

# **A Survey of How the Subject of Origins Is Taught**

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# Method

- One hundred biology high school and college faculty at secular schools were surveyed by telephone or in person to determine how they handled the subject of origins.

# Open-ended survey was used

to allow individual expressions in answer to a list of five questions were asked of each person willing to be interviewed.

I also sat in on classes

# Findings

- found that one of the most common approaches to the subject of origins was to explain to the class that '
- religion and science were *separate disciplines* and had different answers to the subject of origins.

# Teachers who are creationists

- Another approach was to ignore the subject by “not getting to it” (often covered at end of book).
  - This common response was dealt with by including it in every chapter.
- About 20 to 40 percent of all biology teachers are creationists or ID supporters, thus many prefer to skip it for fear of getting into trouble.

# Explain I have to teach

- Another approach is to tell class "I do not accept evolution, but have to teach it."
- Or: "I have to teach evolution, so will, but realize that many of you do not accept evolution. I do not care what you believe,
- Just that you learn the material. Even if you disagree you need to know what you disagree with and why."

# Teachers who are evolutionists

- Many biology teachers that are evolutionists have experiences problems (parent and student complaints) so just do not cover it).
- One approach they use is to just skip evolution topic.

# Theistic evolution

- Another common approach was to relate to the class that the means God used to create was by evolution; therefore there was no conflict between religion and evolution.
  - Rarely did they explain what role God had in evolution.
- This claim was often just a way of avoiding the controversy.



# Science fact, religion morals.

- A 3rd common approach was to inform students that evolution is fact and theological explanations were faith, and fact only would be covered in their biology class.
- Science is fact, religion is values, morals

# Teach all theories

- A 4<sup>th</sup> approach is to teach all theories.
  - Creationism
  - Intelligent Design
  - Theistic evolution
  - Naturalistic evolution
  - Panspermia
  - Myths from other cultures
- Example: Purdue evolutionist professor. Feedback was very positive.

# Another Common Approach

- A common approach was to teach that science had proven life originated by natural means, falsifying theological explanations.
- Several professors stressed that evolution from molecules to humans was fact, and those who disagreed must accept this view or they would fail the class
  - or they could drop the class now.

- A University of Toledo Professor
- First day of biology class, told class molecules to man evolution was true and if they disagreed they should drop the class immediately.
- Several students walked out on the spot.

# Some Case Histories.

- I have collected hundreds of case histories, a few which I will relate to illustrate common events.

# One example in Bio 101.

- **Professor:** life evolved from methane, ammonia, carbon dioxide, water and other common simple compounds.
- Lightening (or another energy source) formed amino acids and other macromolecules.
- These macromolecules were able to reproduce, causing the start of chemical evolution.
- Eventually, simple cell like structures resulted from natural selection.

# Select Case Histories

- **Student:** Has this been proven scientifically or is it a theory?
- **Professor:** Oh yes, it has been proven scientifically. We have evidence for each step.
- **Student:** Oh, it is not just theory?
- **Professor:** In science "theory" is a summary of facts
  - chemical evolution is in that sense both theory and fact.

# Another Example

- **Professor:** Once the cell evolved soon simple organisms as yeast formed. Yeast then evolved into worms (it is much more complex than this. I am going through this rather quickly, so bear with me).
- Then worms evolved into fish, fish into amphibians, amphibians into reptiles, reptiles into mammals, mammals into primates, and last the apex of evolution, primates into humans.
- **Student:** do we have the fossils to prove this?



- Yes, the fossil record is very complete, all of these steps have been well documented.
  - evolution was purely the result of the accumulation of mutations selected by natural selection. We have now proven Darwin so that today no intelligent person doubts evolution.
- **Student:** Did God have any role?

- **Professor:** No, this is a science class, not religion.
- **Student:** If this is how humans got here, why are there still worms, fish, amphibians, reptiles mammals and primates? Why did they not all evolve?
- **Professor:** It seems that you have been reading creationists books and this argument has been answered by science.

- **Student:** Could you summarize it?
- **Professor:** We do not have time. this subject is complex and I am not a paleontologist, an expert on the fossil record.
  - My research is on *drosophila*. I would suggest that you not read creation or intelligent design books as they will only confuse you.

# Factors that Influence what is taught

- The 5 major factors that determine what is taught in U.S. classroom:
  - (1) state standards;
  - (2) district's standards / district's administration;
  - (3) available curriculum / textbooks;
  - (4) school's administration;
  - (5) teacher himself/herself.

# Evolution turns students off to Science

- A common problem

# Some nasty comments

- My 7th grade science teacher taught the world was created by evolution (time, chance, mutations, lots of luck). I raised my hand, but before I could say anything he informed us that he would teach only his theory because mine had no basis in fact.
- He said he did not want to hear any "Christian" ideas because they were bogus. I was shocked and angry at our school. He would not even discuss if intelligent design was possible because it was religion.

- In 6th grade Social Studies, the teacher told us to start reading the 75 page long chapter on Darwinism. I then asked where was the creationism chapter and when were we going to study it. She said creationism was not in the book
- I told her I did not feel it was right to teach one theory. She did not like that and told me to sit down and shut up. My mom always taught me to respect my elders so I did as she said.
- The next morning I asking questions about evolution and was sent to the principals office. While there I called my mom to come and talk to the principal so I could get back into class. She came and they agreed that I can skip that chapter.



