



"VITAL ARTICLES ON SCIENCE/CREATION"

impact

September 2004

Impact #375

SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND THE SUBJECT OF ORIGINS

*by Duane T. Gish

True science is the search for truth. The single most important principle of science education is the one that instructs students to identify assumptions, use critical thinking, make logical deductions, and consider alternative explanations. When any theory becomes dogma, and its proponents seek every device to protect the theory from challenges and seek to ban alternatives, this is poor science, poor education, and a violation of the academic freedom of students and teachers. These considerations are especially important when applied to the teaching of origins, which not only powerfully influences the teaching of biology and other physical sciences, but also philosophy, psychology, history, and religion. Today evolutionists dominate our educational establishment and scientific organizations. Evolution is accepted and promoted by the majority within the mass media—newspapers, radio, television, and magazines. The evolutionary establishment has reacted in a fit of mass hysteria to even the feeblest challenges to its control of public education and the promotion of evolution as an established fact.

The reaction of the evolutionary establishment to the adoption in August of 1999 by the Kansas State Board of Education of new guidelines for teaching science education is a glaring example. The Board, by a 6–4 vote, sought to demote evolution from the preeminent place as the organizing principle of all of biology and its position as unquestioned fact requiring correct answers on certain tests. Predictably, the evolutionary establishment urged evolutionists throughout the U.S. to make known their objections to members of the Kansas State Board of Education and to contact newspapers throughout Kansas. Most of these papers published articles and editorials denouncing the action of the Board, declaring that the State of Kansas was in danger of becoming the laughing stock of the U.S. Many of these articles inferred that evolution was in danger of being eliminated or drastically curtailed in textbooks. As a result, in the next election several of the Board members who voted for the new guidelines were replaced.

*Dr. Duane Gish is Senior Vice President of ICR.

In February 2001, the new State Board of Education voted 7–4 to replace the science guidelines put in place by the previous Board with guidelines that reestablished evolution to its preeminent position. The evolutionary establishment had won. What precisely was the action taken by the earlier Board? Scott Hill, a member of the Board, and one of those who supported the modified guidelines, issued a public statement. In this statement he said:

In a word, the firestorm was about arrogance . . . the fact is a group of close-minded science educators were determined to put in place curricular standards that held up Evolution as the most important concept in all of science. Not only did they suggest a unifying status to evolution, but further suggested the concept transcended science. . . . These narrow-minded drafters ignored input from scores of professional scientists. . . . The State Board did not remove evolution; they did not even deemphasize it. The State Board did not include creationism; they did not even mention it. What the State Board did do was take input from *all* constituents and develop a set of standards based on good, qualifiable science.

Actually, the most obvious criticism of the action taken by the earlier Kansas State Board should have been that it didn't go far enough. Should the teaching about the theory of evolution, along with all of its assumptions and evidence believed to support it, be banned? Absolutely not. To do so would violate the academic and religious freedoms of those who believe in evolution. On the other hand, should teachers and students be encouraged to carefully examine and critically evaluate the assumptions that permeate evolutionary theory? Should teachers and students be allowed, even encouraged, to search out and consider scientific evidence that contradicts the assumptions and claims for the validity of the theory of evolution? Absolutely. To do otherwise is poor science and poor education. Should teachers and students be permitted and encouraged to examine and evaluate the scientific evidence that many thousands of scientists throughout the United States of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, eastern religions, and other persuasions believe provides powerful positive evidence for a theistic, supernatural origin of the universe and its living organisms? Absolutely. To do otherwise places a severe constraint on the search for truth and violates the academic and religious freedoms of those who hold such views.

But didn't the U.S. Supreme Court, in their 1987 ruling on the Louisiana equal time law, which *required* that the scientific evidence for both creation and evolution be taught, declare that teaching scientific evidence that supports creation in public schools violates separation of church and state and is unconstitutional? Absolutely not. The Supreme Court ruled that the Louisiana law which *required* that evidence for both be taught was unconstitutional because it was wrongly motivated by members of the Louisiana legislature. The scientific evidence for creation can be taught in science classrooms if this is done voluntarily by teachers without coercion, and without reference to religious literature of any kind. That this is so has been admitted by prominent evolutionists. Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard University stated, "Creationists claim their law broadened the freedom of teachers by permitting the introduction of controversial material. But no statute exists in any state to

bar instruction in ‘creation science.’ It could be taught before, and it can be taught now.”¹ Eugenie Scott, who heads the anti-creationist organization, National Center for Science Education, stated that “Reports of the death of ‘scientific creationism,’ however, are premature. The Supreme Court decision says only that the Louisiana law violates the constitutional separation of church and state; it does not say that no one can teach scientific creationism—and unfortunately many individual teachers do.”² In spite of this fact, it is incessantly repeated in newspapers that teaching the scientific evidence for creation in public schools violates the constitution and has been prohibited by the Supreme Court. As a result most educators have accepted this false notion, and it is widely promoted by evolutionists.

