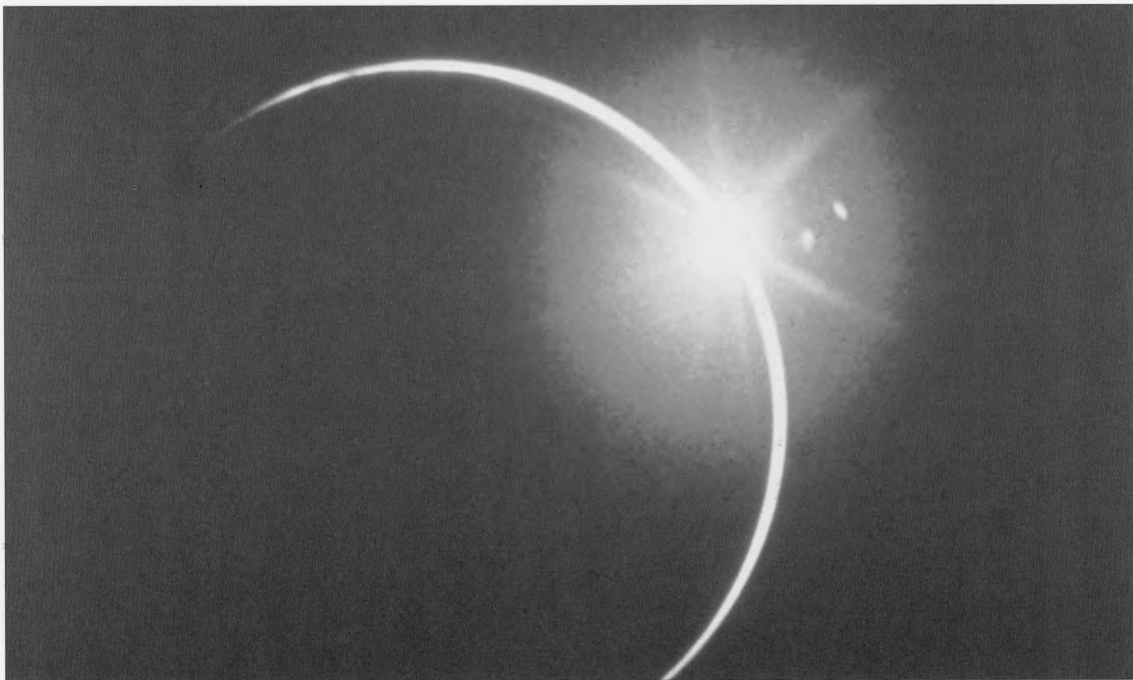


Discussed: public schools, religious liberty, *Adventist Review*, prisons, kinetics,  
hypocrisy, children, responsibility

# Good Religion, Bad Science

*By Andrew Hoehn*

**A**dventism by and large supports the idea that intelligent design is a viable scientific theory. Furthermore, many Adventists support the cause that intelligent design be taught in public school. But these Adventists fail to see that intelligent design requires religious belief, and that teaching any religious belief in public schools erodes our own religious liberties.



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The *Adventist Review* has not been outspoken on the topic of intelligent design, but the few articles and editorials it has published on the topic have been in support of intelligent design as scientific fact. One of *Christianity Today's* books of the year this year was the *Case for a Creator*, an apologetic for intelligent design. The idea that our creationist religious principles have scientific backing has caught hold of the Christian consciousness.

Intelligent design in its most simple form is the belief that the universe is too complex a thing to have happened by evolutionary principles, and therefore must have been created by a designer. Although this agrees with the religious perspectives of Christians, and in fact

field of study are too complex for us to understand and must be attributed to a god. There's no reason that those scientists couldn't hold intelligent design as a religious view, but they should never let it guide their scientific inquiry. Intelligent design is good religion, but bad science.

Although believing in intelligent design is in no way harmful to the average individual, the danger of intelligent design comes when it is held as pure science; for then religion disguised as science can be taught in public schools.

Here is an area in which Adventist history should serve us well. We have a long tradition of demonizing the political efforts of the Catholic Church, marking

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most religions, there is very little support for this idea in the scientific community at large.

In December, U.S. District Judge John E. Jones III agreed that intelligent design is based on religious belief. He ruled that the Dover Pennsylvania School District should not be allowed to teach intelligent design in its schools.

It makes sense for Christians to believe in intelligent design on a religious level. We may not be sure exactly where God came into the creation process—if he spoke the world into being in six literal days about six thousand years ago, or if he was involved much earlier in the process—and we should be comfortable believing that.

From a scientific perspective, if the argument for intelligent design was attributed to other areas of science, the conclusions would be laughable.

A medical researcher would never say "the prions that cause mad cow disease are too complex to understand, so they must have been created miraculously." A chemist would never decide that because some enzymes exhibit inexplicable faster-than-diffusion kinetics, they must be moved by the hand of a god. A zoologist would never decide that a lemur's capacity for jumping is the result of the supernatural.

In that same vein, scientists trying to discover the origins of life should never decide that parts of their

Sunday laws as one of the signs of the times, and generally defending ourselves from any governmental practice that infringes on our religious liberties. But we forget about rendering unto Caesar when it comes to the Ten Commandments in courthouses, nativities on the lawn of city hall, or creationism in schools.

It is hypocritical for us to pick and choose the religious liberties that we support. Either the government can propagate religious belief, or it can't. It is our responsibility to support the separation of religion and government whether or not we agree with the religious views being offered by the government. In doing so, we leave ourselves with the responsibility of the religious education of our children, and free ourselves from the obligation of government-enforced religious practices.

Adventists should not be fighting to put intelligent design in schools. We should instead be fighting to keep religion in our own hands, and out of the government's.

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This article first appeared in the January 5, 2006, issue of the Walla Walla College student newspaper, the *Collegian*.

What  
scripture has  
to say about  
the natural  
world is  
always said  
for the  
purpose of  
teaching  
right relations  
with God  
and with the  
community.

Evolutionary  
biology per se  
does not  
need God, but  
theologians  
interpret the  
evolutionary  
process as a  
manifestation of  
divine creativity.

Science tells us  
about series of  
physical events  
and the laws  
that explain why  
one thing hap-  
pened rather  
than another.  
The doctrine of  
creation explains  
why the whole  
process takes  
place at all. In  
addition, it tells  
us what God's  
purposes are for  
it and that it is  
essentially good.

