

# Australasian Science

www.control.com.au

**EDITOR/PUBLISHER:** Guy Nolch

**CONSCIENCE EDITOR:** Peter Pockley

**WRITERS:** Stephen Luntz, Peter Pockley,  
Simon Grose

**CARTOONIST:** Simon Kneebone

**COPY EDITORS:** Guy Nolch, Rob Morrison

**PATRONS:** Laureate Professor Peter Doherty,  
Robyn Williams

**AUSTRALASIAN SCIENCE IS PUBLISHED BY**  
Control Publications P/L, Box 2155,  
Wattletree Rd PO, VIC 3145, Australia  
Phone (03) 9500 0015  
Fax (03) 9500 0255

*E-mail* science@control.com.au

*Web* australasianscience.com.au

#### SUBSCRIPTION PRICES

\$64 (individuals) including GST

\$99 (schools) including GST

\$209 (institutions) including GST.

Refer to the subscription form opposite for details.

#### ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Rates and specifications are available from  
australasianscience.com.au

**BACKISSUES** are available for \$8 each  
(incl. GST) from australasianscience.com.au

**PUBLISHED** 10 times per year. The opinions  
expressed in this publication are those of the  
authors and do not necessarily represent those  
of the publisher.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes original articles of  
interest to the general public written by  
qualified writers on fields within their  
expertise. Writers' guidelines are available  
at www.control.com.au under "Contact Us".  
Prospective authors should submit an  
abstract to the Editor prior to submitting a  
manuscript.

© 2005 Control Publications Pty Ltd  
(ABN 46 006 591 304). All rights reserved.  
Authorisation to mechanically or electroni-  
cally copy the contents of this publication is  
granted by the publisher for educational or  
research use only. All other requests to  
reproduce content should be addressed to  
Control Publications Pty Ltd.

Authorisation to mechanically or electroni-  
cally copy the contents of this publication is  
granted by the publisher to users registered  
with Copyright Agency Ltd (CAL). Special  
requests should be addressed to Control  
Publications Pty Ltd.

**Distributed by** Gordon & Gotch Ltd

**Printed by** BPA Print Group, 11 Evans St,  
Burwood, Vic. 3125, Australia.

**Print Post Approved** PP 331379/0032.

ISSN 1442-679X.

\*RRP only \$7.95, including GST.

**F**or thousands of years religions have provided persuasive explanations for the mysteries of the world around us. Who could blame the eskimos for believing that the aurora were spirits dancing in the sky? Or Native Americans that a hurricane like Katrina was the act of a vengeful Thunderbird god?

But scientific knowledge in recent centuries has provided godless explanations for these phenomena, and the gaps in which gods can exist have narrowed. When Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection proposed that humans were descended from apes, it stripped God's pivotal role as the creator of life.

Nevertheless, the creation of Man has remained a central tenet of religious belief even though evidence in support of evolution has continued to grow. Every day scientists witness evolution in the lab when they set up conditions that favour the development of characteristics like insecticide resistance in insects, for example.

While it is not surprising that some fundamentalists are still denying the validity of evolution, it is worrying that their numbers are gaining strength through the rise of the "intelligent design" movement. ID has evolved from the "creation science" movement, which clung fast to a literal interpretation of the biblical account of creation while exploiting uncertainties in scientific evidence for evolution.

ID is a Trojan Horse for creationism. It does not claim that evolution doesn't occur. Rather, it claims that natural selection is God's way of tinkering with his original creation.

ID departs further from science when it claims that complex structures such as the eye could not have evolved if evolution occurs stepwise through a series of random mutations. Instead, ID argues that an "intelligent designer" must have created something as complex as the eye.

ID rests its case here, throwing down the challenge for scientists to provide proof of a stepwise development of the complex eye from a light-sensitive spot. But this is difficult as eyes and light-sensing spots don't fossilise well.

The debate seems to stop here. The scientists return to their labs to mutate some more insects, while ID's followers return to their quest to find God.

But until God reveals Himself they cannot prove that their intelligent designer even exists. Somehow they are absolved of the onus of proof in the debate.

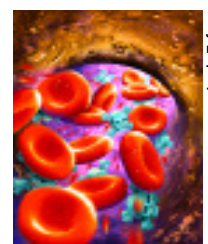
While the central tenet of ID remains unprovable, the movement is still attracting influential supporters. In recent months US President George W. Bush and Australian Science Minister Dr Brendan Nelson have supported the teaching of ID in schools alongside evolution (see p.32).

This is a huge mistake. ID is an article of religious faith. If it is to be taught, it should only be in the context of religion.

If our leaders allow ID to be taught in science classes it will give it unwarranted legitimacy in the impressionable minds of future generations.

## ABOUT THE COVER

**Nanotechnology is the next great frontier of science. Already nanotech products are on the market, with revenue from the industry quadrupling in the past 4 years. However, research has revealed unique health concerns arising from nanoparticles, with authorities now examining whether special regulatory measures are required to oversee the industry (see p.14).**



Jamie Tuffrey