain and lightning and earthquakes? Above all, the wonderful abilities of living things seemed to point to a creator who had a special interest in life. Today we understand most of these things in terms of physical forces acting under impersonal laws. We don't yet know the most fundamental laws, and we can't work out the consequences of all the laws we know. The human mind remains extraordinarily difficult to understand, but so is the weather. We can't predict whether it will rain one month from today, but we do know the rules that govern the rain, even though we can't always calculate the consequences. I see nothing about the human mind any more than about the weather that stands out as beyond the hope of understanding as a consequence of impersonal laws acting over billions of years.*

Steven Weinberg,  
1979 Nobel Laureate in Physics

## Dr. Fox's Lecture

Nearly thirty years ago one of the funniest articles ever published in a respectable medical journal appeared. Of course, it was not meant to be funny. Its purposes were serious and sober enough. The conclusions, moreover, were trustworthy and had

important implications for education at all levels. In fact, the conclusions had implications for *all* conveyance of knowledge by experts to intelligent, but nonexpert, audiences. In the *Journal of Medical Education*, D. H. Naftulin, M.D., and colleagues published a research study entitled “The Doctor Fox Lecture: A Paradigm of Educational Seduction.”<sup>1</sup> There is no better way to explain the intention and the results of this work than to quote from its abstract:

[T]he authors programmed an actor to teach charismatically and *nonsubstantively on a topic about which he knew nothing*. The authors hypothesized that given a sufficiently impressive lecture paradigm, even experienced educators participating in a new learning experience can be seduced into feeling satisfied that they have learned despite irrelevant, conflicting, and meaningless content conveyed by the lecturer. The hypothesis was supported when 55 subjects responded favorably at the significant level to an eight-item questionnaire concerning their attitudes toward the lecture. (emphasis added)

For purposes of this experiment, the investigators hired a mature, respectable, scholarly looking fellow, a professional actor. He memorized a prefabricated nonsense lecture entitled “Mathematical Game Theory as Applied to Physician Education.” The better popular science magazines had recently covered (real) game theory and its possible applications, so the title was appropriate. The silver-haired actor was trained to answer affably all audience questions following his lecture—by means, as the authors explain, of “double talk, neologisms, non sequiturs, and contradictory statements. All this was to be interspersed with parenthetical humor and meaningless references to unrelated topics.”<sup>2</sup> In two of the three trials of this experiment, the audience consisted of “psychiatrists, psychologists, and social-worker educators,” while that of the third trial “consisted of 33 educators and administrators enrolled in a graduate level university educational philosophy course.” This counterfeit scholar of “Mathematical Game Theory” was called Dr. Myron L. Fox, and a fraudulent but respectful and laudatory introduction was supplied.

Very interesting data followed from the survey and questionnaire administered after each session in which Fox’s (and other) presentations were made. These were simply the detailed statistics of approval or disapproval. The phony Dr. Fox’s presentations of discoveries in mathematical game theory were strongly approved by these educationally sophisticated, lecture-experienced audiences. But the really funny results are in the “subjective” comments added to the questionnaire, that is, in what listeners wrote as prose responses to the invitation to comment (the following comments are from a number of different respondents). “No respondent [in the first group],” Dr. Naftulin and his co-authors wrote, “reported having read Dr. Fox’s publications. [But] subjective responses included the following: ‘Excellent presentation, enjoyed listening. Has warm manner. Good flow, seems enthusiastic. What about the two types

of games, zero-sum and non-zero-sum? Too intellectual a presentation. My orientation is more pragmatic.” From the largest group of subjects for this experiment, the substantive comments were, if possible, even funnier: “Lively examples. His relaxed manner of presentation was a large factor in holding my interest. Extremely articulate. Interesting, wish he had dwelled more on background. Good analysis of subject that has been personally studied before. Very dramatic presentation. He was certainly captivating. Somewhat disorganized. Frustratingly boring. Unorganized and ineffective. Articulate. Knowledgeable.”<sup>3</sup>

We highly recommend this article. It should still be possible to find it in any university, especially one with a good medical or education library. The “educational seduction” of the title refers to what “Dr. Fox” did for (and to?) his listeners. This result and many others like it should have affected all schools of education, if not teachers generally. However, such was not the case. The possibility, indeed the likelihood, of intellectual “seduction” in circumstances such as these is probably increasing as specialization increases. Countless clones of Dr. Fox tread the academic and public policy boards today, as always. Readers familiar with the now-universal practice in higher education of using end-of-course student evaluations as key evidence in faculty promotion and tenure decisions will know this: evaluations by students, who lack the requisite knowledge but are called on to judge their professors’ expertise in their disciplines, can determine the academic fate of nontenured faculty and the possibility of merit raises for tenured ones. Intellectual seduction by substantive (“content”) nonsense, offered to audiences who want or like to hear what they are being told, or who simply assume that what they don’t understand must be correct if it *sounds* scholarly, is nearly universal.

This book is about a current, national, intellectual seduction phenomenon, not in mathematical game theory, but close enough to it. It is a case, at least formally, not much different from the Dr. Fox lecture, except that the lecturers here actually believe what they are lecturing about, or at least they want very much to believe it, or are convinced that they *must* believe it. And they are not actors, but *executors* of a real and serious political strategy. The “audiences” in this case are large; they consist of decent people: students, parents, teachers, public officials across the length and breadth of the United States (and now in other countries of the “developed world”)—people who don’t, in most cases, know much about science, especially the modern biological sciences. But they are people who are deeply and justifiably concerned about their religious faith, the state of their society, and the education of their children. They include some people for whom “fairness” and openness to the ideas of “the other side” have become the cherished, even the indispensable, characteristics of our civilization. Their insistence on the equal worth of *all* earnestly held opinions—whether or not those opinions are well founded—makes them relativists whether they know it or not. This book

is about the newest form of *creationism*, named by its proponents “intelligent design” (ID); but it is, especially, about the organization of the system of public and political relations that drives the movement. That system operates on a very detailed plan—a set of well articulated goals, strategies, and tactics—named “The Wedge” by its executors. It offers an upgraded form of the religious fundamentalist creationism long familiar in America.

## Neo-creationism

Creationism has been a perennial nuisance for American science education. Despite the persistent fecklessness of creationist arguments and their continued failure in the courts since 1925, the creationists refuse to go away. The attempts to insert religion into public elementary and secondary science education are unceasing, and they now include direct efforts to influence college students as well. Efforts to force it into curricula—especially those having anything at all to do with biology and the history of Earth—have been unremitting since the late nineteenth century, and they have continued into the present. The most notorious recent, nearly successful, attempt was the 1999 deletion of evolution and all immediately relevant geology and cosmology from the Kansas public school science standards, by action of the state board of education. Scientific integrity was restored to those defaced standards only after a protracted political effort to defeat creationist board members and replace them with moderates—who eventually undid the damage to science teaching and to the state’s reputation.

The defeated have not given up, however; today they are more active than ever in the politics and public affairs of Kansas and other states. And increasingly it appears that pro-evolution (pro-science) victories are secure only until the next election, when old battles may be revived by “stealth” candidates who do not disclose their anti-evolution agenda until *after* they are elected to office. Soon after the restoration of the integrity of science standards in Kansas, new efforts, even more forceful and better organized than those in Kansas, were mounted in Ohio. More are brewing in several other states, gaining added impetus from the Wedge’s efforts in the United States Congress. Nor is the phenomenon likely to remain limited to the United States; similar efforts are in progress or being planned in a number of other countries.

