« Live Blogging the Final Science Vote in Texas II TFN Video: Don McLeroy's Attack on Evolution »

Science Takes Hit in Texas

By TFN

The Texas Freedom Network has released the following statement on the final adoption of science curriculum standards by the State Board of Education today:

> FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
>
> March 27, 2009
>
> **TFN President Kathy Miller: Texas State Board of Education Adopts Flawed Science Standards**
>
> The word "weaknesses" no longer appears in the science standards. But the document still has plenty of potential footholds for creationist attacks on evolution to make their way into Texas classrooms.
>
> Through a series of contradictory and convoluted amendments, the board crafted a road map that creationists will use to pressure publishers into putting phony arguments attacking established science into textbooks.
>
> We appreciate that the politicians on the board seek compromise, but don't agree that compromises can be made on established mainstream science or on honest education policy.
>
> What's truly unfortunate is that we now have to revisit this entire debate in two years when new science textbooks are adopted. Perhaps the Texas legislature can do something to prevent that.
>
> *###*
>
> *The Texas Freedom Network is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization of religious and community leaders who advance a mainstream agenda supporting public education, religious freedom and individual liberties.*

This entry was posted on March 27, 2009 at 4:25 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.

52 Responses to "Science Takes Hit in Texas"

Ben Says:
March 27, 2009 at 4:30 pm

Check the date at the top of the release. Year is wrong.

Your friend, the proofreader.

No need to publish this comment.

Thanks again for all your hard work.

TFN Says:
March 27, 2009 at 4:43 pm

Thanks for the catch!

Joe Lapp Says:
March 27, 2009 at 4:55 pm

I think the final standards encourage science teachers to address creationism, but they don't say what stance teachers have to take on creationism. Some teachers will teach creationism, some will show how science undermines creationism.

But these standards guarantee that the topic of creationism will arise in science classes.

The same requirement is made of textbooks, so this may have the effect of *requiring* that textbooks undermine creationism (if they are to remain scientific).

But the SBOE will decide how to interpret these standards, and that's where publishers may get into trouble.

Ed Darrell Says:
March 27, 2009 at 4:55 pm

When Don McLeroy says "compromise," it's like when in the old Victorian novels it was noted that the lady was "compromised against her will."

It *was* a Texas songwriter, Robert Earl Keen, who wrote "the road goes on forever." He knows Texas.

jdg Says:
March 27, 2009 at 6:29 pm

If teachers bring up creationism, lawsuits will surely rise.

Eik Corell Says:
March 27, 2009 at 7:30 pm

Wait, so what exact happened? Wasn't this originally about the Wedge Strategy of the Discovery Institute — Meaning that they wanted to introduce the text "strengths and weakenesses". This got denied, so how come immediately after they can just adopt new laws on the spot? Wasn't all their wishes denied in the initial verdict? Why did they even go through this trouble about new curriculum including magic wizards in the sky when they could just have forced these issues through to begin with, like they did now? A bit confused here.

ScienceMinded Says:
March 27, 2009 at 9:06 pm

Correction from earlier post by TFN (NB) staff: The Texas Freedom Network is an extremist left-wing liberal organization consisting of NB whose far-from-mainstream agenda opposes anything to do with sound public science education, religious freedom, or individual liberties.

And, Lets all give a round of applause for today's accomplishments of the SBOE faction that opposes the NB agenda. As evidenced by many of the vote totals today, it appears that many of the left-wing members of the SBOE also denounces the NB agenda. Wow, the NB aren't even mainstream with the liberal, left-wing board members!! Another piece of evidence: throughout the entire SBOE proceedings that took place this week, which allegedly threatens the entire NB belief system, there were approximately only 30 NB supporters that actually blogged here on the NB website. 30 supporters showing up, for probably the most major event of the year, is pretty pathetic for an organization that claims to be mainstream!! Here is another piece of evidence for you NB: If you can't even

recognize that you've been hoodwinked by the SBOE, how will you ever recognize that theories have weaknesses? Oh, that's right, you won't, your NB!

