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Minister Preaches Creationism in Weed, California Public School Science Classes

In late March, Reverend Gerry Sprunger of the Berean Fundamental Church showed the creationist film *Origins, Two Models* to 7th and 8th grade science classes at a Weed, California public school. (Weed is in northern California, near Mt. Shasta.) He also led a discussion on creationism.

The teacher — new, untenured, and in his first year at the institution — was informed by principal Mike DeRoss that Reverend Sprunger (who is pastor of DeRoss's church) would be coming. DeRoss said that the visit "was traditional" and had been taking place for some 15 years. The teacher protested to no avail.

In a handout sheet accompanying the presentation, Reverend Sprunger told the students:

I appreciate the leadership at Weed elementary school, which gives me the opportunity to come to this science class to present a brief overview of alternative data, so you can consider each alternative, weigh the implications and consequences of each position, and then decide for yourself which is more reasonable. Your choice will make a profound difference in the way you value yourself, contribute to society, and pursue excellence in life goals. Obviously, if you believe that an all-wise Creator made you and the world, then you will sense a responsibility to this Creator. If you are the product of mechanistic chance, then life loses (sic) much of its meaning.

The handout told students that a "significant number of qualified scientists are now finding that a creation account of origins fits the scientific evidence better than does evolution." They were also informed that "[t]wo scientific models of origins exist, both with prominent scientists supporting them." As for evolution, the handout repeated stock ICR nonsense:

The evolution model predicts that the fossil record will provide a gradual change through the various strata, from simple to complex, with millions of transitional forms. NONE HAS

Weed, continued on p. 9

Sudanese Biologist Jailed for Teaching Evolution

Farouk Mohammed Ibrahim, professor of biology at the University of Khartoum, has been jailed and tortured for teaching students about evolution. According to Andy Coghlan ("Sudan Jails Biologist for Teaching Darwinism," in *New Scientist*, 17 March 1990, p. 21), "the fundamentalist Muslim government of Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan has jailed hundreds of political opponents without trial" since seizing power in June 1989. Among those arrested are numerous academics detained for political activity, but Professor Ibrahim is apparently the first to be jailed for his scientific views.

Sudan, continued on p. 11

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Nucleus

From the Editor

Last issue, I noted in this space that I had produced the masters for the issue on my own PostScript™-compatible printer. Well, so I thought. Besides the masters, I sent a diskette with the Ventura Publisher® files for the issue to Berkeley for production. Our printer put the diskette in his Linotronic™ laser typesetter, pressed a few keys, and — *voila!* — out came a new set of masters with 1270 dots/inch resolution (compared to my 300 dot/inch copy). Unfortunately, he produced the issue without noticing that one illustration (the data plot on p. 8) had to be pasted in the old fashioned way! By the time the graphic was pasted in and the page reprinted and replaced, a month had been lost. We think the razor-sharp characters were worth the wait.

The 1990 International Conference on Creationism is being held in Pittsburgh 30 July through 4 August, and several creationist watchers (including me) will attend. We will report on it next issue.

Robert J. Schadewald

Nick Sanduleak Dead of Heart Attack

We regret to report that astronomer Nicholas Sanduleak died of a heart attack on 7 May 1990 at age 56. A senior research associate in astronomy with the Warner & Swasey Observatory of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Nick sometimes described himself as "an old-fashioned astronomer." He used conventional telescopes to study and catalog unconventional stars.

One of Nick's many projects was a survey of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a small companion galaxy to our Milky Way that is visible only from southern latitudes. Working from the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in La Serena, Chile, he cataloged the positions and characteristics of interesting stars. Years later, on 23 February 1987, one

of the stars that caught his attention caught everyone's attention by exploding. The first naked-eye supernova in 400 years is known to astronomers as Sanduleak 202-69. It was the first supernova anywhere that had been studied before it blew up.

A long-time opponent of pseudoscience, Nick was one of the founders of the South Shore Skeptics (the name is a parody of the North Coast Bible-Science Association). He sometimes attended creationist events, such as the 1986 International Conference on Creationism in Pittsburgh, and he wrote and lectured against pseudoscience. His untimely death was a great loss for skeptics as well as astronomers. □

Submissions

NCSE Reports needs articles and reports. We especially need short reports (600 words or less) on local stories involving evolution education, Committees of Correspondence, or creationist activities. Articles should be submitted *double-spaced* and typed on one side of the paper with 1" margins all around.

Computer users, please use a *nonproportional* 10- or 12-pitch font such as Courier. If possible, include a diskette containing the text. Users of IBM® and compatible computers may submit any format 3½" or 5¼" diskette with the text in WordPerfect®, Microsoft® Word, old-fashioned WordStar®, WordStar Professional, DCA, or ASCII. Macintosh® users may submit text in WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, or ASCII (text).

No submissions will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Send submissions to:

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NCSE in the News

In May, *NCSE Reports* editor Robert Schadewald was featured on the late-night “Laura Lee Show” on KING radio in Seattle to talk about his favorite subject — the history of the flat-Earth movement. Ms Lee was fascinated to learn that flat Earthism is a manifestation of extreme fundamentalism. Many of her questions explored how some religious believers can deny or rationalize away any evidence that conflicts with their Bible-based viewpoint. A creationist who called in to dispute Schadewald’s views on religious fanaticism inadvertently provided excellent support for them.

In June, Executive Director Dr. Eugenie C. Scott appeared on station WOAI in San Antonio, on a nationally-broadcast talk show. As usual, there were many callers quoting young-earth creationist arguments such as the Paluxy River “mantracks,” the supposed lack of intermediate fossils, and so forth. She was surprised and delighted when NCSE member Scott Faust, from Denton, Texas, got through to comment on the lack of veracity of the Paluxy “human” tracks. □

NCSE Receives Grants

In June, NCSE received notification of grants from two foundations. The William H. Donner Foundation awarded us a two-year, \$73,000 grant to support the distribution of *Stones and Bones*, an exemplary high school program teaching human evolution, and the production of NCSE’s second videotape, *How Do Scientists Know About Punctuated Equilibrium*.

The Laurel Foundation awarded NCSE \$20,000 for promotion and support of our textbook review newsletter, *Bookwatch Reviews*.

We are very pleased to receive these grants and grateful for the confidence in our efforts and goals that they represent. □

Resource Center Receives Donation

Dr. Patrick McKim, anthropologist from California Polytechnic State University, has generously donated three boxes of creationist books and brochures (and even some creationist comic books!) to NCSE’s William V. Mayer Resource Center. These materials will be available for use in our library as soon as they are catalogued.

We very much appreciate this donation, and we know it will be put to good use by scholars and others interested in studying the creation/evolution phenomenon. □

Stan Weinberg on Sick List

Stanley M. Weinberg, a founder of NCSE, is recuperating from a heart attack suffered in June. Weinberg was instrumental in setting up the original Committees of Correspondence network in the late seventies and early eighties, and in organizing and incorporating NCSE to coordinate CC activities. In 1986, he secured a \$150,000 grant from Carnegie Corporation to open a national office, hire a director, and fund a series of projects. Grants from other foundations followed, and before he finished, Weinberg had raised \$250,000 to get NCSE started on a good footing.

Your wishes for a speedy recovery can be sent to Stanley M. Weinberg, 156 East Alta Vista, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501. From all of us at NCSE — Get well quick, Stan! □

Errata

In editing Ranse Traxler’s cover story for *NCSE Reports* 10(3), “Creation Science Still Plays Well in Peoria,” we “corrected” the first name of Dr. Donal Myer, President of the Illinois State Academy of Science, to Donald. We apologize to Dr. Myer for the error. □

Letters

Bowden feels that, as Darwin's symptoms can be due entirely to emotional stress, any physical cause would be redundant.