This struggle is cyclic; there have been short periods of relative quiet after major creationist failures in the courts. But the effects of the struggle are being felt today far beyond pedagogy in the schools. They are everywhere visible, and except for a few conscientious media outlets, they also threaten to lower the already variable and uncertain standards of science journalism. Contrary to the perception of most scientifically

literate people, creationism as a cultural presence has in the recent past grown generally stronger—even as its arguments, in the face of scientific progress, have grown steadily weaker and more hypocritical. Despite the intense activity of creationists, no faction, nor any individual advocate of one, and no modern creationist “research” program has as yet come up with a new, verifiable, fruitful, and important fact about the mechanisms or the history of life or the ancestral relationships among living things on Earth. For that reason, the scorecard of scientific successes for any form of creationism, including ID theory, is blank.

Creationists, including the newest kind—the neo-creationist “intelligent design theorists” who are the subject of this book—offer an abundance of theories. These theories are often decorated with open or only thinly disguised religious allusions, and they always include the now-standard rejection of naturalism, which is, in these circumstances, the indirect admission of supernaturalism. Their contributions to ongoing science consist of nit-picking and the extraction of trivialities from the vast literature of biology and of unsupported statements about what—they insist—*cannot* happen: “Darwinism”—organic evolution shaped by natural selection and reflecting the common ancestry of all life forms. In the face of the extraordinary and often highly practical twentieth-century progress of the life sciences under the unifying concepts of evolution, their “science” consists of quote-mining—minute searching of the biological literature—including outdated literature—for minor slips and inconsistencies and for polemically promising examples of internal arguments. These internal disagreements, fundamental to the working of all natural science, are then presented dramatically to lay audiences as evidence of the fraudulence and impending collapse of “Darwinism.” How are such audiences to know that modern biology is *not* a house of cards, *not* founded on a “dying theory”?

### *Intelligent Design*

Until a few years ago, “scientific” creationism was led by biblical literalists like Duane Gish and Henry Morris, whose Bible-thumping and logic-chopping were easy to discount, even for ordinary (nonscience) journalists, by exposing the obvious errors of fact and logic—independently of the gross errors of actual science. But those old-timers have now been eclipsed by a new brand of creationists who have absorbed a part of their following: the new boys are intelligent design promoters, mainly those associated with the Discovery Institute’s Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture (now Center for Science and Culture), based in Seattle, Washington. This group operates under a detailed and ambitious plan of action: “The Wedge.” Through relentlessly energetic programs of publication, conferences, and public appearances, all aimed at impressing lay audiences and political people, the Wedge is working its way into the

American cultural mainstream. Editorials and opinion pieces in national journals, prime-time television interviews, and other high-profile public appearances, offhand but highly visible negative judgments on evolution or “Darwinism” from conservative politicians and sympathetic public intellectuals (assisted in their anti-science by a scattering of “feminist epistemologists,” postmodernists, and Marxists)—all these contribute to a rising receptiveness to ID claims by those who do not know, or who simply refuse to consider, the actual state of the relevant sciences. In documenting and analyzing the political and religious nature of the Wedge, and bringing together expert comment on the ID “science” claims, we show that such grateful reception of the glad tidings of intelligent design is entirely unjustified by either the scientific, the mathematical, or the philosophic weight of any evidence offered.

#### THE WEDGE’S HAMMERS

Under cover of advanced degrees, including a few in science, obtained in some of the major universities, the Wedge’s workers have been carving out a habitable and expanding niche within higher education, cultivating cells of followers—students as well as (primarily nonbiology) faculty—on campus after campus. This is the first real success of creationism in the formerly hostile grove of academe. Furthermore, the Wedge’s political alliances reach into a large, partisan elite among the nation’s legislators and other political leaders. Armed thus with a potentially huge base of popular support that includes most of the Religious Right, wielding a new legal strategy with which it hopes to win in the litigation certain to follow insertion of ID into public school science anywhere—and lawyers ready to go to work when it does—the Wedge of ID creationism is, indeed, intelligently designed. To be sure, its science component is *not*. But in a public relations-driven and mass-communications world, that is not a disadvantage. In the West, opinions, perceptions, loyalties, and, ultimately, votes are what matter when the goal is to change public policy—or for that matter, cultural patterns. Serious inquiry and questions of truth are often a mere diversion.

This newly energized, intellectually reactionary enterprise will not fade quietly away as the current team of ID promoters ages. It is already too well organized and funded, and the leading Wedge figures have invested too much of themselves for that to happen. Moreover, there is every reason to think that religiously conservative, anti-science agitation will increase, especially as the life sciences and medical research continue to probe the fundamentals of human behavior. As that happens, the general public uneasiness with evolutionary biology and the underlying genetics and cell biology becomes simple hostility, not just on the political right. Some of the far-left intelligentsia help to fuel the hostility, at least in academia. Therefore, we have undertaken to document very thor-



oughly, largely but not exclusively by means of the Wedge's own announcements and productions, its steadily increasing output of anti-evolution and more broadly anti-science materials.

The Discovery Institute's creationists are younger and better educated than most of the traditional "young-earth" creationists. Their public relations tricks are up to date and skillful; they know how to manipulate the media. They are very well funded, and their commitment is fired by the same sincere religious fervor that characterized earlier and less affluent versions of creationism. This combination makes them crusaders, just as inspired as, but much more effective than, the old literalists, whose pseudo-science was easily recognized as ludicrous. And the Wedge carries out its program as a part of the evangelical Christian community, which William Dembski credits with "for now providing the safest haven for intelligent design."<sup>4</sup> The welcoming voices within this community have all but drowned out those of its many members who are honest in their approach to science, sincere in their Christian faith, and appreciative of the protection afforded to *both* by secular, constitutional democracy. Dembski admits that the Wedge's acceptance among evangelicals is not "particularly safe by any absolute standard."<sup>5</sup> Yet in our survey of this issue, we see that the evangelical voices most prominently heard, with a few notable exceptions, support the Wedge.

#### FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Unfortunately, ID, by now quite familiar among scientifically qualified and religiously neutral observers as the recycled, old-fashioned creationism it is, drapes its religious skeleton in the fancy-dress language of modern science, albeit without having contributed to science, at least so far, any data or any testable theoretical notions. Therefore, ID creationism is most unlikely in the short term to change genuine science as practiced in industry, universities, and independent research laboratories. But the Wedge's public relations blitz (intended to revolutionize public opinion); its legal strategizing (intended as groundwork for major court cases yet to come); and its feverish political alliance-building (through which the Discovery Institute hopes to shape public policy) all constitute a threat to the integrity of education and in the end to the ability of the public to judge scientific and technological claims. This last threat is not just a secondary, long-term worry. Competent, honest scientific thinking is critically important *now*, not only to the intellectual maturation of our species, especially of its children, but also to optimal management of such current, urgent policy problems as environmental preservation and improvement, energy resources, management and support of scientific research, financing medicine and public health (including human heredity and reproduction), and, in general, the support and use of advanced technology.

Led by Phillip Johnson, William Dembski, Michael Behe, and Jonathan Wells—the four current top names of the Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture—with a growing group of like-minded fellows and co-workers, this movement seeks nothing less than to overthrow the system of rules and procedures of modern science and those intellectual footings of our culture laid down in the Enlightenment and over some 300 years. If this sounds overwrought, we ask our readers to proceed at least a little way into the following chapters to judge for themselves. In any case, the Wedge *admits* that this is its aim. By its own boastful reports, the Wedge has undertaken to discredit the naturalistic methodology that has been the working principle of all effective science since the seventeenth century. It desires to substitute for it a particular version of “theistic science,” whose chief argument is that nothing about nature is to be understood or taught without reference to supernatural or at least unknowable causes—in effect, to God. The evidence that this is a fundamental goal follows within the pages of this book. No matter that these creationists have produced not even a research *program*, despite their endlessly repeated scientific claims. Pretensions to the contrary, this strategy is not really aimed at science and scientists, whom they consider lost in grievous error and whom they regularly accuse of fraud (as we will demonstrate), of conspiring to hide from a gulled public the failures of modern science, especially of “Darwinism.” It is aimed, rather, at a vast, mostly science-innocent populace and at the public officials and lawmakers who depend on it for votes.