Congratulations McLeroy, Dunbar, Leo, Lowe, Bradley, Cargill, ... Thanks for your efforts and wisdom. Another fine day for science!!

Yours TRULY, ScienceMinded

Adam Solomon Says:
March 27, 2009 at 9:06 pm

I don't envy the job of Texas science teachers. If I'm teaching the Big Bang and I'm required to talk about "alternative theories," what is there to say? There are none. Will the SBOE have teachers lie to their students?

Rocky George Says:
March 27, 2009 at 9:23 pm

It still amazes me that in this scientific and technological age, we still have to take science and intellectual honesty to court in order to keep the smothering, anti-intellectual vacuum of fundamentalism from destroying education and polluting the minds of our children with mythical, "creationism" garbage.

Some Texans, literally living on millions of years worth of fossil beds, and economically rewarded because of the geology of Texas, still have to dictate myth be taught in the classroom because the science doesn't support their religious beliefs. We are long past the time when this "emic" of ignorance can be accepted within the "etic" of scientific reality, even in Texas. Wake up folks! Get a life.

Tiffany Says:
March 27, 2009 at 9:26 pm

ScienceMinded,
I understand your need to speak out against what most people reading this lifeblog agree with. It's ok. You're a minority here trying to convince a majority (speaking in this TFN context only) of the incorrectness of your views. This probably won't play out like Twelve Angry Men, though. I'm afraid you're still the long dissenter here, and you're not winning over any team members.

Like I said, though. I understand your need to try to convince us that our views are wrong, and yours are right. People insecure about their belief system regularly do that in order to convince themselves of their own correctness. It's basic psychology, so we understand.

Ben Says:
March 27, 2009 at 9:35 pm

It's been a long time since I've had the displeasure of interacting with anyone as despicable and dishonest as ScienceBlinded. The ironic thing, he is a Christian. Fortunately, most Christians are much more like Charles.

If anybody reading this knows anyone like ScienceBlinded, perhaps it's time to speak up and let that person know just how repugnant their views are. Keeping quiet only allows his sort of smug self-righteousness and willful ignorance to survive, generation after generation, creating problems in our schools and in our society. Just how bad is he? You'll see when he replies to this post. Or simply read his past comments.

Rocky George Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:13 pm

I think one of the best ways to help students make up their own minds about the mythology of Judeo-Christian creationism is to teach 5 or 6 of the cration myths: the creation myths (both in Genesis) in the Bible, the Hindu creation myths, some of the Native American creation myths and others from various cultures. That way the student understands that creation myths were important ways of understanding their world and supporting and maintaing their their religions.

The best defense against anti-intellectualism is an offense of more intellecutally honest education.

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:16 pm

TFN says,
–Through a series of contradictory and convoluted amendments, the board crafted a road map that creationists will use to pressure publishers into putting phony arguments attacking established science into textbooks. –

For the umpteenth time, no school system in the world — including Texas — is required to use Texas-approved textbooks! Local school districts in Texas can use state-unapproved textbooks if the districts pay the full cost, which isn't much. If a biology textbook costs, say, $100 and is used for five years, that comes to a cost of only about $20 per student per year. A popular biology textbook, "Biology" by Ken Miller and Joe Levine, already comes in regular, California, and Texas editions.

ScienceMinded Says:
–The Texas Freedom Network is an extremist left-wing liberal organization consisting of NB–

What does "NB" mean – "non-believer"? What does believing or not believing have to do with this?

Ben Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:17 pm

Jeff Carlson

jdg Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:24 pm

Don't worry everyone, it won't be taught. This vote was symbolic only.

jdg Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:37 pm

The reason this happened today is that people who do actual science are not on these board. If we get on these school boards then we can keep good science on the books instead of a religious ideology acting as "weaknesses"

jdg Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:45 pm

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 27, 2009 at 10:16 pm

What does "NB" mean – "non-believer"? What does believing or not believing have to do with this?