More on Darwin's Ailment

With regard to the news items "Darwin Didn't Die of Evolution" (NCSE Reports 9(4), although the conclusions in the item are not disputed, they are hardly "news," as the case for Darwin having Chagas's disease was, I believe, the first put by Dr. Saul Adler in 1959, (*Nature*, v. 194, pp. 1102-1103). In his article, Adler concluded the following:

It is obviously impossible to prove that Darwin was a victim of Chagas's disease, but two points cannot be overlooked.

1. His symptoms can be fitted into the framework of Chagas's at least as well as into any psychogenic theory of their cause.
2. It is possible to pinpoint a definite incident of March 24, 1834 [sic], during which he was exposed to optimum conditions for infection with *T. cruzi*.

Even the creationists are aware of the convincing case for Darwin's illness having a specific physical cause.

The two main documenters of the "Evolutionist Conspiracy Theory," Malcolm Bowden *The Rise of the Evolution Fraud*, and Ian Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, both felt that it was necessary to discount this probability.

Bowden feels that, as Darwin's symptoms can be due entirely to emotional stress, any physical cause would be redundant. After all, Darwin would have felt considerable emotional stress when "he was writing about a theory *which he knew was basically false*." (Bowden's emphasis)

The case for Darwin suffering from Chagas's disease is a logical deduction which is in accord with the observations. If the creationists start accepting logical deductions that agree with observations, who knows where it might end.

Allan A. Lang
Australia

The Creation Model Predicts...

(Editor's note: In the March-April issue of NCSE Reports, I asked creationist attorney Wendell Bird to explain how his "discontinuitist theory" accounts for certain facts about the natural world. Bird did not respond, but another creationist did. All capitalization, italics, and ellipses are original.)

CREATION, which includes "intelligence" as a causal possibility, closely parallels EVOLUTION (which *ad hoc* excludes such consideration) in their early postulates. *Both* propose the material universe arose in the distant past via a speculative, non-testable mechanism (CREATION or BIG BANG) ... and that the complex DNA code leading to *first* LIFE appeared in a similar untestable singularity (DESIGN vs. SPONTANEOUS GENERATION).

The concepts in Mr. Schadewald's challenge ... 1) homology, 2) biochemistry and 3) tree of descent ... ALL involve *changes* to this original gene pool. As this is the first stage at which *ORGANIC EVOLUTION* (or creation's *VARIATION*) are subject to *empirical* test, it is indeed a proper point to undertake a *scientific* comparison of these two conflicting views.

ORGANIC EVOLUTION proceeds from the premise that *life* began with the formation of a *FIRST* primitive gene pool. Over time, random mutations sorted and screened by natural selection (in some yet-to-be-demonstrated-manner), continually *ADDS new* exquisitely complex DNA code as required to produce increasingly complicated lifeforms.

Combining this *unverifiable* postulate and *undemonstratable* mechanism, Mr. Schadewald "deduces" (and obviously *believes*) that *common ancestry* best

ORGANIC EVOLUTION
proceeds from the premise that life began with the formation of a FIRST primitive gene pool.

explains why various life-forms share homologous structures, have similar biochemistry, and why they can be arranged in what can be interpreted as a tree of descent (ascent?).

NON-RELIGIOUS CREATION

proposes the observable data *better* fits a different (equally untestable) initial postulate. Namely, that when life first appeared on earth it did so in a multiple number of varyingly complex gene pools based on common DNA code and design principles. These original pools contained ALL the useful genetic information found in lifeforms today as well as those now extinct.

Over time, and by mechanisms well understood and *testable* (mutations,

etc.), this coded information (though remarkably preserved by natural selection) has been selected from, shuffled, degraded or lost ... but NOT increased.

Working from an *unverifiable* postulate but WITH a *testable* mechanism, the creationist “induction” of *common design* to explain 1) homology, 2) parallel biochemistry and 3) unconnected fossil “bushes” (vs. presumed “tree”), appears at least 50% MORE *scientific* than Mr. Schadewald’s mechanismless (metaphysical?) *common ancestor* explanation.

David A. Bradbury

Nothing! That’s What Bradbury’s Creation Model Predicts

Robert J. Schadewald

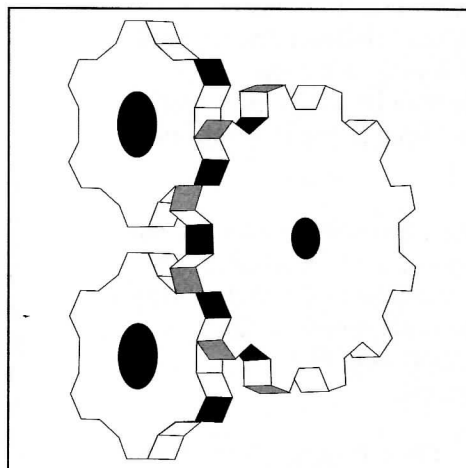
It is hard to argue with Mr. Bradbury’s kind of logic. Perhaps I should start by quoting the challenge to which he attempts to respond. Here it is, as published in *NCSE Reports* 10(2):21:

[W]hat *scientific* statements can discontinuitist theory make about (say) why the animal kingdom is as we find it? Why do humans, cattle, and birds share homologous structures? Why do they have similar biochemistry? Why does there appear to be a tree of descent, misinterpreted by early creationist naturalists as the Ladder of Life? Why is the tree derived from morphological considerations confirmed by biochemistry? Conventional science offers the same simple answer to all of these questions — all animals have descended from a common ancestor.

Where in Bradbury’s volley of assertions are the scientific alternatives to the conventional view? Nowhere!

A Biblical creationist might respond to my questions by claiming that God simply *chose* to create humans, cattle, and birds with homologous structures, similar biochemistry, and so forth. Godly whims are not susceptible to experimental or observational verification, so this assertion removes my questions from the realm of science. Natural theologians might try to explain why God did things one way rather than another, but this also assumes that the observations I cited have no naturalistic interpretation, and thus, no scientific meaning.

Now comes Mr. Bradbury, an engineer who berates scientists in the avowedly-religious *Bible-Science*



The Creation Model Doesn’t Mesh
Gear Illusion © Donald E. Simanek 1990

NON-RELIGIOUS CREATION

proposes ... that when life first appeared on earth it did so in a multiple number of varyingly complex gene pools based on common DNA code and design principles.

A Biblical creationist might respond to my questions by claiming that God simply chose to create humans, cattle, and birds with homologous structures, similar biochemistry, and so forth [which] removes my questions from the realm of science.

[A]nyone can invoke a deceptive creator to explain why inconvenient evidence has no meaning. It is a game without rules.

Science makes the operational assumptions that the natural world is orderly, and that we can learn about its order through observations.

CC update

I'm calling to tell you that we are not teaching creationism in our school district.

Newsletter (see "An Open Letter to Prof. Michael Zimmerman," April 1989, p.14), to argue for "non-religious creation." Bradbury offers a plain-brown-wrapper creator who created the natural world as we know it according to a common design. Once again, the observations I cited have meaning only in terms of the will and volition of the (now generic) creator. Bradbury, in his role as a (nonreligious) natural theologian, implies that nearly all biologists have been deceived by this (nonreligious) creator's fixation with common design.