### *A Neo-creationist’s Progress*

In April 2001, ID movement founder Phillip Johnson released on the creationist Access Research Network website “The Wedge: A Progress Report.”<sup>6</sup> There he reviewed the Wedge’s goals: “to legitimate the topic of intelligent design . . . within the mainstream intellectual community” and “to make naturalism the central focus of discussion [meaning “of attack”] in the religious world.” He cited the establishment of a “beach-head” in American journalism, exemplified by articles in major newspapers. He declared that “the Wedge is lodged securely in the crack” between empirical science and naturalistic philosophy, which he calls “the dominant naturalistic system of thought control.” According to Johnson, “the [Wedge] train is already moving along the logical track and it will not stop until it reaches its destination. . . . The initial goals of the Wedge strategy have been accomplished. . . . [I]t’s not the beginning of the end, but it is the end of the beginning.”<sup>7</sup>

There is some justification for this aggressive show of confidence. As Johnson says, ID has won significant coverage in major U.S. newspapers and, more recently, abroad as well. In the *New York Times*, James Glanz wrote that “evolutionists find themselves arrayed not against traditional

creationism, with its roots in biblical literalism, but against a more sophisticated idea: the intelligent design theory.” On the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*, Teresa Watanabe wrote that “a new breed of mostly Christian scholars redefines the old evolution-versus-creationism debate and fashions a movement with more intellectual firepower, mainstream appeal, and academic respectability.”<sup>8</sup> And Robert Wright (author of *The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life*, Vintage Books, 1994) points out in a critical *Slate* article that while ID presents no new ideas of any significance, the *New York Times* article “has granted official significance to the latest form of opposition to Darwinism.” Wright concludes that although ID is just a new label, a marketing device for an old product, it is also an effective one.<sup>9</sup>

The admirable, but in this particular case misguided, concern of most Americans to be fair, “even-handed,” to consider both sides of a dispute respectfully, especially the side claiming to suffer discrimination, creates a fertile field for ID activists. They have enough financial backing and self-righteous zeal to outlast what little effectively organized opposition to them presently exists, especially in the higher education community, which one would quite reasonably expect to be in the forefront of opposition to the Wedge. There is, of course, the further—and very real—possibility that the demographics of the judiciary will shift toward creationism should there be appointments of judges with strong doctrinal or emotional ties to the Religious Right, where one’s views on evolution are once again, as they were in the 1920s, a “litmus test.” There is no doubt that the Wedge’s immediate goal is to change what is taught in classrooms about the basics of biology and the history of life, as we show here from its own documents, sources of support, and productions. But based on our demonstration in chapter 9 of the religious foundation of the intelligent design movement and the importance of this foundation to the Wedge’s goal of “renewing” American culture, we also believe that its ultimate goal is to create a theocratic state, which would provide a protective framework for its pedagogical goals. In an important respect, the Wedge is another strand in the well organized Religious Right network, whose own well documented but poorly understood purposes are strongly antagonistic to the constitutional barriers between church and state.

As of March 2001, creationists had launched programs to change public school curricula in one out of five states across the nation. During the writing of this book, creationists were causing significant problems in Ohio, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Kansas, Missouri, Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.<sup>10</sup> At present, there are renewed rumblings in New Mexico, where a hard-fought battle was presumably resolved. These programs have not yet attained their broadest goals, but they continue to divert precious educational resources, time, and energy from the real problems of public education in the United States toward

the work of responding to creationist attacks. Even in the small, rural state of Louisiana, ID advocates seem to be waiting in the wings to initiate a sequel to recent attempts by Representative Sharon Weston-Broome to declare the idea of evolution “racist.”<sup>11</sup> In Kansas, where creationist changes to the state’s science standards have finally been reversed, the Discovery Institute is nevertheless actively assisting a satellite group, the Intelligent Design Network (IDnet), in pushing ID more aggressively than ever. In June 2001, IDnet held its Second Annual Symposium, “Darwin, Design, and Democracy II: Teaching the Evidence in Science Education,” featuring three key Wedge campaigners—Phillip Johnson, William Dembski, and Jonathan Wells.<sup>12</sup> The great public universities are now a main target of wedge efforts: a Discovery Institute fellow, Jed Macosko, taught ID in a for-credit course at the University of California-Berkeley; his father, Chris Macosko, has been doing the same at the University of Minnesota.<sup>13</sup>

Concern about the Wedge is building, very late but finally, in scientific and academic quarters. The American Geophysical Union considered ID a problem serious enough to require scheduling at least six presentations on it at the spring 2001 conference.<sup>14</sup> Philosopher Robert Pennock’s eye-opening book, *Tower of Babel: The Evidence Against the New Creationism* (MIT, 1999), analyzed and recounted the philosophical and scientific flaws of ID creationism. It is followed by his anthology, *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives* (MIT, 2001). These books seem to be making a contribution in awakening academics to the need for an effective counterstrategy. Similar books are on the way; and in book reviews and a spate of recent writings, distinguished scientists are at last taking the trouble (and it is troublesome, *and* time-consuming, *and* costly!) to rebut, point by point, the new creationist claims. Of course, those claims are not really new. They are rather pretentious variants of the ancient, and discredited, argument from design (aptly renamed for our era, by Richard Dawkins, the argument from personal incredulity).

So far, however, no book has documented the genesis, the support, the real goals, and the remarkable sheer volume of Wedge activities. We have come to believe that such a chronicle is needed if people of good will toward science and toward honest inquiry are to understand the magnitude of this threat—not only to education but to the principle of separation of church and state. The chapters that follow are our effort to supply the facts: as complete an account, within the limits of a single volume and the reader’s patience, as can be assembled—and checked independently—from easily accessible public sources. To convince those with the indispensable basic knowledge who are in a position to act, that they must do so, we must first make the case that (1) a formal intelligent design strategy, apart from and above the familiar creationist carping about evolutionary and historical science, does exist, and (2) it is being

executed successfully in all respects *except* the production of hard scientific results—data. To accomplish these aims, we have had to accumulate the evidence, which consists of the massive schedule of the Wedge’s own activities in execution of the strategy, together with the actual pronouncements of Wedge members. We have allowed them to speak for themselves here at length and as often as possible.

The Wedge’s busy schedule of ID activities and its increasing public visibility have been accompanied by a steadily evolving public relations effort to present itself as a mainstream organization. In August 2002, the CRSC changed its name, now calling itself simply the “Center for Science and Culture.” This move parallels the Wedge’s low-key phase-out of the overtly religious banners on its early web pages: from Michelangelo’s God creating Adam, to Michelangelo’s God creating DNA, to the current Hubble telescope photo of the MyCn18 Hourglass Nebula.<sup>15</sup> But despite the attempt to alter its public face, the Wedge’s substantive identity remains. Thus, we refer henceforth to the Center for Science and Culture by the name under which it has been known during the period covered in this book: the Center for the *Renewal* of Science and Culture (CRSC).