Yes larry, it means non-believer. You should know this, stop pretending it was not a religious issue.
Head back into the sand Larry.

ScienceMinded Says:
March 28, 2009 at 12:08 am

Actually, It means NoBrainers. It is how I affectionately refer to all my pro-TFN buddies. It's the name that stuck after reading so many of their utterly thoughtless comments. It's what they all seemed to have evolved into after congregating at this web site for some time and spending too much time breeding pure nonsense about evolution with one another!! So remember NB, it's not about religion, it's about teaching both the recognized strengths and weaknesses of ALL theories that are taught in public classrooms. What a bunch of NB!!!!

Win some, lose some for science « Off the Kuff Says:
March 28, 2009 at 7:52 am

[...] conclusion to draw after the three-day circus that was the now-concluded SBOE hearings in Austin. TFN Insider sums it up: TFN President Kathy Miller: Texas State Board of Education Adopts Flawed Science [...]

Boudica Says:
March 28, 2009 at 12:39 pm

My 14 yr old son will be taking Biology next year as a HS freshman, and believe me, I will be watching like a hawk about what he is taught. Any mention of creationism or intelligent (!) design will be "fighting words."

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 28, 2009 at 12:58 pm

The Wall Street Journal is finally essentially saying what I have been saying for a long time — that the Texas board of education's influence on textbook content has been overrated. A WSJ article says,
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123819751472561761.html

Science standards in Texas resonate across the U.S., since it approves one set of books for the entire state. That makes Texas the nation's single largest market for high-school textbooks.

In the past, publishers often have written texts to its curriculum and marketed them nationally rather than spend time and money reworking them for different states and districts.

The notion that Texas controls textbook content outside of Texas is probably the result of the widespread adoption of ***non-controversial*** Texas-approved textbooks outside of Texas.

BTW, California has statewide textbook adoption for grades 1-8 but not at the high school level — see https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/57/75/5775.htm

The WSJ article continues,
That influence has diminished, said Jay Diskey, executive director of the Association of American Publishers' school division, as districts and statewide boards of education have become more likely to scrutinize texts approved in other states. Desktop publishing also has made it easier for companies to amend textbooks to suit different markets.

"It's not necessarily the case" that the Texas curriculum will pop up in other states, Mr. Diskey said.

As I have pointed out, a popular biology textbook, "Biology" by Ken Miller and Joe Levine, comes in regular, California, and Texas editions (even though this is a high-school level textbook and — as I noted above — California does not have statewide textbook adoption at the high school level). What are the differences between these editions, I wonder?

The WSJ says,
But within Texas, what the board says, goes.

That's not true — local school districts in Texas can use state-unapproved textbooks. The districts must pay the full cost of state-unapproved textbooks in the "foundation curriculum" (I presume that biology is in the foundation curriculum), but curiously the state will pay up to 70% of the cost of state-unapproved textbooks in the "enrichment curriculum."

The WSJ said,
Several years ago, the board expressed concern that a description of the Ice Age occurring "millions of years ago" conflicted with biblical timelines. The publisher changed it to "in the distant past." Another publisher sought to satisfy the board by inserting a heading about "strengths and weaknesses of evolution" in a biology text, drawing condemnation from science organizations.

What? I thought that in the last round of science textbook approvals in 2003, the "fundies" on the Texas SBOE did not have enough votes to have weaknesses of evolution included in the textbooks.

The WSJ said,
The board will use the new standards to choose new textbooks in 2011.

==========

I am very annoyed by reporters who spread misinformation instead of doing a little original research.