But anyone can invoke a deceptive creator to explain why inconvenient evidence has no meaning. It is a game without rules. Henry Morris does it to explain away light from distant galaxies. Robert V. Gentry does it to explain away xenoliths in "primordial" granites (and much else). The godfather of all such thinkers, Philip Henry Gosse, claimed in his famous book *Omphalos* that essentially all the geologic strata and the fossils therein were created as we find them. Indeed, a flat Earther using such reasoning

could invoke mathematical transformations and specially created laws of physics to explain why Earth appears spherical even though it is really flat.

Science makes the operational assumptions that the natural world is orderly, and that we can learn about its order through observations. Neither assumption is provable in the philosophical sense (for example, the material world could be an illusion, as some Buddhists claim). But science cannot operate in areas where either assumption fails. Bradbury's concluding assertion that "*common design*" by a (nonreligious) creator is "50% MORE *scientific*" than descent with modification reveals that he does not understand this.

Indeed, from his first shrill assertion to his last, Bradbury reveals so many misconceptions about science and evolution that it would take pages to identify and expose all of them. I deliberately confined myself to his central claim, leaving the rest as an exercise for the reader. □

Peoria Public Schools Do Teach Creationism

*Ransom R. Traxler
St. Louis Area Liaison*

In *NCSE Reports* 10(4):1, I reported how Institute for Creation Research speakers have been brought into Peoria public school science classes for 12 years. When I finished that report, I was still waiting for a reply from the Peoria School District superintendent, who I had been trying to reach since late March.

After being ignored for a month and half, in mid-June I received an irate telephone call from Dr. Melvin Hines, associate superintendent. Our conversation went like this (paraphrased):

Hines: I'm calling to tell you that we are not teaching creationism in our school district.

Traxler: I got a letter from someone in your district stating otherwise.

Hines: I don't care what someone wrote to you, I'm telling you it's not happening.

I read Hines the letter I received from Dr. Chester W. Dugger, Peoria's executive director for high school programs, that said it was. Hines said he would check into it and get back to me.

A month passed with no reply. After further prompting, I received a letter from Hines dated 18 June 1990. It says in part, "[P]lease be advised that the Peoria Public School system has no policy [regarding creationism], nor does it encourage its teachers to allow scientific creationism [sic] to present their beliefs in classes." This is exactly opposite to what Dr. Dugger said in his letter. Hines continued, "There is a policy ... which provides directions for

exposing students to controversial issues. You will note that there is no mention of science nor creationism in this policy.” Hines said he had no evidence for my allegations, and he considered the matter closed.

On the same day I received Hines’s letter, my other inquiries in Peoria paid off in the form of a telephone call from a caller I will identify as “D.T.” to preserve his anonymity. As the parent of a former Peoria high school student, D.T. provided some enlightening details, paraphrased as follows:

Here in Peoria the teachers sidestep evolution as much as possible. When they do mention evolution, they let students object to it and leave the classroom or be reassigned. They have had creationists visit the schools frequently over the years. When one spoke in my son’s class, he could not leave like they let them do when they present evolution. If he did, he would have been looked-down-upon by the others in the class. My son, knowing what he does about science, asked the creationist during the question-answer part some questions he could not answer, and was put-down by the class. That is what I complained about — not that they let a creationist present his religious beliefs as fact in the class, but that they would not let my son leave the classroom like they let the students when they teach evolution.

When D.T. complained to Dr. Dugger, he was told that a school system policy allowed this to happen. He then spoke to the school’s attorney, who told him about the school system’s policy towards creationism.

I told D.T. that Dr. Hines denied that creationism was taught in the public schools and read him the letter I had just received. His response (paraphrased) was as follows:

That’s simply not true. That policy Hines mentions is the same one

they hide behind if someone questions them. It is a district policy to present creationism as a scientific alternative to evolution and if anyone doesn’t believe me, they can ask the Peoria High School principal — he knows it as fact.

Solving this problem will be difficult, because the Peoria school board probably reflects the community, which is religiously conservative. Large and influential churches sponsor and promote creationist speakers. I had expected the superintendent to be the most professional person in the school district, but his official reply leaves much to be desired. It probably will take strong outside influence to solve this problem of the school district.

I have done all that I can with the authorities of the Peoria School District, but that is not the end of the story. I am working with Dr. Jack Bennett, who is developing a policy statement on creation/evolution for the Illinois Academy of Science. Dr. Jenny Grogg of the Illinois Science Teachers Association (ISTA) writes that ISTA will also develop a position statement on creationism. Mr. Don Roderick of the Illinois State Board of Education thinks that what is happening in Peoria may be serious enough to motivate the state to issue its own policy statement. The NABT, the Illinois ACLU, and several other groups have expressed interest in the case. Local members of NCSE may express their concerns directly to the President of the Peoria School Board, Mr. Francis Duren, 3202 North Wisconsin Avenue, Peoria, IL 61603.

During my investigation, I called the Institute for Creation Research in California. They said that Ken Ham is scheduled to visit Peoria again during the 1990-91 school year. To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing to prevent him from repeating last year’s performance and, as described in *Acts & Facts* 18(4), April 1989, “speaking to thirty science classes in four major public high schools in Illinois during their normal science-lesson class time.” □

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News

Implicit in [their] argument is the claim that the state is obligated to recognize as science whatever religious believers declare to be science. (If so, perhaps the Covenant Peoples Church — also organized as the Flat Earth Society — should open a graduate school of science.)

ICR Amends Lawsuit Against Honig

As regular *NCSE Reports* readers know, the state of California has moved to withdraw approval for the Institute for Creation Research Graduate School (ICRGS) to grant masters degrees in science (see “ICR’s Graduate Program in Science Flunks,” *NCSE Reports* 10(2):15). We reported last issue how, on 13 April, ICRGS filed suit against the California Department of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California to block disapproval. On 15 May, ICRGS amended its filing in several interesting respects.

In the original complaint, ICRGS was the only plaintiff. The amended complaint adds three more plaintiffs, as follows:

- Kenneth B. Cumming, dean of ICRGS, faces loss of employment if ICRGS closes.
- S. Harris Rugg, a student at ICRGS, will be unable to find another school with a comparable course of study.
- Woodside Christian Elementary School, Inc. will be unable to hire ICRGS graduates as teachers.

The amended complaint adds Henry Morris to the list of full-time ICRGS faculty (Gish was already on it). New sections have been added about the revised California Science Framework, which the complaint says Honig and Barankin “changed to require indoctrination in evolution and to ridicule and misrepresent creation.” Formerly anonymous doers of detrimental deeds now have names. The “Prayer for Relief” (closing section) has been amended to include remedies and/or damages for the additional plaintiffs.

The original ICRGS complaint appeared to be written hastily. For

example, in the Prayer for Relief, it alleged violation of ICRGS’s rights under the First, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments, but the Ninth Amendment was not mentioned elsewhere in the complaint. The amended complaint corrects this oversight, and it also correctly spells the name of the official who conducted the 1988 site visit of ICR (Roy Steeves, not Steves). Other changes suggest more care in preparation.

Though the amended complaint still denies it, the scientific validity of creationism is a central question in the suit. For example, wording added under the heading “Abridgement of Free Exercise of Religion” argues that denying ICRGS approval to grant science degrees for creationism amounts to “overt discrimination against the plaintiffs, seriously penalizing their beliefs through state hostility...”. Implicit in this argument is the claim that the state is obligated to recognize as science whatever religious believers declare to be science. (If so, perhaps the Covenant Peoples Church — also organized as the Flat Earth Society — should open a graduate school of science.)

