

## **Even if Wesley is Right (and he's not), the Darwinist Misinformation Train is Still Chugging Strong**

**By Casey Luskin**

**September 9, 2005**

Firstly, I'd like to thank Wesley Elsberry for writing a more-or-less gentle and kindly worded response to my "Darwinist Misinformation Train" article on [antievolution.org](http://antievolution.org). I'd also like to say that on a personal level, I have met Wesley and I think he's a nice guy with some very interesting hobbies. Wesley is the only guy I've ever met who owns a bird of prey and takes it hunting. Some might call that eccentric, but I think that's kinda cool. Anyways, I think Wesley is a decent person who has a passionate desire to see the truth made known. I don't always agree with him on what the truth is, but I'd like to compliment him because I think that even though we arrive at different conclusions, if I know understand him properly, then I know our hearts are coming from similar places.

Anyways, Wesley used nearly the precise title I was expecting from the first Darwinist responder. As far as his arguments go, however, they are weak and his collection of quotes do not make anything resembling a case against the nature of ID theory. I am well aware that there are ID proponents who have talked about the designer as being "God" and am fully capable of dealing with these quotes. But before I slice and slash at Wesley's arguments (which I mostly reject), for the sake of argument, I'd like to accept his contentions and see where that leaves the Darwinist Misinformation Train.

### **A Trip Down the *Ad Arguendo*<sup>1</sup> Train Track:**

For the sake of argument only, I will pretend to accept Wesley's arguments that ID proponents have said that the designer must be supernatural, and then I will see where that leaves the Darwinist Misinformation Train. Here is my main point:

***Even if Wesley were right and there were a few instances where ID proponents claim ID theory identifies the designer as God, Darwinists always fail to inform the public of the many (if not an overwhelming majority of) instances where ID proponents make it excruciatingly clear that the designer cannot be identified by ID theory. Darwinists are thus still misrepresenting ID theory to the public because they make statements indicating that ID theory universally identifies the designer as God.***

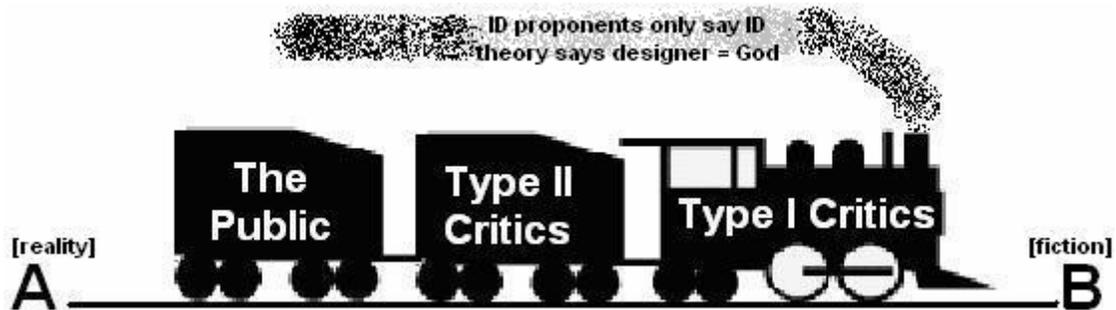
So, if we accept Wesley's contention *ad arguendo* that ID theory identifies the designer as God, the Misinformation Train purposefully ignores many statements by leading ID theorists where they make it clear that the designer cannot be identified. If Wesley is right, and ID theory really can identify the designer as supernatural, then shouldn't the

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<sup>1</sup> To argue "ad arguendo" is to accept some conclusions but only for the sake of argument – not because the conclusions are actually valid. Here, I accept Wesley's conclusions for the sake of argument to see if there is still misinformation coming from the Darwinist camp.

Train still stop claiming that the ID theory uniformly says the designer is supernatural? In Wesley's world, shouldn't the Train at least identify the alleged diversity of thought about what ID theory says about the designer?

Thus, while I do not concede that any ID scientist talking about biological design has ever claimed that the designer must be a supernatural deity, even if Wesley's contentions as correct, then the Darwinist Misinformation Train is still chugging along at full speed because it often never tells people that many (if not most) leading ID proponents claim the designer cannot be identified. So even if we accept Wesley's tenuous arguments, the misinformation coming from many in the Darwinist camp is still as follows:



Even if Wesley is right, the unqualified claim that ID theory generally identifies the designer as supernatural God is still a falsity. Yet clearly there are many ID proponents who have consistently said that the theory itself cannot identify the designer. But these statements are ignored by Darwinists who state that ID unequivocally identifies the designer as the supernatural God. This falsity is widely promoted and is exceedingly effective for stirring up opposition to ID in the public realm.