My blog has an article about the Texas board of education's influence on textbooks — a lot of the information in this comment comes from that article:
http://im-from-missouri.blogspot.com/2009/01/effect-of-texas-science-standards-on.html

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 28, 2009 at 1:28 pm

ScienceMinded Says (March 28, 2009 at 12:08 am) —
–Actually, It means NoBrainers. It is how I affectionately refer to all my pro-TFN buddies. –

SM, that is a misuse of the term. "No-brainer" normally means something that is obvious, self-evident, very easy to understand, etc.. It

means something that does not require the use of one's brain.

Boudica Says (March 28, 2009 at 12:39 pm) —
–My 14 yr old son will be taking Biology next year as a HS freshman, and believe me, I will be watching like a hawk about what he is taught. Any mention of creationism or intelligent (!) design will be "fighting words."–

You Darwinists are really paranoid about anything that does not support Darwinism. A recent national survey of science teachers showed that 25% of respondents spend some time on creationism and intelligent design, though not necessarily teaching them as valid — see
http://im-from-missouri.blogspot.com/2008/08/state-of-evolution-education-in-usa-and.html

BTW, intelligent design is not the only scientific (or pseudoscientific) criticism of evolution. Is "coevolution" a "fighting word"? On my blog, I use coevolution to attack evolution theory –
http://im-from-missouri.blogspot.com/2009/01/summary-of-thoughts-about-co-evolution.html

I wonder why students are not demonstrating in the streets, carrying signs like, "I want to learn about Intelligent Design."

Ben Says:
March 28, 2009 at 1:40 pm

Larry, like a lot of people here, I simply scroll over your remarks. The problem is, all that scrolling is giving me cramps in my hand. Could you please write shorter comments so I won't have to scroll so much?

Thanks in advice. You are a real pal.

ScienceMinded Says:
March 28, 2009 at 3:09 pm

Did you guys read Fish Gal's post. I think she only posted once, but it was the best post I've seen this past week. Go Fish Gal!!!

Yours TRULY

ScienceMinded Says:
March 28, 2009 at 3:12 pm

To Ben: You can use the "Page Down" key on your keyboard. Maybe it would be good to limit posts to less than the equivalent of 1 page.

Ben Says:
March 28, 2009 at 3:34 pm

Tee hee.

Chortle.

Uh, yeah. Maybe not. Stick to being obnoxious. Your humor doesn't work.

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 28, 2009 at 8:09 pm

Ben Says (March 28, 2009 at 1:40 pm) –
–. Could you please write shorter comments so I won't have to scroll so much? –

If you Darwinists did not make so many errors, I would not have to write such long comments correcting them.

My use of URL links to my blog and other websites greatly reduces the lengths of my comments.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 12:42 am

Irreducible stupidity – the belief that the myths & legends of illiterate superstitious ex-slaves lost in the desert millenia ago are acceptable as science today, Evolution has evolved way past Darwin. It gives me the giggles to here the term "Darwinists", like most of your dated arguments from the 1950's.

By the way, check your bible... GOD EVOLVES! Man, made in his image evolves too... Creationists are Satans's spawn taking us from

the true path of righteousness. God bless St, Darwin for starting us on the true path to God! You creationists better start praying that God evolves enough to forgive your transgressions!

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 1:43 am

Larry Larry Larry, you best get down on your knees and pray for forgiveness from our Evolving God! The Devil has surely blinded you from seeing the evolution of our Old Testament God to our New Testament God! You are the true no brainier non believer. Repent while you still have time. God Evolves! God Bless St. Darwin!

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:30 am

Larry Larry Larry read your blogs.. so many insults hurled at people you don't agree with. Our Evolving God is watching you and your increasing transgressions... Bearing false witness against God... how many commandments have you broken? God help you Larry.. best pray to St. Darwin as well!

