

# LITERATURE REVIEWS

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## FRIEND OR FOE?

**Beginnings: Are Science and Scripture Partners in the Search for Origins?** Leonard Brand. 2006. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association. 176 p. Paper, \$15.99.

*Reviewed by Jerry Bergman, Ph.D.  
Department of Geology and Chemistry, Northwest State College  
Archbold, Ohio*

*Beginnings* is an excellent brief and balanced summary of the case for creation and the work that still needs to be done in this area. This readable, well-illustrated 176-page book covers major topics ranging from geology to molecular biology. Also covered are a history of the development of modern day Neo-Darwinism, why the origins issue is important, short age chronology models and directions for the future.

Dr. Brand has a Ph.D. from Cornell University in biology, numerous publications in the refereed scientific literature, and 35 years teaching experience at the university level. He honestly looks at both the strengths and weaknesses of both sides, making this book useful for creationists and Darwinists alike. Although Brand takes the creation position, he effectively shows why many people accept Darwinism, a view that he treats with respect, objectively and accurately.

The problem of terminology is handled in chapter one. A critical need exists for a discussion of definitions because terms such as *creation*, *evolution*, *Darwinism* and others related to the controversy are rarely defined, often leading proponents of both sides to talk past each other. The term *creation* once meant the means of producing something, and the term *creationism* a theistic theory of how the natural world was produced. Today it has become a term of derision to refer to a narrow discredited theological view held by those ignorant of the relevant science fields. Brand notes that some creation advocates, to some degree, fit this now-common definition. The solution he proposes is to use the term “interventionists.”

This approach has its advantages, but the media and the Darwinist elite will likely cause this term to become a one of derision as they have done with the terms *intelligent design* and *abrupt appearance theory*. Nonetheless, this chapter will be useful in helping both sides understand the relevant issues.

In Chapter 2, Brand shows how important Darwinism was in the 1800s in overturning the traditional Christian worldview and that much of the resistance to Darwinism was from scientists. For example, it was not until around the 1940s that a majority of biologists accepted Darwin's major contribution to transformationism theory, natural selection (p 21). Brand accurately notes that if Darwin had proposed his naturalistic theory of evolution for the first time today, our understanding of the cell and its working would preclude most scientists from accepting it.

One example of many that effectively illustrates this point is the kinesin system of transporting materials, such as proteins, around the cell to where they are needed. The system must pick up the correct load and transport it to the proper location in the cell. Kinesin transport carriers use two "legs" powered by ATP to "walk" along a cellular highways made up of microtubules. Each kinesin type carries a specific load, like a bus that goes to one location only; to arrive at the correct destination, cellular materials must board the correct "bus." Thus kinesin is both a molecular transportation and an information processing machine.

Major scientific problems with Neo-Darwinism are briefly summarized, as are some of the problems with the interventionist view. Brand explains the strengths and weaknesses of three models (flood geology, holistic geology, and conventional geology), showing much more work is needed in these areas. Brand notes specific problems with the interventionist model, such as the observation that many modern life forms are not found in the Cambrian rock layers while others are found *only* in certain rock strata (p 199). In contrast to the claims of some creationists, much work needs to be done to understand the history of life —and we may never answer all possible questions in this area, even some major ones.

One point that could be clarified is the uncritical use of the term "Dark Ages," a term Francis Schaefer and others claim was invented by anti-religionists in an effort to discredit the Catholic church. Stark (2005, p 35-68) documents the significant progress that was made at this time in many fields, including science. One of the most significant innovations of this time was "the creation of the first economies that depended primarily on nonhuman power" (Stark 2005, p 38).

I highly recommend this book for both neophytes and seasoned researchers, and for both creationists and Darwinists. It could go a long way to facilitate constructive dialogue between both sides. The controversy will not go away and will become more active in the future due to new research, especially in molecular biology. Consequently, some resolution, or at least accommodation, requires constructive dialogue so that each side can at least understand, and, ideally, respect, the position of the other side. Brand's work is a humble approach that avoids unnecessary confrontation which will help to begin much-needed dialogue among the various advocates of the different positions. He also shows that a good case can be made in favor of the Biblical worldview.

### **Literature Cited**

Stark R. 2005. *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*. NY: Random House.