### **Assessing Wesley's Arguments:**

Now let's get off this fantastical train and examine the strength of Wesley's actual arguments:

Firstly, Wesley makes a bizarre argument that I think that only one entity can be postulated for the designer: God. I think Wesley has completely misunderstood my argument or he's making a very twisted and tenuous stretch which, quite frankly, failed.

In the segment of my original post which Wesley uses to justify his claim, all I was saying is that it is contradictory that sometimes people criticize design for not identifying the designer, and then sometimes people criticize design for identifying the designer. If Wesley wants to spin this into some twisted argument where I am somehow incapable of imagining identities for the designer other than God, so be it. But it isn't me who sometimes argues that the designer must be God under ID theory—it is the Darwinists I quoted to make a completely separate point. So, apparently these Darwinists are the ones with the problem Wesley attributes to me. I don't have that problem. I fully recognize that it is possible that under biological ID theory that the designer could have a variety of identities other than God. I believe that the designer is God (for reasons other than ID

theory) but I recognize that it is fully possible to be an ID proponent and have other ideas about the designer's identity. Besides, if I could only imagine one identity for the designer, then why would I approvingly quote Behe where Behe lists angels and aliens as potential candidates for the designer? If I thought that ID theory mandated that the designer be God, then why would I take the time to write this very long post arguing that ID theory can't identify the designer, as well as other articles on this same subject? Wesley's bizarre and very stretched argument completely fails.

Wesley then criticizes me because I list only 3 short quotes from ID proponents to claim that ID theory doesn't identify the designer. Does Wesley want more? Fine, here are 4 more from the 2 leading ID theorists (there are another 2 more quotes from *Of Pandas and People* given later on in this response):

"One of the worries about intelligent design is that it will jettison much of what is accepted in science, and that an "ID-based curriculum" will look very different from current science curricula. Although intelligent design has radical implications for science, I submit that it does not have nearly as radical implications for science education. First off, intelligent design is not a form of anti-evolutionism. ***Intelligent design does not claim that living things came together suddenly in their present form through the efforts of a supernatural creator. Intelligent design is not and never will be a doctrine of creation.***" (William Dembski, *No Free Lunch*, pg. 314, emphasis added)

"The conclusion that something was designed can be made quite independently of knowledge of the designer. As a matter of procedure, the design must first be apprehended before there can be any further question about the designer. The inference to design can be held with all the firmness that is possible in this world, without knowing anything about the designer." (Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, pg. 197)

"ID is not an interventionist theory. Its only commitment is that the design in the world be empirically detectable. All the design could therefore have emerged through a cosmic evolutionary process that started with the Big Bang. What's more, the designer need not be a deity. It could be an extraterrestrial or a telic process inherent in the universe. ID has no doctrine of creation. Scott and Branch at best could argue that many of the ID proponents are religious believers in a deity, but that has no bearing on the content of the theory. ***As for being "vague" about what happened and when, that is utterly misleading. ID claims that many naturalistic evolutionary scenarios (like the origin of life) are unsupported by evidence and that we simply do not know the answer at this time to what happened. This is not a matter of being vague but rather of not pretending to knowledge that we don't have.***"(William Dembski, [Commentary on Eugenie Scott and Glenn Branch's "Guest Viewpoint: Intelligent design' Not Accepted by Most Scientists](#), emphasis added)

"The most important difference [between modern intelligent design theory and Paley's arguments] is that [intelligent design] is limited to design itself; I strongly emphasize that it is not an argument for the existence of a benevolent God, as Paley's was. I hasten to add that I myself do believe in a benevolent God, and I recognize that philosophy and theology may be able to extend the argument. ***But a scientific argument for design in biology does not reach that far.*** This while I argue for design, the question of the identity of the designer is left open. Possible candidates for the role of designer include: the God of Christianity; an angel--fallen or not; Plato's demi-urge; some mystical new age force; space aliens from Alpha Centauri; time travelers; or some utterly unknown intelligent being. Of course, some of these possibilities may seem more plausible than others based on information from fields other than science. Nonetheless, as regards the identity of the designer, modern ID theory happily echoes Isaac Newton's phrase *hypothesis non fingo*. (Michael Behe, "The Modern Intelligent Design Hypothesis," *Philosophia Christi*, Series 2, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2001), pg. 165, emphasis added)