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:36 am

Hmmm William Paley back in the 1800's put forth the ID concept, Darwin debunked it in 1859... but you all still repeat it as if it's brand shiny new polyester... better catch up with the new millennium and pray for forgiveness to our Evolving God

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:40 am

Chew on this one ID people
Ironically, Behe's own example, the mousetrap, shows what's wrong with this idea. Take away two parts (the catch and the metal bar), and you may not have a mousetrap but you do have a three-part machine that makes a fully functional tie clip or paper clip. Take away the spring, and you have a two-part key chain. The catch of some mousetraps could be used as a fishhook, and the wooden base as a paperweight; useful applications of other parts include everything from toothpicks to nutcrackers and clipboard holders. The point, which science has long understood, is that bits and pieces of supposedly irreducibly complex machines may have different — but still useful — functions.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:42 am

and while we are at it

Wells contends that "Darwin's theory cannot account for all features of living things," but then, it doesn't have to. Today scientists explain features of living things by invoking not only natural selection but also additional biological processes that Darwin didn't know about, including gene transfer, symbiosis, chromosomal rearrangement, and the action of regulator genes. Contrary to what Wells maintains, evolutionary theory is not inadequate. It fits the evidence just fine.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:45 am

And, what the heck, from my own blog

It is quite obvious why the scientific community has rejected creation science. It does not meet with any of the standards that science has set for itself. It is a non-falsifiable, deductivist theory with a supernatural basis that lacks coherence and integrity, is rife with predictive failure and has perverted the process by which theories become science. It simply is not a science and does not, therefore, belong in any science curriculum.

Better start praying to our Evolving God before it's too late folks!

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:50 am

on a roll here

"As Christians," writes Dembski, "we know naturalism is false. Nature is not self-sufficient. ... Nonetheless neither theology nor philosophy can answer the evidential question whether God's interaction with the world is empirically detectable. To answer this question we must look to science." Jonathan Wells, a biologist, and Michael J. Behe, a biochemist, seem just the CRSC fellows to give intelligent design the ticket to credibility. Yet neither has actually done research to test the theory, much less produced data that challenges the massive evidence accumulated by biologists, geologists, and other evolutionary scientists. Wells, influenced in part by Unification Church leader Sun Myung Moon, earned Ph.D.'s in religious studies and biology specifically "to devote my life to destroying Darwinism." Behe sees the relevant question as whether "science can make room for religion." At heart, proponents of intelligent design are not motivated to improve science but to transform it into a theistic enterprise that supports religious faith.

and as a faith they got it wrong... God Evolves... how many strikes before your out (of heaven?)

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:54 am

Claims of scientific persecution? Expelled!

Expelled claims that Sternberg was "terrorized" and that "his life was nearly ruined" when, in 2004, as editor of Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, he published a pro-intelligent design article by Stephen C. Meyer. However, there is no evidence of either terrorism or ruination. Before publishing the paper, Sternberg worked for the National Institutes of Health at the National Center for Biotechnology Information (GenBank) and was an unpaid Research Associate – not an employee – at the Smithsonian. He was the voluntary, unpaid editor of PBSW (small academic journals rarely pay editors), and had given notice of his resignation as editor six months before the Meyer article was published. After the Meyer incident, he remained an employee of NIH and his unpaid position at the Smithsonian was extended in 2006, although he has not shown up there in years. At no time was any aspect of his pay or working conditions at NIH affected. It is difficult to see how his life "was nearly ruined" when nothing serious happened to him. He was never even disciplined for legitimate violations of policy of PBSW or Smithsonian policy.
The Claim

"The paper ignited a firestorm of controversy merely because it suggested intelligent design might be able to explain how life began." (Ben Stein, Expelled)
The Facts

Expelled doesn't even get the paper's subject right. The paper was not about how life began; it was about the Cambrian Explosion, which occurred about three billion years later. The greater error is claiming that the discussion of ID generated the controversy. There was an understandable outcry from members of the Biological Society of Washington over the embarrassing publication of what they recognized as poorly-written, inaccurate science in their journal. The argument presented in the Meyer paper had previously been reviewed and rejected by scientists. Seeing this shoddy science in their journal indeed "ignited a firestorm", but not for the reasons given in Expelled. For more on why the paper was bad science, see the review published on the Panda's Thumb blog and the review in the Palaeontological Society Newsletter.

