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# SIGNATURE IN THE CELL

DNA AND THE EVIDENCE FOR INTELLIGENT DESIGN

**STEPHEN C. MEYER**

In *Signature in the Cell*, Dr. Stephen Meyer shows that the digital code embedded in DNA points powerfully to a designing intelligence and helps unravel a mystery that Darwin did not address: how did the very first life begin? Follow Dr. Meyer as he investigates how new scientific discoveries are pointing to intelligent design as the best explanation for the complexity of life and the universe.



Stephen C. Meyer is Director and Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. Dr. Meyer earned his Ph.D. in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University for a dissertation on the history of origin of life biology and the methodology of the historical sciences.

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## advance praise for *SIGNATURE IN THE CELL*

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How does an intelligent person become a proponent of intelligent design? Anyone who stereotypes IDers as antiscientific ideologues or fundamentalists should read Dr. Meyer's compelling intellectual memoir. Meyer as a student became fascinated with the "DNA enigma"—how the information to produce life originated—and at considerable risk to his career hasn't given up trying to solve the mystery. Meyer shows how step-by-step he concluded that intelligent design is the most likely explanation of how the DNA code came to be, but he's open to new evidence—and in so doing he challenges defenders of undirected evolution to have the courage to explore new alternatives as well.

— **Dr. Marvin Olasky, provost, The King's College, New York City, and editor-in-chief, *World***

In this engaging narrative, Stephen Meyer demonstrates what I as a chemist have long suspected: undirected chemical processes cannot produce the exquisite complexity of the living cell. Meyer also shows something else: there is compelling positive evidence for intelligent design in the digital code stored in the cell's DNA. A decisive case based upon breathtaking and cutting-edge science.

— **Dr. Philip S. Skell, National Academy of Sciences and Evan Pugh Professor at Pennsylvania State University, emeritus**

In *Signature in the Cell*, Stephen C. Meyer gives us a fascinating exploration of the case for intelligent design theory, woven skillfully around a compelling account of Meyer's own journey. Along the way, Meyer effectively dispels the most pernicious caricatures: that intelligent design is simply warmed-over creationism, the province of deluded fools and morons, or a dangerous political conspiracy. Whether you believe intelligent design is true or false, *Signature in the Cell* is a must-read book.

— **Dr. Scott Turner, Environmental and Forest Biology, State University of New York, and author of *The Tinkerer's Accomplice: How Design Emerges from Life Itself***

Meyer demolishes the materialist superstition at the core of evolutionary biology by exposing its Achilles' heel: its utter blindness to the origins of information. With the recognition that cells function as fast as supercomputers and as fruitfully as so many factories, the case for a mindless cosmos collapses. His refutation of Richard Dawkins will have all the dogs barking and angels singing.

— **George Gilder, author of *Wealth and Poverty* and *Telecosm***

This is a "must read" for all serious students of the origin-of-life debate. Not only is it a comprehensive defense of the theory of intelligent design, it is a lucid and rigorous exposition of the various dimensions of the scientific method. Students of chemistry and biology at all levels—high school, undergraduate, or postgraduate—will find much to challenge their thinking in this book.

— **Alastair Noble, Ph.D. chemistry, former BBC Education Officer and Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools for Science, Scotland**

The origin of life remains one of the great unsolved mysteries of modern science. Looking beyond the biochemistry of the problem and focusing instead on the origin and information content of the "code of life," Meyer has written an eminently readable and engaging account of the quest to solve this mystery. Sharing both his personal history and a retelling of the key scientific discoveries of the last half century from this new and intriguing perspective, he has challenged us to consider an alternative to the standard story of abiogenesis and discover new meaning from our existence. I recommend this book to laypeople and accomplished professionals alike.