Wesley then seems to imply that I left off the "master intellect" part of the ACLU quote because I was afraid of it. In fact, sparse usage of the phrase "master intellect" in no way implies that the textbook *Of Pandas and People* identifies the designer as a supernatural God. I addressed this issue about 8 months ago at "<http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1288>". The bottom line is that the phrase "master intellect" comes from *Of Pandas and People*, where, if we interpret the phrase in the context of the whole book, we find that the textbook also makes it clear that ID theory can't identify the designer as supernatural:

"If science is based upon experience, then science tells us the message encoded in DNA must have originated from an intelligent cause. ***But what kind of intelligent agent was it? On its own, science cannot answer this question; it must leave it to religion and philosophy.*** But that should not prevent science from acknowledging evidences for an intelligent cause origin wherever they may exist. This is no different, really, than if we discovered life did result from natural causes. ***We still would not know, from science, if the natural cause was all that was involved, or if the ultimate explanation was beyond nature, and using the natural cause.***" (*Pandas*, pg. 7, emphasis added)

and:

"The idea that life had an intelligent source is hardly unique to Christian fundamentalism. Advocates of design have included not only Christians and other religious theists, but pantheists, Greek and Enlightenment philosophers and now include many modern scientists who describe themselves as religiously agnostic. Moreover, the concept of design implies absolutely nothing about beliefs and normally associated with Christian fundamentalism, such as a young earth, a global flood, or even

the existence of the Christian God. All it implies is that life had an intelligent source." (*Pandas*, pg. 161)

Taking these quotes at face value, we must accept that the designer need not be supernatural. Once we incorporate that correct context into our thinking, it is clear that there are many grammatically correct ways to understand the meaning of the phrase "master intellect" other than identifying the designer as supernatural God. See my response to the ACLU if you want more details (<http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1288>).

Finally, there's a much more troubling implication here. Wesley accuses me of refusing to discuss evidence that ID proponents have identified the designer as God. This couldn't be further from the truth, as I fully acknowledged in my original post that many ID proponents do identify the designer as God, and explained that this does not mean that *ID theory* is what is postulating the designer is God. Here's what I originally said:

"For example, William Dembski, who in the above quote makes it ultra-clear that ID theory can't identify the designer, is also clear elsewhere that he believes the designer is indeed God. In fact, when Dembski talks about the identity of the designer, he is often misquoted (the "Logos quote" comes to mind) by reporters and Darwinists who try to twist Dembski's words into saying that it is ID theory which says the designer is God. This is unfortunate because Dembski makes it clear that he does not derive his beliefs about the identity of the designer from ID theory. Rather, when he identifies the designer, he does so not from ID theory, but from out of his own Christian religious faith.

Darwinists who think that they can misconstrue ID as if it identifies the designer as God simply because they can point to the beliefs of some ID proponents, are using a specious argument. To be accurate and truthful, one has to accept the way ID has been formulated by its proponents. And given the above quotes, there is little doubt as to how ID theory actually works: it can't identify the designer."

For this reason, I GET A HUGE KICK OUT OF THE QUOTE that Wesley takes from Dembski's talk before a *Sunday School* class where Dembski identifies the designer as God. Wesley thus makes the a very good illustration of the common mistake I highlighted in my original post: confusing the religious beliefs of ID proponents with the way they have formulated ID theory.

If you want to see the gem of a quote that Wesley dug up (went to church and audiotaped?) from Dembski, here it is:

"But there are deeper motivations. I mean, I I think, at a fundamental level, and this is, you know, this is I think, you know, in terms of what drives me in this, is that I am, uh, you know, I I think, I think God's glory is being robbed by these naturalistic approaches to biological evolution,

creation, the origin of the the world, the origin of biological complexity and diversity, uh, when you're attributing these, you know, the wonder of nature to these mindless material mechanisms God's glory is getting robbed.” (William A. Dembski, Sunday School talk, 2004/03/07.)