The readers’ patience may well be tried at times by the repetitiousness of Wedge activities: conferences, websites, trade book and media publications and appearances, testimony before legislative bodies and education committees, summonses to religious and cultural renewal predicated on anti-science. The Wedge’s efficient and planned repetitiousness is itself one of our main points. *In fact, it is one of the most remarkable examples in our time of naked public relations management substituting successfully for knowledge and the facts of the case—substituting for the truth.* For that reason alone, it is both interesting and important. It must be known and understood if there is to be recognition—among scientists as well as the literate nonscientist public—of current anti-evolutionism and its aims.

## The Issue

The issue, then, is *not*—as ID creationists insist it is, to their increasingly large and credulous audiences nationwide—that the biological sciences are in deep trouble due to a collapse of Darwinism. The issue is that the public relations work, but not the “science,” of the Wedge and of ID “theorists” is proving all too effective. It is not refutations or technical dismissals of ID scientific claims that are needed. The literature of science and the book review pages of excellent journals are already replete with those: expert reviews of ID books and other public products are readily available to anyone. We provide here what we hope is an adequate sampling of those technical dismissals and expert scientific opinions, and we document the sound science and the ID anti-science as needed. But in

the past few years, very detailed disproof has been provided, again and again, by the commentators best qualified to speak to the substance: some of the world's most honored evolutionary and physical scientists, as well as some of the most distinguished philosophers of mind and science. Rather, what is needed now is documentation of the Wedge *itself*, from its own internal and public relations documents, so that the public may understand its purposes and the magnitude of its impact, current and projected. The issue is not Darwinism or science: the issue is the Wedge itself.

Providing the necessary documentation, including the minutiae that can turn out to be important, is always a writer's strategic problem when the intended audience is broader than a small group of specialists. Even scholars who demand and are accustomed to copious documentation can find it off-putting. Others, members of the most important audience of all—curious, able, and genuinely fair-minded general readers—who rarely if ever read with constant eye and hand movement between text and references, are strongly tempted to give up when confronted with profuse supporting data and the necessary but distracting scholarly apparatus of notes and references. We do not have a *good* solution to this problem. The endnotes can be taken, however, as running commentary, supplementary to, *but not* essential for, the main text. Our references to literature include, whenever possible and therefore in abundance, pointers to sites on the World Wide Web.

No reader needs to use the notes to apprehend the argument and to judge its broad justifications—or lack of them. The main text can usefully and properly be read for itself alone. But for those readers who decide that this argument is to be taken seriously, and who feel the need to arm themselves with facts, they are here; *or* there is a pointer to them, immediately serviceable for anyone with access to a computer and an Internet connection. Initially, we envisioned a much shorter response than this book to the Wedge's campaign. We have delayed work on other projects to write it, even though we would have preferred not to have found it necessary. The more we examined the situation, the more expansive and invasive the Wedge's program proved to be, and the greater, therefore, was the need we saw for full public examination and for a proper response to it. We have watched and waited for the coalescence of an appropriately organized counter-movement, and, indeed, a few small organizations and individual members of the scientific and academic communities, as well as concerned citizens, have recently mounted admirable efforts, with only a minute fraction of the resources available to the Wedge. But those active people *are* few, and they need the help of everyone who has a stake in the high quality of our civic, scientific, and educational cultures.

# I

## How the Wedge Began

*If we understand our own times, we will know that we should affirm the reality of God by challenging the domination of materialism and naturalism in the world of the mind. With the assistance of many friends I have developed a strategy for doing this. . . . We call our strategy the wedge.*

Phillip E. Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*

*I was an establishment figure when I was young, but now I have become a cultural revolutionary.*

Phillip Johnson,  
*Silicon Valley Magazine*

Inquiry is the search for knowledge, whether in the work of a theoretical physicist, an automobile mechanic, or any other honest student of physical reality. Fanaticism—religious, political, or cultural—is the eternal enemy of inquiry. Fanatics have always been preoccupied with controlling education, especially that of children. Freedom of speech, especially in the schools, is their traditional foe and target. In the West, at least, the irresistible compulsion of ideologues to control teaching is well recognized—even in the recurrent periods, like the present, of ideological vigilantism. Vigilantes of one ideology are the keenest watchers for intrusions of the next ideology. People who favor the growth of knowledge and intel-

lectual freedom are usually able to see and willing to oppose fanaticism, even when it lurks under a facade of religious or socio-political rectitude. Alertness to strong ideology masquerading as education has been the main obstacle to the spread of dogma in a democratic society.

There is now, however, a new variant of the old (anti)scientific creationism—a no-holds-barred commitment to particular, parochial religious beliefs about the history and fabric of the world and the place of humanity in it. This variant has eliminated brilliantly the obstacle of rational opposition to ideology substituted for education. The new strategy is wonderfully simple. Here is how you implement it: exploiting that modern, nearly universal, liberal suspicion of zealotry, you accuse the branch of legitimate inquiry whose results you hate, in this case the evolutionary natural sciences, of—what else?—zealotry! Fanaticism! Crying “viewpoint discrimination,” you loudly demand adherence to the principle of freedom of speech, especially in teaching, insisting that such freedom is being denied your legitimate alternative view. You identify your (in this case, religious) view of the world as the victim of censorship by a conspiracy among most of the world’s scientists, whom you label “dogmatic Darwinists” or the like.

This bold strategy is working, not just with religious fundamentalists, who do not need to be convinced anyway, but with people who have no such fundamentalist commitment and who are in principle well-enough educated to see what is happening. Among these increasingly susceptible persons are many politicians, who sense an opportunity to exploit for votes the cry of victimization, and many highly influential persons who have no selfish motives but who, like most of the population, lack the scientific knowledge needed to make an informed distinction between genuine science and pseudoscience.

This lusty new variant of creationism is advancing rapidly by means of a strategy called “The Wedge.” We begin our account of its operations with its own (true) origin story. The Wedge is a movement with a plan to undermine public support for the teaching of evolution and other natural science supporting evolution, while at the same time cultivating a supposedly sound alternative: “intelligent design theory” (ID hereafter). The Wedge of intelligent design, which is simply a restatement of the ancient argument from design, did not arise in the mind of a scientist, or in a science class, or in a laboratory, or as a result of scientific research in the field. It appeared in the course of one man’s personal difficulties after a divorce. Those led a middle-aged Berkeley professor of law, Phillip E. Johnson, into born-again Christianity. The Wedge movement, with its huge ambitions for revolutionizing all science and all culture (as will be shown), was the result of personal crisis and an epiphany in the life of a nonscientist, whose scientific knowledge is at the very most that of an untrained amateur.

In his own account, Phillip Johnson says that “the experience of hav-



ing marriage and family life crash under me, and of achieving a certain amount of academic success and seeing the meaninglessness of it, made me . . . give myself to Christ at the advanced age of 38. And that aroused a particular level of intellectual interest in the question of why the intellectual world is so dominated by naturalistic and agnostic thinking.”<sup>1</sup> Nancy Pearcey, a fellow of the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture and a Johnson associate in this creationist section of the Discovery Institute (see later), links Johnson’s religious conversion and his leadership of the intelligent design movement in two recent publications. In an interview with Johnson for *World* magazine, Pearcey says, “It is not only in politics that leaders forge movements. Phillip Johnson has developed what is called the ‘Intelligent Design’ movement. . . . Mr. Johnson is a Berkeley law professor who, spurred by the crisis of a failed marriage, converted to Christianity in midlife.”<sup>2</sup> In *Christianity Today*, she identifies the causal relationship between Johnson’s new beliefs and his deep animosity toward evolution: “The unofficial spokesman for ID is Phillip E. Johnson, a Berkeley law professor who converted to Christianity in his late 30s, then turned his sharp lawyer’s eyes on the theory of evolution.”<sup>3</sup>

Johnson’s search for meaning in his life set the stage for another epiphany during a sabbatical leave in England: “In 1987, when UC Berkeley law professor Phillip Johnson asked God what he should do with the rest of his life, he didn’t know he’d wind up playing Toto to the ersatz winds of Darwinism. But a fateful trip by a London bookstore hooked Mr. Johnson on a comparative study of evolutionary theory.”<sup>4</sup> Johnson purchased Richard Dawkins’s *The Blind Watchmaker* and “devoured it and then another book, Michael Denton’s *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*.” Says Johnson, “I read these books, and I guess almost immediately I thought, *This is it. This is where it all comes down to, the understanding of creation.*”<sup>5</sup> The Wedge’s gestation had begun.

