

Creationism and Academia: Mutually Exclusive?

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[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written by one of A.P.'s auxiliary staff scientists. Dr. Brooks holds a Ph.D. in Cell Biology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Having served previously as a Research Assistant in Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology in the Medical School at the University of Alabama, Dr. Brooks presently serves as Assistant Professor of Biology at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee.]

We are truly a blessed people to live in a nation founded on Christian principles. Indeed, our religious freedom today is protected by a law that was established over 200 years ago. The first amendment to the *Constitution* states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." (*U.S. Bill of Rights*, 1791). In addition to this fundamental law, Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* clearly prevents employers from discriminating against individuals based on religion. Section 703 states:

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin... (1964).

These documents protect millions of individuals across the United States from religious persecution, but they are ignored by academia with little or no reprisal. In particular, the sciences blatantly and arrogantly discriminate against any person not holding an evolutionary view of the origins of life and the Universe. The problem is widespread in American universities. Many examples of scientist-educators, who have been fired, denied tenure, or simply not hired solely because they hold a creationist view rather than an evolutionary one, have surfaced in the past 20 years.

At one time during my own academic career, I was oblivious to this phenomenon, but then was made painfully aware of it at a recent job interview when I, too, faced this form of persecution. After a day of interviews and a teaching seminar, I met with the biology department chair of a state-funded university in Tennessee. He, with at least some tact, told me that I possessed all of the qualifications to teach for this department but would not be hired because of a statement that I made: "I am a creationist." This university's biology faculty as a collective agreed that no one with this particular belief should be allowed in an undergraduate classroom to teach the biological sciences.

This opinion is not held by these individuals alone. In a survey conducted by Dr. Jerry Bergman, 28 university professors (out of 28 surveyed) agreed with this stance. Bergman wrote:

All those interviewed stated that they doubted very much if their department would ever hire an out-of-the-closet creationist for a faculty position. Some claimed that they themselves

were not opposed, but felt that because a creationist would likely encounter serious problems in their department, it would be best if they not support their hiring. One added that it would not be objectionable to defend creationism on philosophical grounds, but an attempt to do so using biology would preclude hiring (1995).

Are creationism and academia mutually exclusive? Not at Christian universities, where the majority of faculty hold a creationist's view regarding the origins of life. But, this answer is different when applied to state-funded universities, where I dare say that the minority consider themselves creationists, even in the broadest sense. This number drops even more with a more conservative definition of creation. Is it possible for a creationist to teach basic biological concepts to undergraduate or even graduate students in the setting of a state university? The answer is yes!

From high school to graduate school, Darwinian evolution is taught as fact, when, in reality, it is little more than a hypothesis. A hypothesis is defined as a reasonable explanation for an observed phenomenon. Evolution is just that—although not so "reasonable." Why must we limit education by teaching only evolution to the complete dismissal of creationism? What's more, it is possible to teach such concepts as human anatomy and disease, among other subjects, without ever mentioning evolution or creation. Even in subject matter such as genetics and biochemistry, concepts can simply be given to students in an unbiased manner, leaving each student to determine what to believe by way of his or her own independent thought. After all, independent and critical thinking skills are key objectives for students to master.

As citizens of the United States, we each have the right to freedom from religious discrimination in every form. No institution, no matter how many terminal degrees its employees hold, has the right to deny any individual this right. Academia allegedly promotes "diversity" of culture and thought. Unfortunately, however, this claim does not hold true for the study of origins. In this area, evolution holds absolute dominance, and diversity is suppressed, to the detriment of all those seeking education.

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R&R RESOURCES

Q When did Job live?

A Neither the book of Job nor any other book of the Bible indicates forthrightly when God's servant Job lived upon the Earth. Furthermore, no biblical genealogies with chronological information, such as that found in Genesis 5 and 11, help in approximating the century in which Job lived. Nevertheless, various **clues** within the book of Job seem to indicate Job lived sometime after the Flood, but long before the time of Moses.