Wesley’s usage of this quote against Dembski is the equivalent of getting mad because a biologist mentioned the name of Darwin to his biology class. Of course Dembski will identify the designer as God in this quote: he’s speaking in a church! But in this quote, Dembski *in no way claims that ID theory teaches that the designer is God*. Dembski makes it clear that he has philosophical issues with how naturalism rules out the possibility, *a priori*, that God (or any intelligence) acted in the history of life, but Dembski also makes it ultra clear, even when writing before Christian audiences, that the data, not theological questions, is what makes his critique of Darwinism possible:

“The design theorists’ critique of Darwinism begins with Darwinism’s failure as an empirically adequate scientific theory, not with its supposed incompatibility with some system of religious belief. This point is vital to keep in mind in assessing intelligent design’s contribution to the creation - evolution controversy. Critiques of Darwinism by creationists have tended to conflate science and theology, making it unclear whether Darwinism fails strictly as a scientific theory or whether it must be rejected because it is theologically unacceptable. Design theorists refuse to make this a Bible-science controversy. Their critique of Darwinism is not based upon any supposed incompatibility between Christian revelation and Darwinism.”<sup>2</sup>

But this discussion of motivations, etc., is 100% irrelevant to the question at hand: does ID theory identify the designer as the supernatural God? Regardless of Dembski’s motivations, Wesley’s superstar “Sunday School Quote” says absolutely nothing about how ID theory deals with the identity of the designer, so his usage of the quote is totally irrelevant to our current discussion about whether or not ID theory identifies the designer. Sorry Wesley, but all the Sunday School Quote is good for is making ID proponents laugh. And I can tell you that my office-mates got a great laugh after reading Dembski’s apparently incriminating “Sunday School” quote.

This takes care of both Wesley’s William Dembski “Sunday School quote” where, surprise surprise, Dembski identifies the designer as God. (If Wesley is right, then I suppose that when ID proponents talk to kids in Sunday School, they have to pretend they don’t know who the designer is. I happen to have spoken in churches myself, and I have

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<sup>2</sup> William Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology*, (InterVarsity Press, 1999) pg. 112; keep in mind that Dembski here is writing a religiously oriented book for a religious audience, lest there be any conspiracy theories that Dembski changes his tune when speaking before religious audiences.

always made it very clear that while I believe the designer is God, that belief does not come from ID theory.)

Now let's deal with some of Wesley's other quotes:

“Phillip Johnson, a senior fellow at the Institute, stated last year on a Christian radio talk show that "Our strategy has been to change the subject a bit, so that we can get the issue of intelligent design, which really means the reality of God, before the academic world and into the schools."

I dismiss this quote as having anything to do with the scientific theory of ID because Phillip Johnson is not a scientist and has done very little work which actually formulates the technical theory of intelligent design. If I want to understand ID theory, especially as it would be taught in schools, I do not turn to Johnson. I turn to the scientists and techies who have formulated ID theory itself. Most of that has been done by Behe, Dembski, and Meyer (who all are agree that ID theory can't identify the designer). What I find when I turn to Dembski, who has done much of the foundational work behind the scientific theory of ID, is that ID doesn't threaten to bring religion into the science classroom:

"One of the worries about intelligent design is that it will jettison much of what is accepted in science, and that an "ID-based curriculum" will look very different from current science curricula. Although intelligent design has radical implications for science, I submit that it does not have nearly as radical implications for science education. First off, intelligent design is not a form of anti-evolutionism. ***Intelligent design does not claim that living things came together suddenly in their present form through the efforts of a supernatural creator. Intelligent design is not and never will be a doctrine of creation.***" (William Dembski, *No Free Lunch*, pg. 314, emphasis added)

Some work formulating ID theory has also been done by an innovative philosopher Wesley quotes named Del Ratzch. Quoth Wesley:

“Second, design could be built protohistorically into the very fabric of nature and nature's operations. For instance, a fine-tuning of natural constants for some specific purpose would involve a design not introduced into nature but a designing of nature itself. This second broad category, involving as it does the giving of definition even to what nature is, is obviously an option only for supernatural agents.” (Del Ratzsch, *Mere Creation*, p.290)