According to Johnson, the Wedge movement, if not that name for it, began in 1992: “The movement we now call The Wedge made its public debut at a conference of scientists and philosophers held at Southern Methodist University [SMU] in March 1992, following the publication of my book *Darwin on Trial* [1991]. The conference brought together as speakers some key Wedge figures, particularly Michael Behe, Stephen Meyer, William Dembski, and myself.”<sup>6</sup> Johnson had established contacts with a “cadre of intelligent design (ID) proponents for whom Mr. Johnson acted as an early fulcrum. . . . Mr. Johnson made contact, exchanged flurries of e-mail, and arranged personal meetings. He frames these alliances as a ‘wedge strategy,’ with himself as lead blocker and ID scientists carrying the ball behind him.”<sup>7</sup> In 1993, a year after the SMU conference, the Wedge held another meeting (June 22–24, 1993), “The Status of Darwinian Theory and Origins of Life Studies”: “the Johnson-Behe cadre of scholars met at Pajaro Dunes. . . . Here, Behe presented

for the first time the seed thoughts that had been brewing in his mind for a year—the idea of ‘irreducibly complex’ molecular machinery.”<sup>8</sup> This idea has come to serve as something of a joke among evolutionary biologists (which Behe is not) and other scientists, but it seems to be the gladdest of glad tidings for the scientifically naive.

When the July 1992 issue of *Scientific American* published Stephen Jay Gould’s devastating review of Johnson’s *Darwin on Trial*, in which Gould described the book as “full of errors, badly argued, based on false criteria, and abysmally written,” Johnson’s supporters formed the “Ad Hoc Origins Committee” and wrote a letter (probably in 1992 or 1993) on Johnson’s behalf: “This letter was mailed to thousands of university professors shortly after Gould wrote his vitriolic analysis of . . . *Darwin on Trial*. Included with it was Johnson’s essay ‘The Religion of the Blind Watchmaker’, replying to Gould, which *Scientific American* refused to publish.”<sup>9</sup> Among the thirty-nine signatories were nine (listed here with their then-current affiliations), who a few years later became Fellows of the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture:

Henry F. Schaefer III, Ph.D. Chemistry University of Georgia	Robert Koons, Ph.D. Philosophy U[niversity of] T[exas], Austin
Stephen Meyer, Ph.D. Philosophy Whitworth College	Walter Bradley, Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering Texas A & M University
Michael Behe, Ph.D. Biochemistry Lehigh University	Paul Chien, Ph.D. Biology University of San Francisco
William Dembski, Ph.D. Philosophy Northwestern University	John Angus Campbell, Ph.D. Speech University of Washington
Robert Kaita, Ph.D. Physics Princeton University	

These names recur, as we shall see, throughout the subsequent history of the Wedge. The signers describe themselves as “a group of fellow professors or academic scientists who are generally sympathetic to Johnson and believe that he warrants a hearing. . . . *Most of us are also Christian theists who like Johnson are unhappy with the polarized debate between biblical literalism and scientific materialism. We think a critical re-evaluation of Darwinism is both necessary and possible without embracing young-earth creationism*” (emphasis added). Notre Dame philosopher Alvin Plantinga was also a signatory to this letter, which is early evidence of his continuing support of and continued, active participation in the intelligent design movement. Nancy Pearcey refers to Plantinga as a “design proponent.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, a critical mass of religiously committed supporters had

already begun to coalesce around Johnson. None of those named had significant, professional credentials in evolutionary biology, nor had any of them published scientific peer-reviewed research on, or criticism of, evolution. In fact, not one of them has done so to this day.

But by 1995, Johnson's mission had crystallized, and he had a loyal contingent of associates to help carry it out. That summer they held another conference, "The Death of Materialism and the Renewal of Culture," which served as a matrix for the "Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture," organized the following year.<sup>11</sup> Johnson produced another book, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law and Education* (InterVarsity Press, 1995), in which he positioned himself as a "theistic realist" fighting against "methodological naturalism":

First, here is a definition of MN [methodological naturalism], followed by a contrasting definition of my own position, which I label "theistic realism" (TR).

. . . 1. A methodological naturalist defines science as the search for the best naturalistic theories. A theory would not be naturalistic if it left something (such as the existence of genetic information or consciousness) to be explained by a supernatural cause. Hence all events in evolution (before the evolution of intelligence) are assumed to be attributable to unintelligent causes. The question is not *whether* life (genetic information) arose by some combination of chance and chemical laws . . . but merely *how* it did so. . . .

The Creator belongs to the realm of religion, not scientific investigation.

2. A theistic realist assumes that the universe and all its creatures were brought into existence for a purpose by God. Theistic realists expect this "fact" of creation to have empirical, observable consequences that are different from the consequences one would observe if the universe were the product of nonrational causes. . . . God always has the option of working through regular secondary mechanisms, and we observe such mechanisms frequently. On the other hand, many important questions—including the origin of genetic information and human consciousness—may not be explicable in terms of unintelligent causes, just as a computer or a book cannot be explained that way.<sup>12</sup>

This superficially reasonable opposition between (what he defines as) naturalism and "theistic realism" became the hallmark of Johnson's persuasive technique with legally, philosophically, and scientifically lay audiences. Now that the metaphysical terrain of ID was mapped, Johnson and his allies needed a formal strategy for executing the mission of toppling "naturalism" from its pedestal in Western culture, and necessarily thereby, of putting modern science in its proper (in their view) place. By 1996, the most crucial of preliminary developments had been achieved: the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture was established under the auspices of the Discovery Institute (DI), a conservative Seattle think tank that had itself been established in 1990.<sup>13</sup> The Wedge had found a home. In its summer 1996 *Journal*, "a periodic publication that keeps DI members and friends up to date on Discovery's programs and events," the Institute announced the CRSC's formation, which "grew

out of last summer's [1995] 'Death of Materialism' conference."<sup>14</sup> According to DI president Bruce Chapman, "The conference pointed the way and helped us mobilize support to attack the scientific argument for the 20th century's ideology of materialism and the host of social 'isms' that attend it." (That list of social "isms" includes, of course, everything that religious conservatives see as evil in contemporary culture and in the modern world.) Larry Witham's December 1999 *Washington Times* column reveals the CRSC's topmost position on the roster of its parent organization's priorities:

The eight-year-old Discovery Institute is a Seattle think tank where research in transportation, military reform, economics and the environment often takes on the easygoing tenor of its Northwest hometown. But it also sponsors a group of academics in science affectionately called 'the wedge.' . . . The wedge is part of the institute's four-year-old Center for Renewal of Science and Culture (CRSC), a research, publishing and conference program that challenges what it calls an anti-religious bias in science and science education. "I would say it's our No. 1 project," said Bruce Chapman, Discovery's president and founder.<sup>15</sup>