First, Job's postdiluvian status seems apparent from a question Eliphaz raised in his final speech. While accusing Job of wickedness, Eliphaz asked: "Will you keep to the old way which **wicked men** have trod, who were cut down before their time, whose foundations were **swept away by a flood?**" (Job 22:16, emp. added). As Wayne Jackson noted: "That this is a reference to the Flood of Noah's day is almost universally conceded by scholars" (1983, p. 58).

Second, that Job was a patriarch who lived prior to the time of Moses, and probably closer to the time of Abraham, seems evident from the following facts:

- Like other patriarchs of old (Genesis 8:20; 12:7-8; 31:54), Job, as the head of his family, offered up sacrifices to God (Job 1:5; cf. 42:8). In the book of Job, there is no mention of the Levitical priesthood, the tabernacle, the temple, the Law of Moses, etc.
- Unlike Israelite law, where the family inheritance was passed on to daughters only in the absence of sons (Numbers 27:1-11; 36:1-13), Job gave his daughters "an inheritance among their brothers" (Job 42:15).

- Job's material wealth was measured, not in money, but in the amount of livestock he owned (Job 1:3; 42:12), which is more characteristic of patriarchal times.
- Finally, that Job lived long before the time of Moses seems evident by the fact that the longevity of his life is more comparable to the long lives of the patriarchs who lived around 2200 B.C. The book of Job reveals that Job lived long enough to marry, become "the greatest of all the men of the east" (1:3), and then witness his first 10 children reach at least the age of accountability (1:5), and probably much greater ages (cf. 1:13, 18). Then, after suffering greatly, losing all of his children and his material wealth, God blessed Job with 10 more children and twice as much wealth (42:10-13). The book of Job then concludes: "**After this** Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days" (42:10-17, emp. added). Thus, it would appear that Job lived well into his 200s or beyond. Interestingly, the Septuagint testifies that Job died at the age of 240—an age more comparable to the ancestors of Abraham (e.g., Serug, Abraham's great-grandfather lived to be 230—Genesis 11:22-23).

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IN THE NEWS

In a recent *New Scientist* article titled "Evolution: A Guide for the Not-Yet Perplexed," Michael Le Page expressed great confidence in The General Theory of Evolution, even going so far as to declare, "Evolution is as firmly established a scientific fact as the roundness of the Earth" (2008, 198[2652]:25). Le Page then proceeded to suggest various reasons why evolutionists reject Intelligent Design. After alleging the Earth is 4.5 billion years old (see DeYoung, 2005 and Thompson, 2001 for refutations of this idea), Le Page wrote:

Suppose for a moment that life was **designed** rather than having evolved. In that case organisms that appear similar **might** have very different internal workings, just as an LCD screen has a quite different mechanism to a plasma screen. The explosion of genomic research, however, has revealed that all living creatures work in essentially the same way: they store and translate information using the same genetic code, with only a few minor variations in the most primitive organisms (p. 26, emp. added).

Le Page continued: "[I]f organisms had been **designed** for particular roles, they **might** be unable to adapt to changing conditions. Instead, countless experiments...show that organisms of all kinds evolve when their environment is altered, provided the changes are not too abrupt" (p. 26, emp. added).

Notice Le Page's reasons for rejecting Intelligent Design: (1) if life was designed, "organisms...**might** have very different internal workings," and (2) designed organisms "**might** be unable to adapt" to changing environments (p. 26, emp. added). As should be obvious to any-

one reading this recent issue of *New Scientist*, Le Page's arguments are **pure speculation**. Neither the similarities in the genetic make-up of living organisms nor the ability of living things to adapt to their environments are reasons to reject design and accept evolution.

Creationists have long recognized similarities among animals and humans. In fact, such similarities (even on a cellular level) should be expected among creatures that drink the same water, eat the same food, breathe the same air, live on the same terrain, etc. But, similarities are just that—similarities. Evolutionists interpret these similarities to mean we all share common ancestors, but they cannot prove it. Likewise, the ability of animals to adapt to their surroundings could just as easily be explained as the product of an omniscient Designer programming life long ago with the ability to adapt to its environment.

New Scientist's assumption-based rejection of design is completely unsubstantiated. Neither homology nor organisms' adaptation abilities are proof of The General Theory of Evolution.

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