# One student wrote

- Throughout my schooling, evolution was shoved down my throat. Even in middle school, questioning evolution was not tolerated. My biology teacher was so into evolution that we studied it for a whole semester.
- When I voiced my opinions, I was quickly shot down. I was angry that Intelligent Design was not discussed.
- One day I was being goofy and made the mistake of saying that an alligator on the video we were watching was my cousin.
  - My teacher started yelling, saying I and others who were ignorant. Because I don't believe what he believes doesn't make me ignorant. I shouldn't have been goofy, but was tired of having evolutionism crammed down my throat.
- My teacher added he doesn't go to our churches and make fun of our religion. I never realized that evolution was like a religion. I still believe in Intelligent Design, so must be ignorant.



# Another case

- After a discussion of evolution, when we were dismissed I approached my teacher and asked in a respectful manner, " As you're teaching the theory of Evolution could you prefacing everything with ' it is theorized' or ' it is possible'?"
  - Evolution is a theory and has never been proven, and it needs to be taught that way."
- His response was that it was fact and he will teach it as fact. He was not going to allow any discussion of an alternative theory as Intelligent Design.
- As the weeks passed I continually requested him to substantiate his "facts" and I would try to introduce alternative theories. This was met with hostile ridicule. My dad helped me by researching with me and presenting scientific articles to my teacher. I would meet him after class and we would continue our discussion on evolution. This went on for a few weeks when he challenged me in front of the entire class.

- He displayed charts to the class that stated birds came from dinosaurs. Curious where these charts came from because I was intrigued he became defensive and said "I see exactly where you are going with this", and "this is fact".
  - I felt the need to stick up for myself and started to bring up points using science. He wouldn't have it, so he starting going on and on about Evolution and wouldn't let me get a word in.
- He used his authority to demean and belittle me. He would not engage in any dialogue about any other theory. I went home and discussed the days event's with my dad,
  - he wrote a letter asking, "list five specific examples that prove Macro-Evolution?"
- Bt this letter we hoped to make it known that there are other views. In academia the goal should be to teach students *how to think* instead of force feeding, not allowing open discussion.
  - He did not have the decency to write back.

## legal implications of each approach used.

- Four people interviewed for PhD Chemistry position.
- One faculty (a Darwinist) asked all candidates if they believe in evolution (her words)
- 3 hemmed and hawed *indicating* they did not
  - One said I will be teaching chemistry, not biology.
  - another said I would teach both sides,
  - another said it is a theory only,
  - the last person said evolution does not explain origins of the universe etc).
- Is this question legal? Proper?

# Court cases

- Only case Darwin doubters won: They can meet in a library!
- Judge Lynn Adelman ruled library cannot restrict "speech about creationism in a public forum" 2000 case.

# Moore v. Gaston Board of Education

367 Supp. 1037 (W.D.N.C. 1973)

- Moore taught Darwinism was true, Adam and Eve story false
  - no life after death, no heaven or hell.
- Court ruled *students have a right to hear all points of view.*
- Can teach against Christianity, Bible, creationism, Intelligent Design.

# Dr. James Corbett Case

- Judge ruled that high school teacher Corbett could teach.
  - "when you put on your Jesus glasses, you can't see the truth."
- "Religion was invented when the first con man met the first fool." (Mark Twain)
  - in reference to tension between religion and science: Science "searches for rational answers v. religion stopping inquiry in favor of magic." (p. 16).
- The "Boy Scouts are a homophobic, racist organization."

# Won but Lost!

- Creation is “superstitious nonsense” (p. 21) ruled violated first amendment! (p. 31).
  - Nonetheless ruled in favor of school.
- Corbett responded that he will not change his teaching one iota.
- Also noted a negative correlation between crime and religion.
  - James Selna U.S. District Judge. C.F. v. Capistrano Unified School District SAC 07-1434 JVS.



# Courts have consistently ruled

- Cannot teach there is life after death, God created us, or problems with evolution theory.
  - Called creationism in the back door.
- We, in essence, have a state enforced religion.





# Creation now taught everywhere

- main concern is what is taught about origins in our schools.
  - not *if* it is taught.
  - both creationism and evolutionism are *conclusions* about creation.
  - Creation exists, thus a creator must exist

# Everyone a creationist

- **only** question is *who* or *what* is creator.
- one creation story: creator is mutations (copying errors) produce variety selected by natural selection.
  - we are the product of an accumulation of copying errors.
  - From molecules to man by time, chance, natural law.

## Other creation view involves intelligence.

- Common to teach evidence in *support* of evolution and argue *against* creationism, or ID.
- covering evidence *against* evolution and evidence *for* creation can end your career.
- covering evidence *for* evolution and evidence *against* creation can produce a promotion.

# This amounts to indoctrination.

- If teaching evidence "against" ID science,
  - teaching evidence for ID religion?
- Is, "fossil record supports molecules to man" science?
- but other side, i.e. "fossil record does *not* support molecules to man", religion?



# Evolution *rarely* defined.

- a simple definition is: “from the goo to you by way of the zoo” or from molecules to man
- problem is *not* **survival** of the fittest but **arrival** of the fittest.
- Scientists proposed several theories, none have panned out.
  - Gemmules
  - Pangenesis.
  - Orthogenesis
  - Lamarckianism

# Censorship Hurts Science

- My conclusion: evolution as I defined it above, never occurred, and could never have occurred, is from science, not religion.
  - truth will come out eventually,
- Darwin fundamentalists can fire Darwin doubters, deny them tenure, degrees, and a place at the table
  - but this will *not* change reality.

# Truth will Prevail

- will take longer, and will be done, mostly by evolutionists (we have been blocked from science).
- They will disprove their own theory. We are largely excluded from science, and grants, so they will have to do it.
  - *Nature, Science* great reads!