With formation of the CRSC, the Wedge's core working group was in place: Stephen Meyer and John G. West, Jr., as co-directors; William Dembski, Michael Behe, Jonathan Wells, and Paul Nelson as 1996–1997 full-time research fellows; and Phillip Johnson as advisor.<sup>16</sup> Once the movement was securely housed within DI, execution of the Wedge strategy began to pick up speed. In November 1996, Johnson and his associates convened the "Mere Creation" conference at Biola University in California.<sup>17</sup> The importance of this conference for the subsequent development of the Wedge cannot be overestimated. Indeed, in the foreword to the book issued from it, its importance was made explicit by Henry Schaefer, a Georgia chemist and a signer of the Ad Hoc Origins letter, who had defended Phillip Johnson against the destructive analysis in *Scientific American* of *Darwin on Trial*: "An unprecedented intellectual event occurred in Los Angeles on November 14–17, 1996. Under the sponsorship of Christian Leadership Ministries, Biola University hosted a major research conference bringing together scientists and scholars who reject naturalism as an adequate framework for doing science and who seek a common vision of creation united under the rubric of intelligent design."<sup>18</sup> (Christian Leadership Ministries, the "Faculty Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, International," has continued actively to assist the Wedge, both logistically and by way of its provision of "virtual" office space to Wedge members on its "Leadership University" website.)<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, Dr. Schaefer's description of the Mere Creation conference as "a major research conference" was either simple hyperbole or wishful thinking. It did *not* in fact produce any original, peer-reviewed scientific research.<sup>20</sup> It did, however, yield a badly needed and eventually very effective public relations strategy. The movement's goal at this con-

ference was already clear to third-party observers such as Scott Swanson, who wrote about the conference for *Christianity Today*:

The fledgling “intelligent-design” movement, which says Darwinian explanation of human origins are inadequate, is aiming to shift from the margins to the mainstream. . . . The first major gathering of intelligent-design proponents took place in November at Biola University in La Mirada, California.<sup>21</sup> . . . If the turnout at the conference is any indication, intelligent design is gaining a following. More than 160 academics, double what organizers had envisioned, attended from 98 universities, colleges, and organizations. The majority represented secular universities.<sup>22</sup>

Although, according to Swanson, the organizers “chose not to use the conference as a forum to develop a statement of belief for the movement,” he learned that “leaders are planning a spring conference at the University of Texas and have begun publishing a journal, *Origins and Design*, edited by Paul Nelson.” This “spring conference” materialized as the “Naturalism, Theism, and the Scientific Enterprise” meeting, held at UT in February 1997 and organized by CRSC fellow Robert Koons, a philosopher and UT faculty member.<sup>23</sup> With a core of supporters who had now been able to convene and strategize, the Wedge’s remarkably short embryonic period was over: “Prior to the [Biola] conference, the intelligent-design movement was a loose coalition of academics from a wide variety of disciplines. The conference brought together like-minded people, potential activists, ‘to get them thinking in the same range of questions,’ says . . . Phillip Johnson.”<sup>24</sup>

William Dembski edited a book of conference presentations entitled *Mere Creation: Science, Faith and Intelligent Design* (such books, like the conferences themselves, being a centrally important component of the Wedge strategy). Henry Schaefer wrote its foreword, in which he revealed that the Wedge strategy had now solidified in important ways, as indicated by the adoption of very specific goals for disseminating the Wedge’s message “both at the highest level and at the popular level”:

Preparing a book for publication, with chapters drawn from the conference papers (this goal has been met with the publication of the present volume);

Planning a major origins conference at a large university to engage scientific naturalists;

Outlining a research program to encourage the next generation of scholars to work on theories beyond the confines of naturalism;

Exploring the need for establishing fellowship programs, and encouraging joint research (Seattle’s Discovery Institute is the key player here . . . );

Providing resources for the new journal *Origins & Design* as an ongoing forum and a first-rate interdisciplinary journal with contributions by conference participants (see [www.arn.org/arn](http://www.arn.org/arn));

Preparing information usable in the campus environment of a modern university, such as expanding a World Wide Web origins site . . . and exploring video and other means of communication.

Schaefer also lists the members of the steering committee for the conference:

Michael Behe  
Walter Bradley  
William Dembski  
Phillip Johnson  
Sherwood Lingenfelter  
Stephen Meyer  
J. P. Moreland  
Paul Nelson  
Pattle Pun  
John Mark Reynolds  
Henry F. Schaefer III  
Jeffrey Schloss<sup>25</sup>

The activities Schaefer lists in his foreword prefigure most of the activities now being carried out, and the steering committee metamorphosed into some of the Wedge's most active members. In fact, *all steering committee members except Johnson, who is the CRSC's advisor, and Sherwood Lingenfelter, Biola University provost who hosted the conference, have become CRSC fellows.*

By 1997, Johnson was talking publicly about the Wedge strategy in his book *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (dedicated "To Roberta and Howard [Ahmanson], who understood 'the wedge' because they love the Truth").<sup>26</sup> Johnson devotes chapter 6 to "The Wedge: A Strategy for Truth," calling on the familiar metaphor of a splitting wedge employed to widen a small crack, which can then split a huge log: "We call our strategy 'the wedge.' A log is a seeming solid object, but a wedge can eventually split it by penetrating a crack and gradually widening the split. In this case the ideology of scientific materialism is the apparently solid log."<sup>27</sup> Johnson's 1998 book *Objections Sustained: Subversive Essays on Evolution, Law and Culture*, is dedicated "To the members of the Wedge, present and future."<sup>28</sup> One of his recent books is *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (InterVarsity Press, 2000).

Of course, without money, a multifaceted and determined strategy like the Wedge would have been no more than a pipe dream. The money was forthcoming, however. CRSC was soon funded quite generously by benefactors, the most munificent of whom is Howard Ahmanson (through his organization, Fieldstead and Company). Ahmanson's award, along with that of the Stewardship Foundation, is acknowledged in DI's announcement of the CRSC's establishment in its August 1996 *Journal*:

For over a century, Western science has been influenced by the idea that God is either dead or irrelevant. Two foundations recently awarded Discovery Institute

nearly a million dollars in grants to examine and confront this materialist bias in science, law, and the humanities. The grants will be used to establish the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture at Discovery, which will award research fellowships to scholars, hold conferences, and disseminate research findings among opinionmakers and the general public. . . . Crucial, start-up funding has come from Fieldstead & Company, and the Stewardship Foundation which also awarded a grant.<sup>29</sup>

Financial security—money in the bank, with which to get things done—having been assured for the Wedge, at least for a number of years, the CRSC could now proceed: it could focus its resources and its undivided attention on strategic planning and implementation on behalf of its ultimate purpose—to divest contemporary natural science of its intellectual legitimacy and public respect and to replace it, insofar as circumstances allow and wherever possible, especially in education, with a rigorously God-centered view of creation, including a new “science” based solidly in theism.

# 2

## The Wedge Document: A Design for Design

*Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies.*

"The Wedge Strategy," a.k.a.