At this point I want to say something else nice about Wesley Elsberry. We once went to lunch and we had a very enjoyable conversation and I felt like he was an incredibly nice and interesting guy. This is despite the fact that at times in the past I faced Wesley's shocking wrath in a response he once wrote to me on the internet (which resulted in numerous Darwinists sending me sympathetic e-mails—and ultimately resulted in some

great internet friendships between me and these kind, consoling Darwinists). Today, I won't go there, because I am not interested in taking down people's personalities, and the I typically don't like to play the "quote-accusation" game. But let's look at what the philosopher Ratzch is really saying in this article Wesley quotes from when we take the whole of the context:

“Design, whatever its source, can be located, introduced, initiated, implemented or exhibited in only a limited number of logical arenas. The relevant ones fall into two broad categories. First, design can be introduced into the historical course of and against the background of an already existing nature by humans, aliens, other finite beings, or God. Watches, for instance, embody design that humans introduce into the history of the cosmos and that are not natural manifestations in history of some built-in cosmic design. Second, design could be built protohistorically into the very fabric of nature and nature's operations. For instance, a fine-tuning of natural constants for some specific purpose would involve a design not introduced into nature but a designing of nature itself. This second broad category, even to what that nature is, is obviously only an option for supernatural agents.” (Del Ratzch, *Design, Chance & Theistic Evolution, Mere Creation*. Pg. 290).

When reading the whole paragraph from which the quote was taken, it is seen that Ratzch is completely consistent with Behe and others who see design being invocable in a variety of contexts, where often the options for the designer can range from aliens to humans, etc., and even to God. So Wesley seems to have left off the portion of the quote where Ratzch makes it clear that in many instances (i.e. presumably, biological design), the designer could have a variety of different identities—which are not supernatural. Thus, at the very least, this quote doesn't count against biological design identifying the designer as supernatural.

Ratzch does go further and say cosmic design of the entire universe requires an entity outside of the natural universe (i.e. “supernatural”). And while the universe does exhibit cosmic design, what I've been thinking about in this discussion is biological origins, because that is where the bulk of Behe and Dembski's design arguments have focused. So I'm going to leave the debate about “whether or not identifying the designer of the physical constants of the universe as outside-the-universe is unscientific” to the philosophers of science. Today, I'm talking about what is at stake in Dover, in the controversy over Darwin's theory of evolution, and in all the newspaper articles I cited in my original post: biological design. And when it comes to biological design, Wesley's quote from Ratzch doesn't make a dent in my arguments that the designer need not be supernatural.

Finally, Wesley enlists the infamous “Logos quote” by Dembski. Wesley provided no page number for this quote so I had to dig it up—it is from page 192 of *Signs of Intelligence* in an article written by William Dembski. Wesley cites this quote as if it should surprise me or as if I was ignoring it. In fact, I mentioned this very “Logos quote” in my original post because it is so often cited by Darwinists as proof that ID theory

identifies the designer as God. Wesley tries to paint a picture of me as being “Orwellian” (which dictionary.com defines as “Of, relating to, or evocative of the works of George Orwell, especially the satirical novel *1984*, which depicts a futuristic totalitarian state;” so I’m not sure how the term applies here), but my suspicion is that he’s trying to imply I’m trying to change people’s vocabulary about ID. If his accusation is that I’m trying to change people’s vocabulary, then yes, he’s right: I’m trying to change the way Type I and Type II Darwinists discuss ID because they are misrepresenting it. In any case, I’ve written extensively about the Logos quote in the past (see <http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1261>, <http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1162>, and <http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1163>) so let there be no invented charges that I ignore counter-arguments that supposedly don’t fit my thesis. Again, let’s look at the context of this Logos quote:

The quote Wesley has taken from Dembski is from a section of his article entitled “Design, Metaphysics, and Beyond.” Thus, in this section, Dembski isn’t making any sort of scientific argument, but rather from the very heading we know immediately that he’s talking about design in the broader context of metaphysics (“and Beyond”)—he’s not giving a scientific account of ID theory.

Additionally, keep in mind that Dembski’s article in *Signs of Intelligence* being quoted was originally written for a Christian magazine, (*Touchstone*), written for a Christian audience, talking about the implications of intelligent design theory within the context of the Christian faith. Such a context is perfectly consistent with the aim and goal of *Touchstone Magazine*:

"Touchstone is a Christian journal, conservative in doctrine and eclectic in content, with editors and readers from each of the three great divisions of Christendom--Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox. The mission of the journal and of its publishers, the Fellowship of St. James, is to provide a place where Christians of various backgrounds can speak with one another on the basis of shared belief in the fundamental doctrines of the faith as revealed in the holy Scripture and as summarized in the ancient creeds of the Church." (*Touchstone Magazine*, description of purpose on page 3, July/August, 1999.)