— **Edward Peltzer, Ph.D., Ocean Chemistry, Scripps Institution of Oceanography**

*Signature in the Cell* is at once a philosophical history of how information has come to be central to cutting-edge research in biology today and one man's intellectual journey to the conclusion that intelligent design provides the best explanation for that fact. In his own modest and accessible way, Meyer has provided no less than a blueprint for twenty-first-century biological science—one that decisively shifts the discipline's center of gravity from nineteenth-century Darwinian preoccupations with fossils and field studies to the computerized, lab-based molecular genetics that underwrites the increasingly technological turn in the life sciences. After this book, readers will wonder whether anything more than sentimentality lies behind the continued association of Darwin's name with "modern biology."

— **Dr. Steve Fuller, Professor of Sociology of Science, University of Warwick,**  
**and author of *Dissent from Descent***

The astonishing complexities of DNA have raised questions which the ruling scientific orthodoxy cannot begin to answer. As one of the scientists arguing for 'intelligent design' as the crucial missing link in our understanding of how life came to be, Stephen Meyer guides us lucidly through that labyrinth of questions opened by discoveries in molecular biology on the frontier of scientific knowledge.

—**Christopher Booker, *The Sunday Telegraph***

The most substantial of the many outstanding enigmas in our understanding of biology is to explain the source of the genetic information strung out along the Double Helix and how it gives rise to the near infinite diversity of form and attribute of the living world. Dr Meyer's evaluation of the many contending theories in the light of the most recent scientific advances is comprehensive and dispassionate. While his interpretation of the arguments in favour of Intelligent Design may not persuade all, this is a fascinating and intellectually stimulating book.

—**Dr. James Le Fanu, author of *Why Us? How Science Rediscovered the Mystery of Ourselves***

Stephen Meyer shows with brilliant clarity that biological systems contain information whose origin cannot be explained by purely physical forces. He explains the crucial difference between the order within a complex system and the information needed to specify the functions of a complex system. Many engineers have always known that hierarchical systems do not evolve from the bottom-up by chance. Now Meyer has explained why hierarchical biological systems cannot evolve from the bottom-up by chance mutations.

—**Dr. Stuart Burgess, Professor of Design & Nature, Dept of Mechanical Engineering, Bristol University**

This timely and important book is a landmark in the intelligent design debate and one which draws together all relevant research and information. It is elegantly written in a style that is accessible and laced with interesting historical and personal anecdotes. *Signature in the Cell* will pay rich dividends to everyone who turns its pages.

—**Dr. Norman C. Nevin, OBE, BSc, MD, FFPH, FRCPath, FRCP (Edin), FRCP**  
**Emeritus Professor in Medical Genetics, Queen's University, Belfast**

*Signature in the Cell* delivers a superb overview of the surprising and exciting developments that led to our modern understanding of DNA, and its role in cells. Meyer tells the story in a most engaging way. He retained my interest through many areas that would normally have turned me off. He is careful to credit new ideas and discoveries to their originators, even when he disagrees with the uses to which they have been put. The central idea of the book is that the best explanation of the information coded in DNA is that it resulted from intelligent design. Meyer has marshaled a formidable array of evidence from fields as diverse as biochemistry, philosophy and information theory. He deals fairly and thoroughly with even the most controversial aspects and has made a compelling case for his conclusion. The book is a delightful read which will bring enlightenment and enjoyment to every open minded reader.

—**Dr. John C. Walton, School of Chemistry, University of St. Andrews**

Dr. Stephen Meyer has "hit one out of the ballpark" in the debate over intelligent design. His incisive and diligent work will certainly take its place as a major milestone in the quest for the truth about our origins. His engaging talent, insights, and commitment has produced a most readable and disturbingly provocative essential for any serious thinking inquirer.

