

REACTIONS

Readers are invited to comment on the articles in our journal. Please address contributions to: ORIGINS, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, California 92350 USA.

Re: Gibson: Chicken Soup, Self-Organization and the Origin of Life: A Test (ORIGINS 56:3-5).

I read with interest your editorial, “Chicken Soup, Self-organization and the Origin of Life: a Test.” In this exercise you deal with the concept of life and death and molecules in a whimsical manner. This is the consequence of your not defining the difference between life and death on the biochemical level.

You seem to be saying that if molecules had the capacity to come together spontaneously to form a living entity once, then such should happen again and again. In the picture you paint it is the “coming together” of molecules that makes life happen. But the biochemical basis of life is not structural so much as a dynamic non-equilibrium steady state.

In previously published material¹ I describe the case of the *E. coli* cell that was just killed by a drop of toluene. This dead cell still has all of its proteins, nucleic acids, etc., in their perfect organizational state (in “irreducible complexity”, if you will, ala Behe) — the only thing wrong with this cell is that it is also irreducibly dead! Why? Because the breach of the cell’s cytoplasmic membrane resulted in a loss ATP synthesis and all chemical reactions went to equilibrium. That is what death on the cellular level is about.

I describe further how the life of such cell can be restored. Simply reset the non-equilibrium statuses of all reactions. This can be achieved by simultaneously providing the starting materials of all biochemical pathways and preventing the end products from accumulating.

We can have molecules self-assemble until we are blue in the face. Life will never happen no matter how complex and impressive our biological agglomerates are. These biological complexes serve only as the frame, the infra-structure which partitions living matter into compartments, enabling concentration gradients, etc.

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ENDNOTES

1. Javor GT. 1998. Life: an evidence for creation. *Origins* 25:5-48.

Re: Hasel: Recent Developments in Near Eastern Chronology and Radiocarbon Dating (ORIGINS 56:6-31).

The dilemma between C-14 dating and historically based chronology is resolved by a correlation of C-14 ages with the Biblical time scale.¹ A mathematical conversion based on a date for the Flood indicates C-14 ages around the beginning of the third millennium BC are probably about 400 years greater than corresponding real-time ages. Accordingly, C-14 ages favor the younger placement of historical chronology, as treated by Dr. Hasel.

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ENDNOTES

1. Brown RH. 1990. Correlation of C-14 age with the Biblical time scale. *Origins* 17:56-65.