Since filing the amended complaint, ICR attorney Wendell Bird has been busy distributing subpoenas for depositions. Among those reportedly served so far are NCSE Board member Kevin Padian, CC members Lawrence S. Lerner and William J. Bennetta, and NCSE Supporter Richard E. Dickerson. Padian served on the Science Framework Committee, which ICR views as part of the Conspiracy. Lerner and Dickerson were on the 1989 site visit committee. Perhaps Bennetta was included for his cogent and pungent articles on the ICR approval story — he was ordered to bring copies with him!

Presumably, sometime after the depositions are taken, there will be a preliminary hearing, but we haven’t heard a date. NCSE will continue to track the story and keep you informed. □

Weed, *continued from p. 1*

EVER BEEN FOUND! Because of this lack of evidence for gradual change, some evolutionists have put forward the theory of “punctuated equilibrium,” which says that evolution has happened in short, sharp jerks, followed by long periods of time when no change is occurring. But they find it hard to explain HOW these sudden burst (sic) of rapid evolution could possibly happen.

The 8th grade students reportedly questioned Reverend Sprunger closely. Frequently, he was forced to “explain” a point by saying “because the Bible says so.” A Catholic student reportedly asked Reverend Sprunger whether she could believe God created through evolution (the semiofficial position of the Catholic church) and still be a Christian. He replied, “No.”

NCSE members Ken Goehring and Michael Roesch were alerted beforehand when a concerned parent sent them a copy of a letter notifying parents that the class would be discussing creation and evolution for a week. They visited principal DeRoss, who told them Sprunger would be visiting the class to provide equal time for creation science. Goehring and Roesch questioned the legality of using the classroom to advance a religious belief, but to no avail. DeRoss said Sprunger would speak to the class as scheduled, and he did.

Goehring and Roesch then appealed to the Weed board of trustees (extracts from their letter follow). Their position seemed strengthened when they obtained a copy of Reverend Sprunger’s inflammatory handout (quoted previously).

The issue was put on the agenda of the 7 May meeting of the Weed board of trustees as an “informational item.” By this time, the controversy was out in the open, and the meeting had a larger turnout than usual. Several ministers and citizens argued for creationism in the schools. Goehring, Roesch, and a

few parents argued against including creationism, because it advances particular religious beliefs. At one point, Sprunger acknowledged that some statements in his handout were inappropriate.

The school superintendent, Zeke Zanotto, told the board it needed more information about the propriety of bringing creationists into the schools. He said he would seek a ruling from his county counsel and the California Department of Education. The Weed board of trustees planned to make a decision in July.

Meanwhile, creationism remained a hot topic in Weed. On 18–19 May (Friday evening and all day Saturday), the Institute for Creation Research held a *Back to Genesis* seminar at the Mount Shasta High School. The speakers were Donald Chittick, Ken Ham, and John Morris. The event was organized by Velma Nile, a retired Mount Shasta High School teacher, and sponsored by the South Siskiyou Ministerial Association. About 30 protestant churches put up \$3,000 to underwrite the event, which was free to the public. The seminar drew about 800 people on Friday night, somewhat fewer on Saturday.

A week later, Ken Goehring, a physical anthropologist at the College of the Siskiyous (CS), presented a public lecture on human evolution jointly sponsored by CS and NCSE. Goehring drew about 60 people (sound familiar?), many of whom were creationists. His central point was that evolution is not just a theory about history; it is happening here and now. For example, he pointed out that the rapid evolution of the AIDS virus makes it difficult to develop an effective vaccine. His most powerful point was that we have no proof for an intelligent designer and considerable proof for evolutionary theory. As for design, he argued that evolution inevitably produces the *appearance* of design.

On Monday night, 16 July, Zanotto told the board that he didn’t get a clear

A Catholic student reportedly asked Reverend Sprunger whether she could believe God created through evolution (the semiofficial position of the Catholic church) and still be a Christian. He replied, “No.”

As the situation now stands, Weed public school students will be hearing the Gospel of Creation in their science classes in the coming year.

cut decision from Sacramento. The state doesn't think what they are doing is plainly illegal, but there should be some changes in format. Although Zannotto didn't say so at the meeting, the county counsel has reportedly said that teaching creationism cannot be recommended.

Indeed, thus far, no law or regulation specifically prohibits teaching creationism in California public schools. (The California Science Framework is specific about only science being taught in science classes and about "scientific" creationism not being scientific.) Though not

prohibited, teaching "scientific" creationism is unprofessional. Furthermore, because it is a sectarian religious position, its advocacy contravenes the First Amendment to the Constitution.

As the situation now stands, Weed public school students will be hearing the Gospel of Creation in their science classes in the coming year. Goehring and Roesch are continuing their efforts to keep religion out of the public schools. NCSE is assisting them, and we will keep you informed of developments. □

NCSE Members Question Weed School Board

(The following is excerpted from a letter to the Weed, California Board of Education regarding Reverend Gerry Sprunger's presentation of "scientific" creationism in a public school science class. The incident is described in the preceding article)

Sponsoring such a lecture in a public school is illegal and improper, and this should be reason enough for you to prevent its recurrence (see enclosed Elementary and Secondary Education Code Article 2, Section 51511; also see State Board of Education Policy Statement of the Teaching of Natural Science). However, we believe there are even more reasons why such activity should not take place.

First, such an obvious and radical fundamentalist lecture creates an unnecessary schism between religion and science. In recognition of this fact, many mainstream religions have come out against the teaching of Creationism as a science in our public schools. Such groups include the Lutheran Church, American Jewish Congress, General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Unitarian-Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. [Editor's note:

Copies of position statements by these groups from NCSE's *Voices for Evolution* were attached.]

After talking to the principal of Weed Elementary School, we are also aware of the misconception of equal time as it applies to creationism and evolution. Evolution is a science and therefore it should be obligated only to give equal time to other scientific theories of origin that have merit. To be considered science, a theory must be tentative and subject to revision or even abandonment according to evidence. Creationism is a religious position and should be covered in the social sciences. It is a religion because it is not subject to revision or abandonment according to evidence. Further, when creationism is covered, equal time should be given to the religious origin stories—American Indian, Hindu, Buddhist, and so on.

We would appreciate Board action on this problem as soon as possible. Specifically, we ask the Board to create a policy acknowledging that creationism should not be taught in the science classroom and, that when origin myths are presented in the social science or literature classes, it is in the best interest of the students to include a representative sample of origin myths from diverse cultures. Certainly, we all agree that the sorry state of science education does not need any more dogmatic hurdles to hinder its slow progress. □

Sponsoring such a lecture in a public school is illegal and improper, and this should be reason enough for you to prevent its recurrence.

Evolution of the “World History Chart!”

The Mormon “World History Chart” being marketed as an “invaluable teaching and reference tool” to schools and libraries (see *NCSE Reports* 9(2):18 and 9(4):19) has evolved. According to Southern Illinois liaison Ransie Traxler, the foreign language department at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville recently purchased a copy of the chart that deletes the small map of North America in the upper right-hand corner. This map had Canada labeled as Ethiopia, showed a land bridge to Asia running through Florida, and labeled the North Platte, Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri rivers the Eden, Hiddekel, Pison, and Gihon, respectively.

Apparently, the chart has been secularized (perhaps to make it more marketable to public schools), but objections raised earlier about the confusion of historical fact with sectarian mythology remain valid. The new version retains the blue line marking the Flood running across all geographic areas. It also has lines showing migration out of North America (the site of creation, according to Mormons) at 3840 BC and out of the Middle East after the Flood. □

NSSA Adopts Position Statement on Teaching Creationism

On 5 April 1990, the executive board of the National Science Supervisors Association (NSSA) adopted the following position statement:

The National Science Supervisors Association is opposed to the teaching of “creationism” in the science curricula of the nation’s schools. Creationism, and other pseudo-sciences, are premised upon supernatural explanations of natural phenomena and therefore are outside the realm of science.