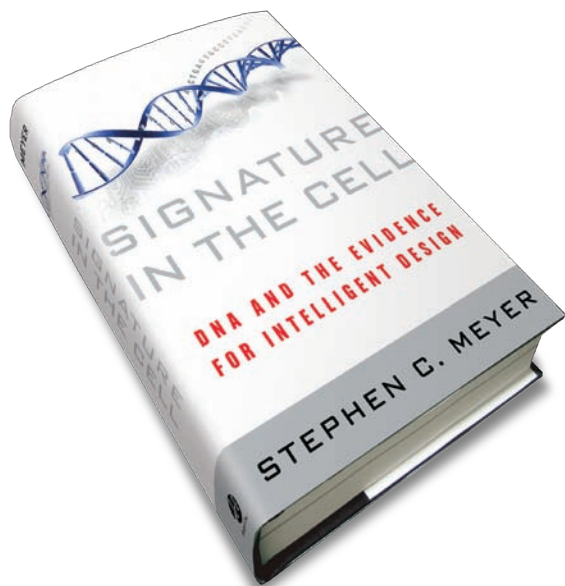
—**Chuck Missler, Founder, Koinonia Institute**

# SIGNATURE IN THE CELL

## DNA AND THE EVIDENCE FOR INTELLIGENT DESIGN

BY **STEPHEN C. MEYER**  
(HARPERONE BOOKS, 2009)

In stores everywhere  
June 23rd



The foundations of scientific materialism are in the process of crumbling. In *Signature in the Cell*, philosopher of science Stephen C. Meyer shows how the digital code in DNA points powerfully to a designing intelligence behind the origin of life. The book will be published on June 23 by HarperOne.

Unlike previous arguments for intelligent design, *Signature in the Cell* presents a radical and comprehensive new case, revealing the evidence not merely of individual features of biological complexity but rather of a fundamental constituent of the universe: information. That evidence has been mounting exponentially in recent years,

known to scientists in specialized fields but largely hidden from public view. A Cambridge University-trained theorist and researcher, director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, Dr. Meyer is the first to bring the relevant data together into a powerful demonstration of the intelligence that stands outside nature and directs the path life has taken.

The universe is comprised of matter, energy, and the information that gives order to matter and energy, thereby bringing life into being. In the cell, information is carried by DNA, which functions like a software program. The signature in the cell is that of the master programmer of life.

In his theory of evolution, Charles Darwin never sought to unravel the mystery of where biological information comes from. For him, the origins of life remained shrouded in impenetrable obscurity. While the digital code in DNA first came to light in the 1950s, it wasn't until later that scientists began to sense the implications behind the exquisitely complex technical system for processing and storing information in the cell. The cell does what any advanced computer operating system can do but with almost inconceivably greater suppleness and efficiency.

Drawing on data from many scientific fields, Stephen Meyer formulates a rigorous argument employing the same method of inferential reasoning that Darwin used. In a thrilling narrative with elements of a detective story as well as a personal quest for truth, Meyer illuminates the mystery that surrounds the origins of DNA. He demonstrates that previous scientific efforts to explain the origins of biological information have all failed, and argues convincingly for intelligent design as the best explanation of life's beginning. In final chapters, he defends ID theory against a range of objections and shows how intelligent design offers fruitful approaches for future scientific research.

# An Interview With Dr. Stephen C. Meyer

author of *Signature in the Cell*

“Meyer demolishes the materialist superstition at the core of evolutionary biology by exposing its Achilles’ heel: its utter blindness to the origins of information. With the recognition that cells function as fast as supercomputers and as fruitfully as so many factories, the case for a mindless cosmos collapses. His refutation of Richard Dawkins will have all the dogs barking and angels singing.”

— George Gilder, author of *Wealth and Poverty* and *Telecosm*

*Q. In your author photo you’re not wearing a white lab coat or holding a test tube or a beaker or anything like that. You’ve written a book about science but are you a real scientist?*

*A.* I’m a philosopher of science with a record of peer-reviewed publications in technical, scientific, philosophical and other books and journals. As a professional scientific theorist, I’ve been studying and writing about the origin of life since I received my PhD at Cambridge University in the field in 1991. There is a widespread misunderstanding that only men in white lab coats can legitimately “do” science. Of course laboratory work is crucial to the advance of science, but the most important scientific discoveries in modern times have been made by researchers who primarily *thought* and *wrote about their thoughts* rather than boiling up stuff in beakers. Darwin himself was primarily a scientific thinker, not a lab scientist. I absolutely love the way he put his case together for unguided evolution. He pioneered the scientific method we now use to formulate a scientific case. In the tradition of Darwin, Watson and Crick, and Einstein, I’ve crafted one long and compelling argument for intelligent design. That’s not meant to sound pretentious, just to point out that the great tradition in science is not limited by any requirement that you spend your days in a lab rather than in an office.