But doesn’t introducing evidence that supports creation require a Creator and is thus religious in nature? Aren’t scientific theories restricted to the use of natural laws and natural processes? It is true that in our efforts to observe, to understand, and to explain the *operation* of the universe and the *operation* of living organisms we do and must employ only natural laws and processes. The evolutionist, however, goes beyond this, stepping outside of empirical science when he insists that we must use these very same natural laws and processes to explain the *origin* of the universe and the *origin* of living organisms. Thus the evolutionist is substituting metaphysics in the place of true science, the search for truth. No theory about origins, creation, or evolution, fulfills the criteria of a scientific theory. A scientific theory must be based on repeatable observations, be subject to scientific test, and be potentially falsifiable. There were no human observers to the origin of the universe, life, or a single living kind. These events took place in the unobservable past and are not capable of observation today. All changes that occur among living things are merely fluctuations within limits. No one observes apelike creatures evolving toward humans or fish evolving into amphibians. Creation and evolution are theories about history, and such theories are not scientific theories. They do have scientific characteristics, they can be discussed in scientific terms, and there is a mass of circumstantial evidence that can be evaluated. Evolution is no more scientific than creation and it is just as religious. What is more religious, a Creator, or no Creator? Dr. Michael Ruse, an evolutionist (and who was then a philosopher of science professor at Guelph University), was one of the main witnesses for evolution in the 1981 Arkansas federal trial concerning the constitutionality of the equal time law for creation and evolution passed by the Arkansas legislature (declared unconstitutional by Judge William Overton). At that time he argued strenuously that evolutionary theory was strictly science, while creation theory was exclusively religious. This served as the main basis for Judge Overton’s decision. About 20 years later, in an article published in a Canadian newspaper,³ Ruse, although still a Darwinian evolutionist, revealed his complete turnabout on the question of evolutionary theory and religion. Ruse flatly stated that he now believes that “Evolution is promoted by its practitioners as more than mere science. Evolution is promulgated as an ideology, a secular religion—a full-fledged alternative to Christianity, with meaning and morality . . . *Evolution is a religion*” (emphasis added). Unfortunately, the unofficial state-sanctioned religion in U.S. public schools today is this non-theistic humanism which clearly violates the separation of church and state.

But isn't the scientific evidence, circumstantial or otherwise, solidly in favor of evolution? Didn't Darwin provide the mechanism that explained how evolution could and did take place? The amazing thing is that today, 140 years after publication of Darwin's book, not only is Darwin's theory under attack by creationists but is under attack by more and more evolutionists! In fact, Søren Løvtrup, well-known Swedish scientist and an evolutionist, has declared that "I believe that one day the Darwinian myth will be ranked the greatest deceit in the history of science."⁴ The fossil record, for example, does not produce the evidence Darwin predicted. If evolution is true we should find innumerable fossilized ancestors and connecting forms. However, every one of these complex invertebrates appear fully formed, with no trace of ancestors or intermediate forms connecting one to another. Furthermore, every major kind of fish known appears in the fossil record fully formed, with no ancestors and no connecting forms. If evolution is true there should have been uncounted billions of transitional forms documenting the intermediate stages between some invertebrate and fishes. There are none. These facts are incompatible with evolution. On the other hand, these facts are precisely what creationists predict. The remainder of the fossil record reveals that each basic type of plant and animal appears fully formed in the fossil record.

Sir Fred Hoyle, world-famous British astronomer, declared after researching the probability of an evolutionary origin of life, the probability of a naturalistic evolutionary origin of life anywhere in the universe in 20 billion years is equal to the probability that a tornado sweeping through a junkyard would assemble a Boeing 747. Sir Fred, formerly an atheist, declared life therefore had to be created, therefore there must be a God. The all-pervasive existence of design and purpose seen throughout the universe and in every detail of the structure and function of living organisms speak eloquently of the existence of the Designer.

Thousands of scientists holding advanced degrees in science from major universities throughout the world reject evolutionary theory and have become convinced on the basis of scientific evidence that the best statement we can make about our origin today is still, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." To deny the opportunity for the students in the tax-supported public schools in our pluralistic democratic society to be taught all of the scientific evidence that supports the two basic theories of origins, creation and evolution, is a denial of academic freedom and constitutes indoctrination in a humanistic, naturalistic worldview or religion.

Endnotes

1. *New York Times Magazine*, July 19, 1987.
2. *Nature*, vol. 329, p. 282, 1987.
3. Michael Ruse, "How Evolution Became a Religion," *National Post*, Toronto, May 13, 2000, p. B-1.
4. Søren Løvtrup, *Darwinism: The Refutation of a Myth*, Croomh Helm, New York, 1987, p. 422.



© 2004 by ICR • All Rights Reserved

Single Copies 10¢ • Order from: **INSTITUTE FOR CREATION RESEARCH**

P.O. Box 2667, El Cajon, CA 92021 • Available for download on our website (www.icr.org).