"The Wedge Document"

Although Phillip Johnson has talked openly about the Wedge strategy, he has not elaborated publicly all of its detail and logistics. The whole plan is exceedingly ambitious. The full particulars can be found in a paper that surfaced on the Internet in March 1999 and has come to be known as the "Wedge Document." This is a five-year plan (1999–2003) for the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture, although it also represents goals stretching into the next twenty years. The CRSC obviously takes its Wedge strategy as a long-term commitment. Entitled "The Wedge Strategy," with the name of the organization, "Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture," beneath the title, this document elucidates current activities of the CRSC, as well as the intentions and hopes for the future that underlie them. It is important in three respects: (1) it confirms the existence of a formal strategy, (2) it provides insight into how the Wedge views its program, and (3) it provides a way to measure



the Wedge's advance. Although no longer recent news among those who follow the creationism issue, the document remains an informal reference point in discussions of the Wedge. Therefore, in light of the remarkable political (not scientific) successes its adherents have already achieved, its provenance, contents, and style are worthy of close examination. That is our purpose in this chapter.

Although the Wedge Document's history and function as the original plan of operations for the Wedge program have never explicitly been acknowledged by the Discovery Institute, the case for its authenticity seems unshakable to all who have examined it and who are familiar with the rhetoric issuing from the CRSC before and after the document's appearance. It is obviously of the first importance for our account of the Wedge that its authenticity be established, even though major sections of it are used in more recent and clearly official statements of its promoters. (In fall 2002, DI belatedly admitted owning the document—a year *after* publication of an article by one of us citing identical wording on an early DI website.) Beyond the usual reasons for establishing the genuineness of such a document, there is another, rather unusual one: since it surfaced on the Web, the Wedge Document's explanations of what it presents as the depraved and moribund condition of Western culture, especially through the twentieth century and now into the twenty-first, might be taken by people acquainted with the hyperbole of the extreme Religious Right for an elaborate spoof—a sophomoric parody of the moral thunderbolts periodically flung by creationists and other religious zealots. “Biological evolution,” according to one such formulation, is the trunk of a tree of evil that bears the foliage of “philosophical evolution,” which in turn produces the rotten fruits of secularism, crime, dirty books, “homosex,” relativism, drugs, sex education, communism, genetic engineering, abortion, hard rock, inflation, and others.<sup>1</sup> One might therefore interpret as deliberate comic excess the Wedge Document's announcement that one of the CRSC's tasks is to “brief policymakers” (e.g., members of the U.S. Congress) on the “opportunities for life after materialism”—if it were not utterly clear that this offer is not meant in jest. There is no evidence of a sense of humor *anywhere* within the Wedge.

In the Wedge Document, all the world's evil is traced to “materialism”; and the most insidious of all the materialist forces, indeed the source of them all, is taken without hesitation to be “Darwinism,” along with such other science as might support it or call into question the accepted truths of religious doctrine. Sadly, the Wedge Document is not a joke. It is taken with utmost seriousness by its authors, and it is meant to encourage and cultivate the financial and political support needed to sustain an ambitious, expensive, and relentless attack on evolutionary science. Here and elsewhere in the book, we quote from it selectively.

Judging from statements in the document, it was written about 1998, as indicated by several examples:

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). . . .

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. . . .

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.”<sup>2</sup>

Verification of the quoted dates helps not only to date the document but to establish its authenticity. A number of facts ascertained independently of the document are consistent with its contents. The copyright date of the book *Mere Creation: Science, Faith & Intelligent Design* is 1998.<sup>3</sup> The book *Maker of Heaven and Earth: Three Views of the Creation-Evolution Controversy*, by Reynolds and Moreland, was published by Zondervan in March 1999.<sup>4</sup> The TechnoPolitics broadcasts referred to aired on November 15 and December 19, 1997, as listed on the creationist website, Access Research Network.<sup>5</sup> In addition, DI president Bruce Chapman recently acknowledged using the document for fundraising in 1998, but immediately added a nonsensical hedge: “I don’t disagree with it. . . . but it’s not our program.”<sup>6</sup> Whatever he may mean here, our study points to the Wedge Document as a precise reflection of DI’s program.

Beyond such consistency of dates, two kinds of information add to the bona fides of the original Wedge Document: correspondence between Jay Wesley Richards, program director of CRSC, and James Still of the Secular Web; and comparison of the Wedge Document’s language and concepts with those today employed regularly and emphatically on the website of the CRSC.

## Correspondence with Jay Wesley Richards

According to James Still, former editor of the Secular Web, the Wedge Document surfaced on the Internet on March 3, 1999.<sup>7</sup> When he and others became aware of it and its contents, Still made contact with Richards. Richards’s responses to Still’s inquiries (as related by Still) leave little doubt of its genuineness:

I remember when the Wedge paper first started making its rounds on the Internet at the beginning of March 1999. People were speculating about its authenticity, what it might mean, and whether the wedge strategy should be taken seriously. So I wrote a story on it for the Secular Web and asked Jay Richards, the CRSC’s Director of Program Development, whether or not the paper was indeed authored by the CRSC. He didn’t want to confirm its authenticity

outright, of course, but he admitted that it was an “older, summary overview of the ‘Wedge’ program.” Out of politeness I didn’t press him on it. For the rest of the conversation, we both treated it as authentic and he was kind enough to explain in great detail the policy behind the three phases outlined within it. If anyone doubts whether or not the paper represents the true position of the CRSC, all that person has to do is visit the CRSC’s website where large portions of the paper are reprinted for all to read.<sup>8</sup>

Still’s recollection is confirmed in an e-mail he received from Richards after he sent Richards the web address to the article. In this message, Richards simply thanked Still for quoting him accurately, acknowledged that scientific naturalists would disagree with CRSC’s program, and for the sake of scientific progress expressed his wish for honest debate rather than personal attacks.<sup>9</sup> Richards answered Still’s questions in a way that reveals his recognition of the document itself: “When asked if he worried that Phase II [of the Document: “Publicity & Opinion-making”] will seem like a heavy-handed spin and that no one will take seriously the work accomplished in Phase I [“Scientific Research, Writing & Publicity”], Richards said that the publicity will not drive the scholarship but that the scholarship will come first and foremost.”<sup>10</sup>

Richards’s reply to Still is as significant for what he does not say as for what he does: he does not disavow the authenticity of the Wedge Document or of any of its contents. His e-mail message to Still after reading Still’s article on the Secular Web was the second opportunity Richards had to disavow the document. He had every chance to declare it a fabrication if indeed it was that, but he did not on either occasion. Indeed, Richards makes no critical comments at all. Moreover, the Wedge Document, along with Still’s article about it, had been posted on the Secular Web, as well as the American Humanist Association website, since early 1999 without protest from the CRSC or any individual member of it. Kansas Citizens for Science, a group formed in 1999 to counteract creationist activities in Kansas, has even used the Wedge Document as a flier in its activities to inform the public of the existence and nature of the Wedge.

Still recounts Richards’s comments in his Secular Web article: “The white paper created quite a buzz among many skeptics after it was widely circulated on the Internet. However, CRSC Senior Fellow and Director of Program Development Jay Richards said that the mission statement and goals had been posted on the CRSC’s web site since 1996.”<sup>11</sup> Richards’s characterization of the document as an older summary may indicate that the document written in 1998 is an updated version of an earlier prospectus for the CRSC’s program, since Still recalls that Richards had made some connection between the document and a 1996 press release.<sup>12</sup>

There is independent support for the 1998 document’s being an updated version. In the February/March 1998 *SBC* (Southern Baptist Con-

vention) *Life* (before the document surfaced on the Internet in 1999), Hal Ostrander, an ardent Wedge supporter, outlines “the wedge strategy of the design theorists.” He refers to four rather than three phases:

The first part is that of research and publicity—where leading scholars are enlisted for the cause, where trailblazing books are written and published, and where considerable attention is drawn to these matters in the scholarly and popular press. . . . The second part of the program is that of recruitment and alliance building. In this stage the next wave of theistic scholars begins their cutting-edge work. . . . The third part is that of academic breakout conferences. At this point the firestorm debates begin. . . . The fourth and final part of the program has a great deal to do with the popular media—where educational video projects, high school textbooks, public TV documentaries, and educational materials for various religious communities become the order of the day.<sup>13</sup>

Ostrander says that implementation of the Wedge strategy is “slated for 1996 through 2001,” indicating that there indeed was an earlier version of the 1998 document, which would have been first drawn up for implementation by the CRSC at its founding in 1996.