Proceedings of the Biological Society of WashingtonThe first question asked by BSW members was "how did this paper ever get published?" According to the Council of the Biological Society of Washington, Sternberg failed to follow proper procedure in publishing the paper: "Contrary to typical editorial practices, the paper was published without review by any associate editor; Sternberg handled the entire review process. The Council, which includes officers, elected councilors, and past presidents, and the associate editors would have deemed the paper inappropriate for the pages of the Proceedings because the subject matter represents such a significant departure from the nearly purely systematic content for which this journal has been known throughout its 122-year history." The BSW withdrew the paper in embarrassment, emphasizing that the paper was substandard science. It commented that the society endorsed "a resolution on ID published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2002/1106id2.shtml), which observes that there is no credible scientific evidence supporting ID as a testable hypothesis to explain the origin of organic diversity. Accordingly, the Meyer paper does not meet the scientific standards of the Proceedings."

Though Sternberg claimed that he was the best qualified to handle the review process, science blogger Ed Brayton notes that this is not the case:

Systematics (the study of taxonomy) is the subject of the PBSW and it is the subject of Sternberg's expertise, but it is not the subject of Meyer's paper. The primary subject of the paper is the Cambrian explosion and, ostensibly, bioinformatics as it pertains to the origin of the higher phyla. This is not the focus of Sternberg's research, nor does it have much of anything to do with systematics other than an obligatory discussion of how many phyla and sub-phyla originated during the Cambrian. The most appropriate reviewers, then, would be paleontologists. Among the associate editors at the time (and still today) was Gale Bishop, an expert in invertebrate paleontology. There were three other specialists on invertebrates among the associate editors as well, including current PBSW editor Stephen Gardiner, Christopher Boyko and Janet Reid, all specialists in invertebrate zoology (the Cambrian fauna was almost entirely made up of invertebrates). Yet Sternberg felt no need to let any of those people, all more qualified than him on the subject, even look at the paper, or even make them aware of its existence. He may not have been under any formal obligation to send the article to someone with a specialty in Cambrian paleontology, but that is both the professional and the ethical thing to do.

The fact that Sternberg published the Meyer paper in his second-to-last scheduled issue as editor, and that he didn't follow normal procedure, suggests that he knew that his actions and the paper would be seen as objectionable by his fellow scientists.
The Claim

"In October, as the OSC complaint recounts, [Sternberg's supervisor] Mr. Coddington told Mr. Sternberg to give up his office and turn in his keys to the departmental floor, thus denying him access to the specimen collections he needs." (Wall Street Journal editorial, linked from Expelled website)
The Facts

According to Coddington in a January 2005 communication, "Well prior to the publication of the Meyer article and my awareness of it, I asked him and another Research Associate to move as part of a larger and unavoidable reorganization of space involving 17 people and 20 offices. He agreed. I offered both individuals new, identical, standard Research Associate work spaces. The other accepted, but Dr. von Sternberg declined and instead requested space in an entirely different part of the Museum, which I provided, and which he currently occupies."

The Smithsonian wrote a letter to the Wall Street Journal, observing, "Dr. Sternberg's characterization of his work conditions and treatment at the Smithsonian is incorrect. He was never denied office space, keys or access to the collections."

In a January 30, 2006, letter responding to Sternberg's concerns, Smithsonian Deputy Secretary & Chief Operating Officer Sheila Burke explained:

"As you know, as part of an effort to enhance security at the Museum, all researchers were asked to return their keys in 2004, and were issued coded identification badges to provide access to non-public areas. The badge you were issued, which provides general access to doors and elevators, is still operative. If you have any problems gaining access to conduct your research, however please contact the Security office at NMNH. In accordance with NMNH policy, please return your old keys as soon as possible to your sponsor, Dr. Vari."