We therefore stand with other such organizations as the National Science Teachers Association, the Council of State Science Supervisors, the National Association of Biology Teachers, the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science in opposing the inclusion of such pseudo-science in the science curricula of the schools of the nation.

This statement is similar to position statements adopted by numerous other scientific organizations and reprinted in NCSE’s *Voices for Evolution*. NCSE has permission from NSSA to reprint the statement in the next edition of *Voices for Evolution*. □

Sudan, continued from p. 1

A letter from Ibrahim, smuggled out of prison, describes how he endured days and nights of torture — including whipping, kicking, and beating — accompanied by death threats and verbal abuse. He was also prevented from washing and praying. One interrogator, a member of the ruling council, made it clear that Ibrahim’s crime was teaching evolution.

The Muslim community in Britain was shocked and outraged by Ibrahim’s treatment. Coghlan reported that international efforts were under way to secure his release.

Most Islamic scholars find no contradiction between evolution and the Koran, although the latter’s story of creation closely parallels Genesis. The growth of fundamentalism among Muslims could change that. We hope Professor Ibrahim’s problems are not a harbinger of the future.

NCSE President John R. Cole made several calls to the Sudanese embassy, but he could not learn anything further about Professor Ibrahim’s situation. If you have any additional information on this case, please contact the NCSE national office. □

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**Tracking
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creationists
— and the
people
who
believe
them!**

Why We Must Track Creationist Claims

Karl D. Fezer

Creationist attempts to legislate hindrances to the teaching of evolution in public schools — and “balanced treatment” for their own Bible-based views — have been overturned repeatedly by federal courts.

Now creationists are promoting their views at “Back-to-Genesis Seminars” and other gatherings more vigorously than ever. They deliberately and explicitly seek entrance to local public schools through sympathetic school teachers and school boards. This arena is less visible than state legislatures, and creationist maneuvers in it are less likely to be challenged. We need many more concerned people throughout the United States to monitor the local scene and to challenge creationist maneuvers — or to seek help in doing so. Calls to appropriate school personnel and letters-to-the-editor by local residents who understand creationism and its arguments can be very effective.

The following is the second in a series of columns intended to instruct newcomers to the ranks of creationism watchers (and refresh veterans). I will edit the series. Each column will focus on one creationist argument. Future columns will be written by experts in the appropriate fields, reviewed by persons experienced in responding to creationist claims, and edited to be comprehensible to nonspecialists. Columns will be as brief as possible — no more than 1200 words.

NSCE plans eventually to assemble these columns into a creationism watcher’s handbook. I invite readers to send me column ideas and suggestions as to how particular columns might be improved.

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Concord College
Athens, WV 24712
Office phone (304) 384-5214
Home phone (304) 384-7820

Is the Concept of Natural Selection Tautolous?

Karl D. Fezer

In *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin assembled many lines of evidence and argument for “descent with modification,” the idea that diverse organisms are related by descent from common ancestors. One line of evidence and argument was that natural selection is an important mechanism of such biological evolution. Being able to show *how* something happens, though often not essential to demonstrating that it *does* happen, nevertheless strengthens the case that it does.

Natural selection occurs among members of species that exhibit variations in hereditary traits. In a specific environment, some of these traits cause their possessors, on average, to contribute more surviving offspring to the next generation than to

possessors of alternative traits. Because the traits are hereditary, the proportion of individuals with “favorable” traits tends to increase. This also has been called “differential reproduction” and “survival of the fittest.”

Creationist Duane T. Gish (1983) paraphrases criticism by some reputable scholars as follows:

When it is asked, what survives, the answer is, the fittest. But when it is asked, what are the fittest, the answer is, those that survive! Natural selection thus collapses into a tautology, devoid of explanatory value. It is not possible to explain *why* some varieties live to reproduce more offspring — it is only known that they do.

*When it is asked,
what survives, the
answer is, the
fittest. But when it
is asked, what are
the fittest, the
answer is, those
that survive!*

Ironically, earlier in the same paper, Gish describes a classic example of natural selection; light-colored peppered moths (*Biston betularia*) resting on lichen-covered tree trunks are well camouflaged. When lichens were killed and trunks darkened by industrial pollution, the peppered form became conspicuously visible and declined in numbers, and the previously rare, dark form of the species was concealed and came to predominate. H.B.D. Kettlewell (1959), cited by Gish, reported experiments that showed clearly that differential predation by birds was a major reason *why* this change came about. (Gish's purpose here was to argue, rightly, that the shift from light to dark moths represented change within a single species, not evolution of a new species. However, he seemed to have been oblivious to the contradiction between this example and his subsequent claim that natural selection is "devoid of explanatory value.")

Kettlewell's study and numerous others show clearly that natural selection does occur, and that it is often important (1) in making populations poorly adapted to their environment better adapted (directional selection) and (2) in keeping well adapted populations well adapted (stabilizing selection).

It is important to note that *seemingly* adaptive traits may or may not have become established in a population as a result of natural selection. Zebras' stripes appear to provide camouflage. But elaborate studies might be required to demonstrate convincingly (1) that stripes provide a significant advantage and (2) that stripes did not come to characterize zebras only because of chance elimination of the alternatives to stripe-producing genes in a small population of ancestors (genetic drift). A book by Endler (1986) is devoted to "methods for detection of natural selection in the wild."

Natural selection competes with genetic drift and with other

mechanisms as an explanation of why organisms have the traits they possess. Scientists disagree on the *relative* importance of these processes in evolution. But most agree that natural selection has been important.

Sharks, ichthyosaurs, dolphins, and penguins exhibit the results of convergent evolution. As marine predators they share body shape characteristics required for this life-style. Yet they represent four different classes of vertebrates; each exhibits a multitude of characteristics that shows its common ancestry, respectively, with other cartilaginous fish, reptiles, mammals, or birds. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that natural selection favored development of a streamlined shape in each of these lineages, three of which began with very different terrestrial animals.

Darwin formulated the concept of natural selection in terms of living organisms, and it is usually considered a biological concept. However, Eigen *et al* (1981) reported that RNA *molecules* can arise *de novo*, replicate, and exhibit natural selection in cell-free systems. This justifies viewing natural selection in more general terms.

Like theorems or plane geometry and mathematical formulas, natural selection can be understood as a principle of abstract deductive logic. Given: Any kind of entity that, in an appropriate environment, reproduces. Its characteristics are determined by some form of self-reproducing code. Naturally occurring variations in the code produce corresponding variations in the characteristics of the entities. In a given environment, some variations that we can call "favorable" cause the entities to reproduce more successfully than do entities with alternative variations. It follows that the proportion of the entities with favorable code and characteristics will tend to increase. Alternative characteristics may be favored in a different environment.

This principle says nothing about what characteristics actually cause

Natural selection competes with genetic drift and with other mechanisms as an explanation of why organisms have the traits they possess. Scientists disagree on the relative importance of these processes in evolution. But most agree that natural selection has been important.

Like theorems or plane geometry and mathematical formulas, natural selection can be understood as a principle of abstract deductive logic.

The principle of natural selection can (and should) be formulated in a nontautologous way.

Resources

Recent finds in Egypt show that Basilosaurus, a primitive fossil whale known from partial skeletons since the early 19th century, had functional pelvic limbs and feet. No doubt we will now learn that the creation model predicted this.

reproduction to be more successful, nor why they have this effect. Nor, by itself, does this argument demonstrate that entities such as those described actually exist. Empirical studies, such as Kettlewell's and those of Eigen and his colleagues, provide answers to such questions.