The August 1996 issue of Discovery Institute *Journal* announces the establishment of the CRSC as a new arm of the institute:

For over a century, Western science has been influenced by the idea that God is either dead or irrelevant. Two foundations recently awarded Discovery Institute nearly a million dollars in grants to examine and confront this materialistic bias in science, law, and the humanities. The grants will be used to establish the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture at Discovery, which will award research fellowships to scholars, hold conferences, and disseminate research findings among opinion makers and the general public.<sup>14</sup>

The CRSC website became accessible early in 1996.<sup>15</sup> Richards’s remarks are strong evidence that the Wedge Document is genuine. And, although these separate considerations suggest that it does represent an older version of their program, it is abundantly clear that the Wedge Document’s contents are anything but outdated in the view of its promoters. Virtually the entire plan—with the striking exception of the “scientific research” on intelligent design offered as the key to the rest of the program—is in full execution as we write.

## Comparison of Language and Concepts

James Still’s comment that large portions of the Wedge Document were on CRSC’s website is correct. The case for the authenticity of the Wedge Document as the original plan could be made entirely by inspection of the CRSC’s official announcements of goals, objectives, and strategies. The most convincing evidence for the Wedge Document’s authenticity

therefore comes from the CRSC website, on pages that contain verbatim wording from the circulated online document and on other pages with similar wording and identical concepts. Many such pages appear to be early ones, dating from the CRSC's establishment, and are no longer accessible on the site. The most important of these pages was entitled "What is The Center for the Renewal of Science & Culture All About?" When found, this page was not directly retrievable from the main CRSC website; it was stored in a directory that was then, but is no longer, accessible. This early page in its entirety is virtually identical to the introduction of the online Wedge Document and confirms the latter's authenticity. An excerpt from this early page is sufficient illustration:

The proposition that human beings are created in the image of God is one of the bedrock principles on which Western civilization was built. . . .

Debunking the traditional conceptions of both God and man, thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud portrayed human beings . . . as animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by chance 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. . . .

Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its damning cultural legacies.<sup>16</sup>

An excerpt follows from the online Wedge Document's introduction; with the exception of a few words, it is the same as the CRSC's early web page:

The proposition that human beings are created in the image of God is one of the bedrock principles on which Western civilization was built. . . .

Debunking the traditional conceptions of both God and man, thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud portrayed humans . . . 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. . . .

Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies.

Readers may view the entire Wedge Document directly; it is online at both <http://www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/idt/wedge.html> and <http://www.antievolution.org/features/wedge.html>. In short, the introduction to the online Wedge Document and the entire early page from the CRSC website itself ("What is The Center for the Renewal of Science & Culture All About?") are the same, with only insignificant changes. But there is more authenticating evidence that predates the Wedge Document itself.

In summer 1995, the DI sponsored a "Death of Materialism" conference, out of which the CRSC was born.<sup>17</sup> John G. West, Jr. (now associ-

ate director of the CRSC) delivered an address entitled “The Death of Materialism and the Renewal of Culture,” in which his opening paragraphs are identical to the online version of the Wedge Document’s introduction, save for roughly a dozen words as shown in this excerpt:

The proposition that human beings are created in the image of God is one of the bedrock principles on which Western civilization was built. . . .

Debunking the traditional conceptions of both God and man, thinkers such as Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud portrayed human beings . . . as animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by chance 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.<sup>18</sup>

Listed on one of CRSC’s now-inaccessible web pages, West was one of its first research fellows (1996–1997).<sup>19</sup>

Beyond the evidence predating the Wedge Document, there are plentiful contemporary traces of its existence and continued operation. For example, the spring/winter 1998 Discovery Institute *Journal*, DI’s annual report, contains an unsigned article that restates all the major arguments in the Wedge Document’s introduction:

1. The harmful effects of “scientific materialism” on “politics, medicine, the welfare system, law, and the arts”;
2. CRSC’s goal of undermining “scientific materialism”;
3. CRSC’s desire to “bring about *nothing less than a scientific and cultural revolution.*” (emphasis added)

The similarities are also obvious in the opening statements of the *Journal* article:

During the past century, human beings have been treated increasingly as the products of their genes and their environment. The cultural consequences of this scientific materialism can be seen in virtually every area of human endeavor, including politics, medicine, the welfare system, law, and the arts. . . . Discovery Institute’s Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture is devoted to the overthrow of scientific materialism. . . . [T]he Center hopes to bring about nothing less than a scientific and cultural revolution.<sup>20</sup>

A brochure entitled “Exploring a Designed Universe” that was available on the CRSC site in pdf also contains wording identical to the introduction of the Wedge Document. This brochure appears to have been produced no earlier than September 1998, since it advertises William Dembski’s book *The Design Inference*, also published in 1998.<sup>21</sup>

The CRSC continues to repeat the assertions on which the Wedge Document stands. The most striking current evidence for authenticity of the original Wedge Document is the similarity between its language and concepts and the language and concepts used regularly on CRSC’s web-

site today, specifically, on the key page “Life After Materialism?”<sup>22</sup> The following are some of these similarities:

Wedge Document

Thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud portrayed humans . . . 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 center awards fellowships for original research, holds conferences, and briefs policymakers about the opportunities for life after materialism.

CRSC: “Life After Materialism?”

Marx, Freud, and Dewey . . . portrayed humans . . . as mere animals or machines controlled by impersonal forces of biochemistry and environment.

This materialistic conception . . . infected almost every area of Western thought and culture . . . politics and law . . . literature and personal mores.

Can there be life after materialism?

The genuineness of the Wedge Document as a statement of the Wedge’s strategy is therefore not a matter of speculation. Yet, even if it were not the authentic foundational document, the astonishing increase of CRSC activities enunciating and claiming to implement that document’s stated principles demonstrate the existence of a well-orchestrated strategy for inserting intelligent design creationism into the American cultural mainstream and for securing to it a permanent, and if possible, dominant, place throughout American education. Today, with its program of action spelled out in the Wedge Document and the official, published successors to it, and with ample funding secured, the Wedge is at work and gaining power, despite occasional setbacks. Having begun with only four research fellows, the CRSC as of early 2003 consists of at least forty-three fellows, fourteen of whom have senior status. Phillip Johnson is still the advisor, along with George Gilder.<sup>23</sup> Their pursuit of the Wedge’s goals continues largely, if not entirely, unopposed by seriously organized political effort and certainly undeterred, even welcomed, by those who share the Wedge’s broader political and religious aims. The Wedge is now making excellent progress even in the halls of Congress—we present evidence later.

The Wedge-forced split in the log of “materialist” science and culture

widened with the establishment, in October 1999, of the Michael Polanyi Center at Baylor University, although that center no longer bears the original name and has been absorbed into Baylor's Institute for Faith and Learning. The eventual destiny of that part of the Wedge's agenda embodied in the Polanyi Center—of which much more later—remains to be determined. But with the DI having provided the CRSC, and therefore the Wedge, a proper, functional home, it has grown in a very few years from infancy to robust adolescence and is racing toward adulthood.