Writing in such a context, it makes sense for Dembski to give his interpretation of the religious and theological meaning of intelligent design for his own Christian faith. After all, Dembski is a theologian with an M-Div from one of the most prestigious seminaries in the U.S. (Princeton). Perhaps that's why this quote comes at the very end of an article about ID in a section entitled “Design, Metaphysics, & Beyond.” Clearly, in this section, Dembski is looking at design in a much broader context than its mere scientific implications. The proof of this lies in the 2 paragraphs preceding the infamous Logos quote:

“The primary challenge, once the broader implications of design for science have been worked out, is therefore to develop a relational ontology

in which the problem of being resolves thus: to be is to be in communion, and to be in communion is to transmit and receive information. Such an ontology will not only safeguard science and leave adequate breathing space for design, but will also make sense of the world as sacrament.” (Dembski, Signs of Intelligence, pg. 191)

Now at this point, I have to admit that I don't have a strong technical background in theology and I'm sure I don't grasp the full implications of what Dembski is saying here. But I can see 3 reasons that make me feel this quote is not trying to claim that ID theory identifies the designer as God:

- 1) Dembski makes it clear from both the heading of this section and other passages that he is talking about design in the context of its meaning beyond science. That is, he's interpreting design within a pre-existing metaphysical framework—not expounding upon the necessary scientific implications of ID.
- 2) Dembski is talking about how design can have one function in science (where it can be empirically detected, and as we know from other quotes by Dembski, the designer can't be scientifically identified) versus another function in metaphysics.
- 3) For Dembski, this leaves “adequate breathing space for design in science.” I think this makes it clear that Dembski is not trying to put metaphysics into science.

Since we know that Dembski is ultra clear in other contexts that the designer can't be identified using scientific methods (see the quotes from him just below), I think that it's safe to say that in this quote, Dembski is not claiming that the designer can be identified as the “Logos theology of John's gospel” from the scientific theory of ID alone.

So Dembski, who has advanced degrees not just in mathematics but also in philosophy and theology, is speaking as a philosopher and theologian and interpreting the meaning of design in a metaphysical context. It's clear that whatever Dembski says here is not meant to be taken as the scientific implications of ID. It's meant to be taken from the perspective of someone who is assuming some metaphysical reality and interpreting intelligent design within the context of that metaphysic. This is akin to what Dembski does in his book “Intelligent Design” where he notes that at that point in the book, his aim “is to use divine creation as a lens for understanding intelligent agency generally.” If there are any doubts about Dembski's methodology, we can see that Dembski explains exactly what he means when he interprets a scientific theory through a lens:

“Typically when a lens is used to examine something, the lens is independent of the thing being examined. Thus, when I look at a scene through binoculars, the scene itself need not contain any binoculars.” (Intelligent Design, pg. 207)

Dembski is not arguing that a supernatural creator, the Christian doctrine of divine creation, nor Jesus Christ as creator are conclusions of ID theory. Rather, they serve as the context, or “lens,” through which Dembski is interpreting ID. Dembski's apparently incriminating statements that ID is the “Logos theology of John's gospel” is simply his

interpretation of the meaning of ID theory within the context of Dembski's Christian religious faith. These could not be scientific conclusions of ID theory, unless Dembski were to explicitly contradict himself in numerous other venues:

“One of the worries about intelligent design is that it will jettison much of what is accepted in science, and that an “ID-based curriculum” will look very different from current science curricula. Although intelligent design has radical implications for science, I submit that it does not have nearly as radical implications for science education. First off, intelligent design is not a form of anti-evolutionism. *Intelligent design does not claim that living things came together suddenly in their present form through the efforts of a supernatural creator. Intelligent design is not and never will be a doctrine of creation.*” (Dembski, *No Free Lunch*, page 314 (emphasis added)).

