

Matt and Tiffany take it upon themselves to find out more, meeting with Paul Down, an art professor and industrial designer.



**Discussion Leader:** Dr. Stan Hudson was a geology major at the University of California at Riverside before becoming a Christian. He then shifted his studies to theology, eventually earning a Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. Today he combines both interests, co-hosting the weekly radio program "Sink the Beagle," a light-hearted approach to creationism and evolution issues. He currently pastors two churches in the university towns of Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington.

Today we examine one of the alternate model's strongest evidences – design. Matt, Tiffany and Paul traveled to South Bend, Indiana. There they met up with a professor of industrial design, Paul Down. Professor Down showed them around his department and some of the projects his design students were engaged in.

## 1 QUESTION:

Matt and Tiffany asked him where ideas came from and he mentioned that he got many from looking at the natural world. The one area he seemed especially impressed with was what?

### ANSWER:

Nature is much better at recycling than mankind is. The natural world seems to use everything well with very little real waste.



## 2 QUESTION:

Theologian John Baldwin brought up biochemist Michael Behe's famous model for intelligent design called "irreducible complexity." See glossary terms for a definition. In particular, Dr. Baldwin used Behe's mousetrap illustration. How could a mouse trap ever have evolved through natural selection he wondered. Why would natural selection (Darwin's theory) perhaps fall short in explaining a mouse trap?

### ANSWER:

Because a "half-mouse trap" would not have advantages that would favor its selection over other critters. If anything, non-functioning parts would be a hindrance, lessening the chances for selection.

## DEFINITION:

**IRREDUCIBLE COMPLEXITY**—An argument put forth by biologist Michael Behe ("Darwin's Black Box") in support of Intelligent Design. To use Behe's own definition, "a single system which is composed of several well-matched interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning." Arguing against the assumption of Darwin's natural selection that only traits that help a species survive are passed to future generations, he wonders how complex systems developed their necessary components, since individually those components would not be advantageous for survival. Examples of irreducibly complex systems from Behe are blood clotting and the cilium.

**DEFINITION:**

**INTELLIGENT DESIGN**—The proposition that certain features of the universe and of living things are better explained as having originated by an intelligent designer rather than through unguided natural processes. The Seattle-based Discovery Institute has been active in promoting this as worthy of inclusion in science curricula in public schools. However, the science community has been aggressive and largely successful in stifling attempts to challenge materialism, despite the public's favoring such inclusiveness. The term is often shortened to "I. D."



**4 QUESTION:**

Paul Down said his design students came up with ideas based upon their own encounters with things in a desire to make those things work better. After time Down said he could recognize the student designers' works by their style. Assuming an artistic and creative God, what might we be able to tell about Him from His designs in nature?

**ANSWER:**

Lots of possibilities here...a Lover of beauty, color, complexity; Someone able to see how systems interact and depend upon each other; a Lover of variety, precision; how about Someone with a sense of humor (pandas, platypuses, porcupines)? Above all, one could see Someone who tries to care for every need of every creature.

**3 QUESTION:**

Dr. Baldwin also suggested that the human body might have similar "irreducibly complex" bio-machines. Behe certainly thinks so. What was his famous book entitled, which represented the first time in recent years a mainstream scientist attacked materialistic evolution?

**ANSWER:**

"Darwin's Black Box." It was published in 1996.

**5 QUESTION:**

Microbiologist Tim Standish mentioned an incredibly complex protein named Endothelin 1. It has the responsibility of constricting blood vessels so injured animals might not bleed to death. Should it do its job too well, no blood would flow. Should it not constrict vessels enough, well, you get the idea. How could such an organic compound develop through mutation and natural selection before any effects would be beneficial to the host organism (getting the rate of blood flow just so, with no mistakes!)?

**ANSWER:**

This is Michael Behe's basic argument...there is no reason for a mutation that is not a completely advantageous feature to be passed on to descendants. And that was the belief of Darwin—natural selection would tend to favor only useful mutations.

**6 QUESTION:**

Dr. Standish added that "we can recognize intelligence when we see information, even though we might not understand that information" just yet. What principle of "intelligent design" is this illustrating?

**ANSWER:**

Remember, naturalism says that through lots of time and chance anything is possible. But is everything we see "likely" to have just happened? An example would be when we might hike through a desert and see a stack of flat rocks. We might see that the rocks' organization suggests someone placed them that way; what would be the chances for them to be there through natural processes ("luck")? So, *organization suggests intelligence.*



**DEFINITION:**

**THERMODYNAMICS, SECOND LAW OF**—In plain English, the movement of the universe towards disorder (even energy distribution). That means things have a tendency to break down, not to organize themselves (the ability to organize is a key requirement for evolution at all levels). Popular physicist Stephen Hawking described it using an example from “time:” you can see a coffee cup break, and indeed many are breaking around the world...but none are reforming.

**7 QUESTION:**

Designer Paul Down also pointed out that even should there be evolution, it would have to be driven by intelligence, to support what he sees in nature. Design is not “happenstance,” he said. He used an example from everyday life. What was it?

**ANSWER:**

A spoon has evolved over time, but the design was improved by human intelligence. Design always suggests a Designer.

**8 QUESTION:**

Tim Standish pointed out that natural processes tend to wear things down. Why is this important to note?

**ANSWER:**

For evolution to have happened from the Big Bang onward nature would have to go from disorganization to organization through chance. Instead, we see in the natural world a tendency towards decay. See the glossary of terms for the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

**9 QUESTION:**

Again designer Paul Down noted that nature is “many times more complex” than the things that man has made. What could we learn from that?

**ANSWER:**

If it takes lots of creative juices and experiments to make simple things (human things), why would complex things happen without creative juices and experiments?

**10 QUESTION:**

What example did Dr. Standish use from his own observations of the effectiveness of Endothelin 1?

**ANSWER:**

He saw a man whose leg had just been blown off by a land mine. The Endothelin 1 had done its job well; the man didn’t bleed to death.

**11 QUESTION:**

A frustrated designer, Professor Down, complained how hard it was to design something that worked at all; the complexity of nature’s systems that seem to work so very well in interrelated ways was to him the epitome of...what?

**ANSWER:**

Design, of course! Maybe we should listen to those whose career leads them to spend thousands of hours in trying to design things and systems to work, and to work well. It ain’t easy!

**12 QUESTION:**

Author Cliff Goldstein ended the program with an awesome illustration: “the anthropic principle.” This comes from the Greek word for humanity: *anthropos*. He said that some scientists are now more and more convinced our universe seems almost “made for man.” The old idea of that “simply throwing the dice long enough” would get us all of what we see is beginning to lose its appeal. Is the universe “made for man?”

**ANSWER:**

That might be a bit strong, even for creationists! It certainly was made for man, animals, angels, *all* life forms, creationists would say. And it was made as a place where God could have fellowship with His creatures. The Bible records that God’s original creation was designed with everything “good.”