In short, Sternberg has turned two bits of bureaucratic minutiae affecting an entire division of the museum – a switch from keys to ID badges and a routine shuffling of office space – into a conspiracy to undermine him personally. EXPELLED

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:01 am

Claims of scientific persecution? Expelled

Expelled claims that Iowa State University astronomy professor Guillermo Gonzalez was denied tenure because of his views on intelligent design. However, this shows a naïve and distorted understanding of the tenure process at a major research university. The tenure process involves intense scrutiny of a candidate's accomplishments in order to assess his future potential; the beliefs or extra-academic opinions held by the candidate are not a factor. Gonzalez's academic record is not as golden as Expelled would have you believe, and due process was rendered at every level of appeal. ISU was justified in rejecting his application for tenure.
The Claim

"Normally, it is not especially difficult to attain tenure at ISU. In 2007, 91 percent of tenure applications were approved." (Klinghoffer, D. (2007) Tenure Trouble. Weekly Standard: 8 June. Linked from the Expelled website)
The Facts

Iowa State UniversityGaining tenure at a major research institution is never easy. The stakes – employment protection from dismissal without due cause – are very high, and it is appropriate that candidates should face intense scrutiny. Each department at ISU determines tenure independently, so it is inappropriate to look at average tenure rates across the entire university. Professors who receive negative evaluations, or who know that they are underperforming for other reasons, often start looking for employment elsewhere before their tenure review. This makes statistics on approval of university-wide tenure decisions less valuable than the Weekly Standard article would have you believe. Of the twelve candidates considered for tenure in Gonzales's department (physics) in the last decade, four were denied tenure, only a 66% approval rate. (Brumfiel, G. 2007 Darwin sceptic says views cost tenure. Nature, published online: 23 May. Subscription required.)

According to ISU, Gonzalez's tenure decision was based on "refereed publications, his level of success in attracting research funding and grants, the amount of telescope observing time he had been granted, the number of graduate students he had supervised, and most importantly, the overall evidence of future career promise in the field of astronomy." As documented below, the university had grounds to conclude that the early promise of Gonzalez's career was not being met.
The Claim

"According to a Smithsonian/NASA astrophysics database, Gonzalez's scientific articles from 2001 to 2007 rank the highest among astronomers in his department according to a standard measure of how frequently they have been cited by other scientists. He has published 68 peer-reviewed articles, which beat the ISU department's standard for tenure by 350 percent. He has also co-authored a standard astronomy textbook, published by Cambridge University Press, which his faculty colleagues use in their own classes."

(Klinghoffer, D. (2007) Tenure Trouble. Weekly Standard: 8 June. Linked from the Expelled website)
The Facts

Gonzalez's publication output dropped steadily during his time at ISU. The work he did publish was based on re-evaluations of data he had previously collected or analyses of other people's data.

An assessment by the Chronicle of Higher Education (subscription required) found that:

...a closer look at Mr. Gonzalez's case raises some questions about his recent scholarship and whether he has lived up to his early promise. ...

Under normal circumstances, Mr. Gonzalez's publication record would be stellar and would warrant his earning tenure at most universities, according to Mr. Hirsch [a scholar who analyzed the publication record]. But Mr. Gonzalez completed the best scholarship, as judged by his peers, while doing postdoctoral work at the University of Texas at Austin and at the University of Washington, where he received his Ph.D. His record has trailed off since then.

"It looks like it slowed down considerably," said Mr. Hirsch.... "It's not clear that he started new things, or anything on his own, in the period he was an assistant professor at Iowa State."

That pattern may have hurt his case. "Tenure review only deals with his work since he came to Iowa State," said John McCarroll, a spokesman for the university.

When considering a tenure case, faculty committees try to anticipate what kind of work a professor will accomplish in the future. "The only reason the previous record is relevant is the extent to which it can predict future performance," said Mr. Hirsch. "Generally, it's a good indication, but in some cases it's not."