“Intelligent design is modest in what it attributes to the designing intelligence responsible for the specified complexity in nature. For instance, design theorists recognize that the nature, moral character and purposes of this intelligence lie beyond the competence of science and must be left to religion and philosophy.” (Dembski, *The Design Revolution*, pg. 42)

"ID is not an interventionist theory. Its only commitment is that the design in the world be empirically detectable. All the design could therefore have emerged through a cosmic evolutionary process that started with the Big Bang. What's more, the designer need not be a deity. It could be an extraterrestrial or a telic process inherent in the universe. ID has no doctrine of creation. Scott and Branch at best could argue that many of the ID proponents are religious believers in a deity, but that has no bearing on the content of the theory. ***As for being “vague” about what happened and when, that is utterly misleading. ID claims that many naturalistic evolutionary scenarios (like the origin of life) are unsupported by evidence and that we simply do not know the answer at this time to what happened. This is not a matter of being vague but rather of not pretending to knowledge that we don't have.***"(William Dembski, *Commentary on Eugenie Scott and Glenn Branch's "Guest Viewpoint: 'Intelligent design' Not Accepted by Most Scientists*, emphasis added)

So, if we take Dembski seriously when he writes, then we have to realize that in the “Logos” quote, Dembski is not giving a scientific formulation of ID theory but is merely explaining the meaning of ID theory within the context of his Christian faith. Given that Dembski is also a trained theologian, it should come as no surprise that he is engaging in this completely legitimate undertaking.

Some people have made the charge that Dembski changes his tune about how ID works when speaking before religious audiences. Keep in mind that this same Dembski who identified the designer as God when speaking before a church has also written in books

published by Christian publishers, for Christian audiences, that intelligent design theory is not a theological enterprise:

“I submit that the preoccupation by critics with theology results not from intelligent design being inherently theological. Instead, it results from critics having built their own theology (or anti-theology), as the case may be) on a foundation of Darwinism. Intelligent design challenges that foundation, so critics reflexively assume that intelligent design must be inherently theological and have a theological agenda. Freud, if it were not for his own virulent Darwinism, would have instantly seen this as a projection. Critics of intelligent design resort to a classic defense mechanism: they project onto intelligent design the very thing that intelligent design unmasks in their own views, namely, that Darwinism, especially as it has been taken up by today’s intellectual elite, has itself become a project in theology.” (William Dembski, *The Design Revolution*, pg. 46, InterVarsity Press)

So much for any claims that Dembski is trying to appeal to Christians by making ID theory say the designer is God in one context. He’s pretty clear before Christian audiences how ID theory works. That’s why in this same book by the very Christian publisher, InterVarsity Press, Dembski writes:

“Intelligent Design is a strictly scientific theory devoid of religious commitments. Whereas the creator underlying scientific creationism conforms to a strict, literalist interpretation of the Bible, the designer underlying intelligent design need not even be a deity. To be sure, the designer is compatible with the creator-God of the world’s major monotheistic religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. But the designer is also compatible with the watchmaker-God of the deists, the Demiurge of Plato’s *Timaeus* and the divine reason (i.e. logos spermatikos) of the ancient Stoics. One can even take an agnostic view about the designer, treating specified complexity as a brute fact inherently unexplained in terms of chance and necessity.” (William Dembski, *The Design Revolution*, pg. 44, InterVarsity Press)

It sounds like Dembski keeps the same tune whether speaking to secular, or religious audiences.

**In the interests of accuracy, context, and truth, I think it would be admirable if Wesley Elsberry would add each of the 6 above quotes (in green) from William Dembski to the Wiki from which he gleaned his other quotes.**

(Wesley simply cited the Wedge Document as if it speaks for itself, so I’ll just cite Discovery’s Wedge Document Response because it speaks for itself:  
<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2101>)

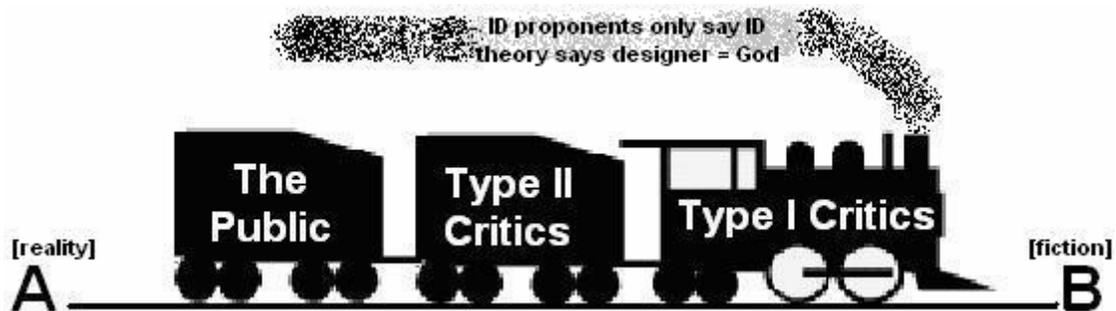
Additionally, Wesley does not address this argument I made in my post:

“(Besides, if the critics are right and ID theory mandates that the designer is God, then what about those ID sympathizers who aren’t religious—like the agnostic philosopher Antony Flew?)”

