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Darwinists and Doubters — The Central Issue

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The New York Times is out again with (yet another) major article on the controversy over evolutionary theory and Intelligent Design. Today's article, "In Explaining Life's Complexity, Darwinists and Doubters Clash," by Kenneth Chang, sets this issue this way: *At the heart of the debate over intelligent design is this question: Can a scientific explanation of the history of life include the actions of an unseen higher being? The proponents of intelligent design, a school of thought that some have argued should be taught alongside evolution in the nation's schools, say that the complexity and diversity of life go beyond what evolution can explain.*

The article goes on to insist that many proponents of evolution do believe in God. As the reporter explains, *That does not mean that scientists do not believe in God. Many do. But they see science as an effort to find out how the material world works, with nothing to say about why we are here or how we should live.*

At this point I simply have to respond as a theologian. That statement reveals the most basic issue at stake in this debate. Understanding the world and understanding "why we are here" and "how we should live" are unavoidably related to each other. Just ask those who are self-consciously working out an "evolutionary view of life." The Christian doctrine of creation claims that the order and structure of the universe are determined by the biblical answers to the questions of "why we are here" and "how we should live."

I do not doubt that some proponents of evolution believe in some form of deity. But I do not see how an honest proponent of the dominant model of evolution can believe in the God of the Bible, who intervenes in human history and rules over His creation. I am reminded of Professor Stephen Hawking, author of the best-selling book, *A Brief History of Time*. A defender of evolutionary theory, Hawking famously remarked that if God exists, there is simply nothing for Him to do. For biblical Christians, this is the central and unavoidable issue in the current controversy

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