But note that the principle of natural selection can (and should) be formulated in a nontautologous way. And note again that it certainly is not "devoid of explanatory value." Rather, when combined with empirical evidence, it forms a crucial part of our understanding of nature. The same can be said of the use of mathematical formulas throughout science.

For further treatment of this subject, readers are referred to Gould (1983).

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Bliss on Molecular Biology

Robert J. Schadewald

Richard B. Bliss, chairman of the Science Education Department of the Institute for Creation Research Graduate School (ICRGS), addressed a regular meeting of the Twin Cities Creation-Science Association (TCCSA) on the evening of 17 April. About 80 people attended.

After some general remarks and an update on ICR's battle with the state of California, Bliss said he would lecture about homology. Actually, he spoke mostly about molecular biology, taking his text from Michael Denton's *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*.

Bliss said the trees of biochemical similarities offered as evidence for evolution are "constructed," strongly implying that they are invented. He suggested that scientists tell a computer what they want — and get it.

Cytochrome *c* is very important, said Bliss, and he displayed a version of Denton's graphic (see below) that shows by what percent cytochrome *c* from a bacteria differs from horse, pigeon, and other cytochrome *c*'s.

Indeed, Bliss said cytochrome *c* was his secret weapon in a debate with Vincent Sarich (an anthropologist and expert on molecular evolution). When he showed the same graphic, he said, Sarich got so flustered that he left the platform and sat in the audience. Later, Sarich tapdanced about the data, and he seemed completely frustrated by it. According to Bliss, "There is no way you can put an evolutionary scenario with this."

Alas, poor Sarich! I know him not, but I do not doubt that he was taken aback by Bliss's molecular biology, though not for the reasons Bliss imagines. Denton's cytochrome *c* data is nicely in accord with evolutionary theory. The organisms at right in the diagram share a common ancestor that branched off from ancient bacteria, so they all differ from modern bacteria by about the same amount. (For details, see Bill Thwaites' review of *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* in *NCSE Reports* 9:4(14) or Matthew Landau's "Protein Sequences and Denton's Error" in *Creation/Evolution* XXVI(1).) But Bliss cannot — or will not — understand this.

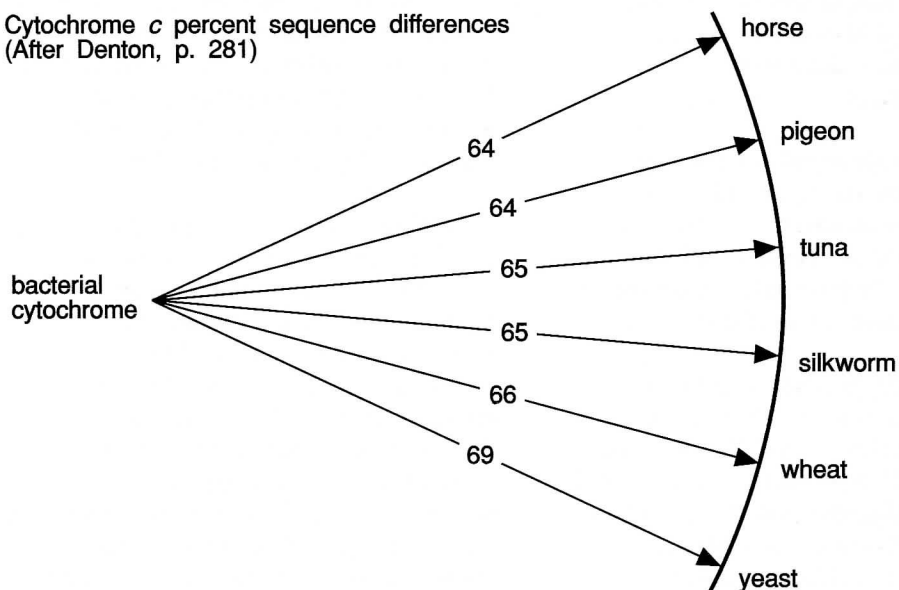
This kind of ignorance could be the downfall of ICRGS. If its faculty is not competent to discuss modern science, the state of California should close it down. □

Keeping tabs

Denton's cytochrome c data is nicely in accord with evolutionary theory.

[I]gnorance could be the downfall of ICRGS. If its faculty is not competent to discuss modern science, the state of California should close it down.

Cytochrome *c* percent sequence differences
(After Denton, p. 281)



The Foundation for Thought and Ethics

John A. Thomas

Readers of *NCSE Reports* know that a new creationist book, *Of Pandas and People*, is making the rounds. Scott Brande has described the efforts of Houghton Publishing Co. to get *Pandas* adopted in Alabama as a supplementary text (*NCSE Reports* 9(6):5 and 10(1):8). *Pandas* presents the “intelligent design” version of the origin of species in an attractive wrapper without any explicit sign of religious creationism (see review, *NCSE Reports* 10(1):16).

Those curious about the origin of *Pandas* itself might wonder why the book’s copyright is held, not by the publisher, but by the Foundation for Thought and Ethics (FTE) of Richardson, Texas. “Houghton Publishing Co.” is the assumed name of Horticultural Printers, Inc., a large Dallas printing firm mainly serving the agriculture industry. Houghton has no other books in print, nor does it have in-house writers or science advisors. *Pandas* is entirely the creation of FTE.

Officials at FTE refused my requests for an interview, but enough evidence exists in the public record and FTE publications to give an adequate sketch of its goals and methods. FTE was formed in 1980 as a tax-exempt charitable and educational organization.

The incorporator and current president of FTE is Jon Buell, an ordained minister. Buell earlier served on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, and in 1972, he formed Probe Ministries with evangelist Jim Williams.

The other major figure in FTE is Charles Thaxton, its “Director of Curriculum Research.” Thaxton, who holds a Ph.D. in chemistry, coauthored an earlier FTE-sponsored book, *The Mystery of Life’s Origin*. *Mystery* offers a skeptical look at current theories of abiogenesis and closes with

a chapter advocating a hypothesis of special creation to explain the origin of life. Thaxton is also a Fellow of the American Scientific Affiliation, an organization of theistic scientists that requires assent from its members to a statement of Christian principles. (You may remember ASA for its publication a few years ago of *Teaching Science in a Climate of Controversy*, a nice packaging of old-earth creationism.)

Although FTE claims to be publishing science books, it obviously has a religious agenda. Buell refers to FTE as a “Christian think-tank” in the original application for tax-exempt status. FTE’s articles of incorporation state that its purpose is both religious and educational, and it includes “proclaiming, publishing, preaching [and] teaching... the Christian Gospel and understanding of the Bible and the light it sheds on the academic and social issues of the day.” The application referred to says the organization’s first activity would be the editing of a book “showing the scientific evidence for creation.”

FTE publishes an occasional newsletter, and in 1985, it commissioned a poll of high-school science teachers to show potential publishers that a market existed for a book on intelligent design. FTE has also sponsored at least one seminar on the creation/evolution debate, but most of its income has been absorbed by the production and marketing of its two books. Its contributors have obviously been willing to put up their money for the long run, hoping for the eventual success of *Mystery* and *Pandas*.

Federal tax records also show that FTE’s money-raising efforts are effective. This is clearly not a group run out of a church basement by inexperienced volunteers. From its formation until late 1988, FTE has raised some \$828,220, almost all of it from donations. About 25% of this money has come from eight individuals, churches, and businesses. One Dallas-area church has donated more than \$14,000, and one individual, \$57,920. The current budget is about

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\$15,000 a month. Buell is the only salaried employee.