I think this is a crucial point, because even if Wesley is correct, and there is diversity of thought among ID scientists about how ID theory deals with the designer question, then that diversity ought to be recognized by Darwinists. As it stands, the Misinformation Train does not even recognize *diversity* but represent ID to the public as if ID PROponents UNIFORMLY ARGUE THAT ID POSTULATES THAT THE DESIGNER IS THE SUPERNATURAL GOD. Given the many quotes counter to that false thesis, it is clear that *at the very least*, there is a strong contingency in the ID community who have made it unequivocal that ID theory cannot identify the designer. I reject Wesley’s contention that any ID scientists see ID theory identifying the designer of the flagellum as the supernatural God. But if Darwinists are going to play Wesley’s tenuous tune, they need to at least recognize that many (if not most) ID proponents claim that ID theory cannot identify the designer. Until then, the Darwinist Misinformation Train is still chugging ahead at full speed.

In other words, Darwinists are still misleading people when they only quote the Logos Quote, the Sunday School quote, and the non-scientist Phil Johnson on some Christian radio station identifying the designer as God, because they don’t tell people that there is a whole lot of unambiguous quotes from leading ID scientists explicitly formulating the theory such that it cannot identify the designer as God.

I reiterate the current state of the train, even if we accept Wesley’s arguments about whether or not ID theory identifies the designer:



Why is the train chugging along so happily? Because by taking a few quotes out of context (“Logos quote”, the Ratzch quote, and the Sunday School quote, and quotes from non-ID-theorists like Johnson), one can conveniently neglect a slew of other quotes (often by the same people) making it ultra clear that ID cannot identify the designer. This permits the benefits Darwinists enjoy by misconstruing ID as an appeal to the supernatural (discussed in my original post).

**Conclusion:**

This whole situation reminds me of what Phillip Quinn recommended for Darwinists when fighting scientific creationists of the 1980's:

“It seems to me that the attempts by creationists to foist their particular brand of dreadful science on public school curricula are pernicious. We should resist such attempts and resist them *effectively* in the political realm. But some of the creationists who are making such attempts are, to put it not too harshly, shysters. So there may well be circumstances in which only the *bad effective argument* will work against them in the political or legal arenas. If there are, then I think, though I come to this conclusion reluctantly, it is morally permissible for us to use the *bad effective argument*, provided we continue to have qualms of conscience about getting our hands soiled. But I also believe we must be very careful not to allow ourselves to slide all the way down the slippery slope to intellectual corruption. Perhaps, if we divide up the labor so that no one among us has to resort to the *bad effective* argument too frequently, we can succeed in resisting *effectively* without paying too high a price in terms of moral corruption. (Quinn P.L., "Creationism, Methodology, and Politics," in Ruse M., ed., "But is it Science?: The Philosophical Question in the Creation/Evolution Controversy," Prometheus Books: Amherst NY, reprint: 1996, pp.398-399, emphasis added: note the Machiavellian emphasis on using the “*bad effective argument*” even if it rests on questionable grounds.)

Perhaps Type I and Type II Darwinists can live with themselves because their claim is so *effective*. But I think I know enough about Wesley Elsberry to know he's the type of person who desires to see the truth known, so I hope that even if he thinks there are some ID proponents who say ID theory says the designer is God, he will acknowledge that the mainstream formulation of ID theory by ID proponents makes it explicitly clear that the designer cannot be identified by ID theory. Until these corrections are made, the Darwinist Misinformation Train will keep chugging strong. Given Wesley's desire for truth, I hope he will do the right thing and urge other Darwinists to accurately represent intelligent design theory. Along these lines, I think it would be admirable for Wesley to add the green Dembski quotes I have provided here in this document, discussing how ID theory itself does not identify the designer, to the [Wiki](#).

Thanks for reading.