*Q. Haven’t we heard all the evidence for intelligent design? The Cambrian explosion, gaps in the fossil record, something about a bacterium and his tail that resembles an outboard motor, all that?*

*A.* It’s true that many people think they have heard all the evidence for intelligent design, but they certainly have not. The intelligent design community is still in its adolescence. The area of evidence I present has not been presented before except in fragments in rather specialized and forbidding scientific venues. I’ve put that evidence together for the first time. Unlike previous contributors to the field, I present a radical and comprehensive new case, revealing the evidence not merely of individual features of biological complexity but of a fundamental constituent of the universe: information. That evidence has been mounting exponentially in recent years, known to scientists in specialized fields but largely hidden from public view.



Stephen C. Meyer is Director and Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. Dr. Meyer earned his Ph.D. in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University for a dissertation on the history of origin of life biology and the methodology of the historical sciences.

*Q. This year marks Darwin's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday and 150 years since he published the Origin of Species. Did you write your book to coincide with those anniversaries, or could it have been written anytime?*

**A.** It's a happy coincidence for me that my book is appearing in this year of auspicious anniversaries. The truth is, it could not have been written 25 years ago when I was just starting my research on the origin of life. It couldn't have been written 10 years ago. The scientific data was not yet in hand. It had not been collected or sifted. It's only in the past decade that the information age has finally come to biology. We now know that biology at its root is digital code, information. Having advanced to this level of digital technology ourselves, in computer science, we can at last begin to appreciate what is going on inside the cell: the nested coding, digital processing, distributive retrieval and storage systems, the whole operating system in the genome. It's extraordinary. The terminology is the very same that we use in discussing computers. While the digital code in DNA was known by the late 1950s, it wasn't until much later that we began to understand what it all means. You have to look at the whole technical system for processing and storing information in the cell. A computer's operating system tells the computer where to find things, and puts them into a data file. The cell is doing the same thing, but with far, far greater efficiency.

*Q. Does your book have anything to say about the whole New Atheist phenomenon, with best-selling authors like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens going around saying that God doesn't exist, as science proves?*

**A.** My book is very relevant to the New Atheist debate. Richard Dawkins and his followers and publicists base their claim to have "disproven" God's existence largely on their premise that the argument for design in nature has been defeated by Darwinian evolution. But Darwin himself never seriously considered the question of how life arose. He knew nothing about the information encoded in DNA. He knew nothing about DNA. The more science reveals about the degree to which life is information-based, the more we are compelled, if we are honest with ourselves, to conclude that there is strong scientific evidence for design in life's history, and especially in the tremendous mystery of its origin. That simply refutes the foundational premise that underlies the argument made by Dawkins, Hitchens, Dennett, Harris, and the rest of them.

*Q. Why is your book important for readers who haven't followed the whole intricate evolution debate up till now? Isn't this all very arcane and theoretical? What's it got to do with me?*

**A.** It has everything to do with the way we all live our lives today. The issue at hand here is nothing less than the keystone of what many have called the Culture Wars. The moral crisis of our time is one in which adults and young people alike can't explain why some things are right and others are wrong. The whole concept of moral responsibility is under attack. Why are people so confused? Because there is this sneaking suspicion, fostered by 150 years of Darwinian evolutionary thinking, that life snapped into existence unaided and unguided, without purpose or meaning. If that were true, it would mean that our lives are without purpose, our moral beliefs nothing more than meaningless artifacts of an evolutionary process that never had us in mind. If there is a signature in the cell, as I argue, then that opens a space for moral thinking grounded not in sentimentality and wishful thinking but in scientific fact.