Recently, FTE's letters have included pleas for donations to cover budget shortfalls. One letter says the Foundation expects *Pandas* to be a significant financial resource eventually, but presently donations have dropped off while FTE has devoted most of its fund-raising time to getting the book into the market.

FTE has also been successful in collecting prominent names for its letterhead, many with Ph.D.s following. Besides the officers and directors, FTE's letterhead includes a "Board of Reference" to provide occasional advice. Some persons listed, such as Norm Sonju and Bob Breunig, are prominent Dallas residents. Others are local business leaders. Michael J. Woodruff is director of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom, a group that filed an *amicus* brief with the U.S. Supreme Court supporting the Louisiana "equal-time" act. Francis H. Hare, Jr., a prominent Birmingham attorney, represented Haughton at the Alabama textbook hearings. FTE also boasts a "Council of Academic and Educational Advisors." Besides Thaxton and the authors of *Pandas*, the council includes Joseph Sobran, an editor of *National Review*, Charles M. Duke Jr., an Apollo astronaut, and Lois Harbaugh, secretary of the National Science Supervisors Association. Others hold positions at major universities around the country.

An interesting question is the relationship of FTE to more mainstream creationist organizations. Apparently, Buell and Thaxton accept the scientific account of the earth's age; their quarrel is with naturalistic theories of the origin of life, and with the Darwinian view that new species (particularly humans) can arise from the operation of natural selection upon genetic variation. They can accept "microevolution," or changes within species, but not "macroevolution," defined as the change of one species into another.

Although FTE completely avoids young-earth material in its publications, it never explicitly criticizes such theories either, and it seeks support wherever it may be found. It has used the mailing list of the *Bible Science Newsletter*, a hard-line creationist publication, to offer *The Mystery of Life's Origin* for sale. A favorable review of *Mystery* by Kerby Anderson, a strict creationist, was included in the same mailing. Representatives of FTE have spoken before the Metroplex Institute of Origin Science in Dallas, a strict creationist group more likely to hear mantrackers Carl Baugh and Don Patton. One of the authors of *Pandas*, Percival Davis (P. William Davis on FTE letterhead), coauthored *A Case for Creation* with Wayne Friar in 1983, a standard creationist work with frequent religious references.

What will FTE do with *Pandas* now that it has been effectively rejected in Alabama? Apparently, FTE has decided against further attempts at state textbook approval, at least for the present. Henry Skrabanek, president of Haughton, told me that Haughton and FTE intend to change course and direct their efforts "outside the schools" to the grass-roots level. Skrabanek said sales of *Pandas* so far have been single-copy, and he needed to get the book into the schools to have significant sales. He said local school boards, teacher's groups, and parents were the likely targets of the new effort.

A May 1990 letter from FTE confirms this new strategy. It says, "[W]e are finding that the best approach to the local school system is through the biology teacher.... Experience has indicated that they are comfortable in making a decision to introduce a supplemental text with the review and approval of the school curriculum committee." FTE has a packet of material and an 18-minute videotape to assist parents who approach teachers. I would not be surprised to see copies of *Pandas* appearing in some classrooms this fall. □

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Do Bats Disprove Evolution?

Frank Sonleitner

In an article entitled, “The Great Evolution Lottery” (*Bible Science Newsletter*, May 1990), Edward W. Farrar bases arguments against evolution on the creationist belief that it is impossible to “imagine how highly complex and perfectly working organs of both animals and plants could be preserved for countless generations in their rudimentary stages — absolutely useless.” Bats, he claims, “illustrate the utter futility of transformists to explain their alleged evolution.”

A figure illustrates Farrar’s creationist vision of the various intermediate stages between a shrew and a bat. It shows a shrew whose tiny webbed hands, useless for flight, slowly grow bigger and bigger. But a bat’s wing membranes extend to its hind legs. Thus, evolutionists would suggest that the ancestral shrew-like animal would have a gliding membrane (patagium) between the front and hind legs similar to that found in flying squirrels, flying phalangers, and the flying “lemur.” Further modification might involve elongated webbed fingers for more versatile steering. The flying “lemur” or colego (order, Dermoptera) has the equivalent of a rudimentary bat wing — a patagium and somewhat elongated webbed fingers — and it is a functional glider!

Farrar claims that most bats are nocturnal and all can echolocate. He implies that it is necessary for bats to echolocate and that the nonflying ancestor dared not evolve echolocation because that would reveal its location to predators. Because (he argues) neither the flight mechanism nor echolocation could function until it was 100% efficient (whatever that means), these adaptations must have come into existence instantaneously. All of these assertions are false.

With possibly one exception, all bats are nocturnal, but not all echolocate. Most megachiropteran fruit-eating bats do not echolocate. They have large, sensitive eyes and fly only when there is sufficient moonlight. Carnivorous bats navigate by echolocation. Only the insectivorous bats echolocate their flying prey.

Primitive, but working echolocation systems are found in terrestrial shrews, tenrecs (Malagasy insectivores), and some rodents. Even blind people can echolocate to some degree! Shrews emit ultrasonic cries from the larynx, similar to the microchiropteran insectivorous bats. Tenrecs use audible tongue clicks, as do the rodents and one genus of fruit-eating bats that roosts in caves. These systems are not at all as sophisticated as those of the insect-eating bats or the dolphins, but they do work.

It is not unreasonable to envision species of Paleocene or late Cretaceous arboreal, insectivorous, nocturnal shrew-like insectivores, using echolocation to jump from branch to branch, later evolving a patagium to extend their jumps by gliding; still further evolving the elongated webbed fingers for steering and possibly catching large insects on the wing, and finally evolving into flying bats. Unfortunately, there is as yet no fossil record of this. Although bats are the second largest mammalian order (after the rodents), they have by far the poorest fossil record. Their delicate skeletons and mainly tropical habitat are not conducive to fossil preservation.

Farrar says a 60% efficient system has no survival value whatever. That is nonsense. Is a fossil-fueled power plant (only 40% efficient at converting heat into electricity) totally useless? Was the Kodak Brownie camera, which lacked a focusing mechanism and iris diaphragm and had only one shutter speed, totally useless? What about a pinhole camera, which has no lens at all? Clearly, the “rudimentary” stages of structures and organs can be functional. Many biological and

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technological examples are known. According to Farrar, “it is incumbent upon evolutionists to tell us, in a detailed, step-by-step manner...” how these various structures evolved. Where we have sufficient information, that has been done. Now it is incumbent upon creationists to tell us, in a detailed, step-by-step manner how the creator created such structures!

Farrar serves up many incredible and totally false assertions: that Darwin rejected natural selection in the last edition of this book; that Goldschmidt and Gould claim that incipient transitional fossils will never be found, because such animals never existed; and that most mutations are lethal.

Furthermore, he claims that the evolutionary mechanism of mutation and natural selection requires that “the organism” must continue to keep winning mutational lotteries over millions of years — clearly a mathematical impossibility! But a species does not consist of one individual trying to win a lottery. It consists of large populations of individuals that share their winnings (advantageous mutated genes) by means of sexual recombination and reproduction. It is highly unlikely that any particular person will win a real (as opposed to metaphorical) lottery, let alone a whole series of them, but consider the entire human population, or just the population of one country or city. Someone is winning a lottery almost every day, and if those winnings are shared with (for example) a particular charity, that charity would have a good, constant income!

Farrar’s article is typical creationist scholarship — incorrect “facts” woven into illogical arguments.

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Current Creation Science

Bible-Science Newsletter, June 1990. The lead article, “Geographical Distribution and Ancient Mariners,” by Russell T. Armdts and Jeremy Lancot, cites a cornucopia of unorthodoxy (especially Barry Fell) to argue that ancient seafarers traveled far and wide and *could* have been responsible for distributing plants and animals as we find them. — Also on the cover, “State of California Orders ICR Graduate School Closed!” by Jerry Bergman, is a long mixture of fact, fantasy, and flapdoodle. — The lead editorial by Reverend Paul A. Bartz, “A National War on Christian Education,” virtually drops the pretense that creationist doctrines are science. Bartz suggests that the doctrines of the resurrection, virgin birth, and deity of Christ might next come under official attack, and he recommends that readers write to education officials “stating that as Christians they affirm their rights to teach their biblical teachings in their schools and churches, no matter what scientific authorities think about these teachings.” □

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What ICR Really Wants

Stanley Rice
The King's College and
Sarah Lawrence College

When one reads literature written by (or listens to debates involving) representatives of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR), one gets the impression that their major message is that the general theory of evolution cannot by itself explain the phenomena of life on Earth, a message with which many people can readily agree. As many of us know, however, the real objective of ICR is *not* merely to convince people to believe in the Creator. Instead, their guiding principle is this: If you do not believe in a recent creation and a Deluge of physically global extent, you might as well not bother believing in a Creator at all. To ICR, the dividing line is *not* theism vs. atheism; it is *not* even creation vs. evolution; it is *not* even reliability vs. error of Holy Scripture. The dividing line between the sheep and the goat is the young vs. old age of the Earth. This fact was abundantly demonstrated in their December *Acts and Facts* and its enclosed advertising.

In their December mailout, ICR advertised a revision of Henry Morris's "Science, Scripture, and the Young Earth." Its red-capital-letter billing was, "Don't be caught unprepared! Have these answers ready! Be prepared!" Prepared for what? Be prepared for Davis Young! ICR has taken on Davis Young, a geologist at the Reformed Church's Calvin College, as their favorite enemy. The entire advertisement tries to sell this book as a handy tool to defend the authority of scripture against Davis Young.

From reading this, and if you did not know better, you would guess that Davis Young was the successor of Bertrand Russell and Aldous Huxley. You would never guess that Davis Young, according to his own published confession of faith, is in fact a Christian, believes the Bible record of creation, and teaches at an

unabashedly conservative Christian college! And yet it makes no difference whatever to ICR; as far as they are concerned, he might as well be an atheist.

In October, ICR's Ken Ham debated Pattle Pun of Wheaton College, also an unabashedly conservative Christian college. Pun, like Young, has openly published his Christian conviction that God is the Creator. I was almost expecting the lead article of the December *Acts and Facts* to claim that Pun's faith in the Creator was worthless, because he does not believe in a recent creation. But they did not do this; instead, the article blamed it all on Davis Young! "It is obvious that Dr. Pun ... [has] been greatly influenced by the work of Dr. Davis Young." The implication of the advertisement and the article is that Young is corrupting Christian higher education.

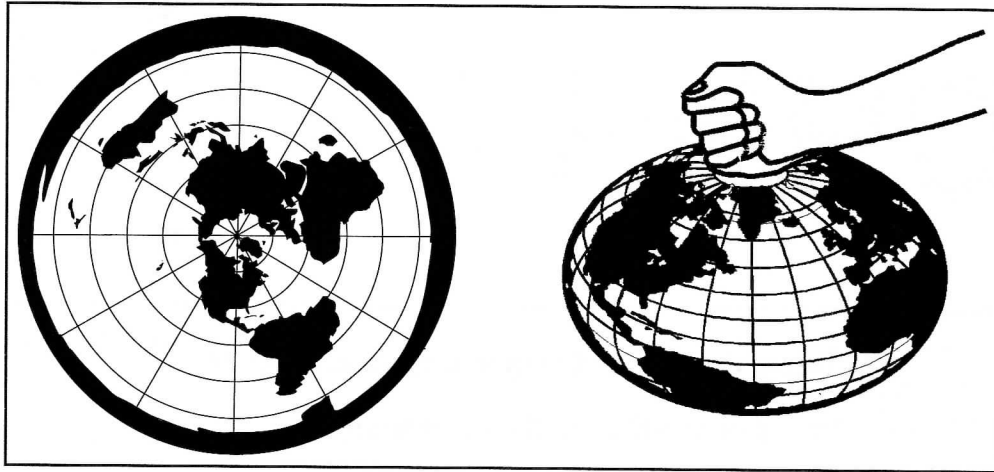
The same day that I received the ICR packet, I also received the American Scientific Affiliation's journal with its insert "Search: Scientists Who Serve God." Guess who the featured scientist was for December 1989? You got it: Davis Young. A considerable amount of biographical material was presented about Young; and even if I had never met him, I would have seen immediately from this information that Young not only has Christian beliefs but puts them into daily practice in his life. The reference to him in ICR literature is at best irresponsible and misleading.

If ICR were primarily interested in getting people to consider alternatives to atheistic evolutionism, they should be embracing Young as an ally, despite the fact that he and they differ in the details of their interpretation of Earth history. But they treat him as an enemy. What does this mean? It means that to ICR the "two models" are young Earth vs. everything else, *not* creation vs. evolution. When public schools consider ICR material for use in "presenting more than one view of origins," it is important that the ICR agenda be recognized for what it is. □

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Miscellanea

In response to pressure from Christian activists, the Portsmouth, England, School Board reportedly banned the teaching of conventional (spherical) astronomy in 1896.¹

A Song²

"Iconoclast"

We do not foist a paste-board Globe on every British school,
Nor vote for children's brains to rack with *Theory's*³ tangled rule;
Nor teach foul Falsehood's right to reign though donned in wig and robe,
Nor quench astonishment in youth when told the earth's a Globe.

Raise high the Truth; knock down the lie! and blow a mighty blast;
By showing how for so-called Science⁴ the Lie rose in the past;
Proclaim the thousands driven mad, and others nigh entranced,
Through grinding-in the Globe-man's Lie, and Protoplasm's dance.

Record how "Parallax"⁵ once fought, and Hampden's⁶ Clarion tongue;
Tell how "Zetetes,"⁷ Carpenter,⁸ have borne the standard on:
Of other heroes, young and old, in every land and clime;
And let the Truth which *must* be told resound along the line.

On, onward! Flatten all the globes in every British school,
Nor keep the Right upon the rack while Falsehoods proudly rule;
Let honest Truth, not lies, prevail through England's fair domain
Then Right shall rule and Truth shine o'er the World's extended Plane.

1. Reported in *Earth—Not a Globe!—Review* 4(1):18 (London, January-March 1897). Readers are cautioned that *Earth Review* was generally no more reliable in such matters than the *Bible-Science Newsletter* or *Acts & Facts*.

2. Reprinted from *Earth—Not a Globe!—Review* 1(2):24 (London, April 1893).

3. As with modern creationism, the philosophical basis of 19th century flat Earthism was Scottish Common Sense Realism, which disparaged mere *theories* and demanded *facts*.

4. See 1 Timothy 6:20.

5. "Parallax" (Samuel Birley Rowbotham) was the founder of modern flat Earthism.

6. John Hampden lost a £500 wager about the shape of the Earth to Alfred Russel Wallace in 1870. For details, see "He Knew Earth Is Round, but His Proof Fell Flat" by Robert Schadewald, *Smithsonian* 9(1):101 (April 1978).

7. Albert Smith was editor of *Earth—Not a Globe!—Review*.

8. William Carpenter, flat-Earth writer and lecturer, was one of the referees for the Hampden-Wallace wager.