David L. Lambert, director of the McDonald Observatory at Texas, supervised Mr. Gonzalez during his postdoctoral fellowship there in the early to mid-1990s. ... [H]e is not aware of any important new work by Mr. Gonzalez since he arrived at Iowa State, such as branching off into different directions of research. "I don't know what else he has done," Mr. Lambert said. ...

Mr. Gonzalez said he does not have any grants through NASA or the National Science Foundation, the two agencies that would normally support his research.... He arrived at Iowa State in 2001, but none of his graduate students there have thus far completed their doctoral work

That even Gonzalez's former academic advisors expressed doubts about his performance at ISU suggests that this is a serious issue. It is worth noting that the decline in his publication rate corresponds to the time when he started putting time into an intelligent design project that has produced no peer-reviewed results. This includes his work on The Privileged Planet and his collaboration with old-earth creationist Hugh Ross from the ministry Reasons to Believe (for instance: http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=2612 and http://www.reasons.org/resources/fff/2002issue09/index.shtml#rare_sun).

According to another analysis of his publication record which includes a graph of his publication productivity:

Gonzalez had a very successful postdoc with a good research group, and that carried over to his first faculty appointment at University of Washington, where he continued to collaborate with his old colleagues from his Ph.D. and postdoc. However, he peaked in 1999, and the decline began even while he was still at the University of Washington. Even more pronounced than the drop in publications is the complete bottom-out in first authorships that is almost sustained throughout his entire probationary period leading up to tenure.

So ISU Physics [would be] stuck with a guy who publishes hardly any papers as primary author, whose publication list contracts once he strikes out on his own, and, perhaps most importantly, who doesn't publish with new colleagues. New tenure-track investigators ... absolutely MUST take an active role in pursuing one another's research interests in order to stretch meager funds as far as possible.

In addition to his declining publication record and his failure to mentor graduate students to completing their programs, it is also notable that Gonzalez brought in far fewer research grants than his colleagues. The average tenured faculty in the ISU physics and astronomy department brought in $1.3 million in grants during their first six years. Gonzalez brought in, at most, $200,000 during the same amount of time, $64,000 of which was used to pay a doctoral student at a different university and $58,000 of which was for his intelligent design book The Privileged Planet. In 2007, Gonzalez told the Ames Tribune that "he was told, beginning with his three-year tenure review in 2004, that he needed to bring in more research funding. He added he heard the same message in reviews every year since, as well. He has made the effort, he said, submitting two grant applications per year, but to no avail."

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:02 am

Claims of scientific persecution? Expelled!

Expelled claims that Caroline Crocker was fired because she mentioned Intelligent Design in a class she was teaching. However, the evidence says otherwise. While there may have been grounds to fire her with cause, Crocker was not fired and continued to teach her course after student complaints; in addition, she did not just "mention" intelligent design, but rather was teaching demonstrably false

creationist material. We do not know for certain why Crocker was not re-hired for her non-tenure track job. Such positions carry no promise that contracts will be renewed. Only tenure-track jobs come with such an expectation, and only tenured professors have a guarantee of employment.

The Claim

"After she simply mentioned Intelligent Design in her cell biology class at George Mason University, Caroline Crocker's sterling academic career came to an abrupt end." (Ben Stein, Expelled)

"[My supervisor] said 'nonetheless you have to be disciplined', and I lost my job." (Caroline Crocker, Expelled)

The Facts

George Mason University, photo from The Fairfax County Economic Development AuthorityExpelled makes it sound as if Crocker was immediately removed (expelled, even) from the George Mason University classroom. On the contrary, she completed teaching the course in the normal fashion, even after student complaints and whatever "discipline" followed that meeting with the supervisor. Crocker's position at George Mason University (GMU) was a non-tenure track contract position in which the employee teaches on a course-by-course basis for a set length of time, with no guarantee of a renewal. Universities commonly use such "contingent faculty", and, while not being brought back for another term may be the result of inadequate performance, it most commonly is the result of staffing needs: whether or not an individual's expertise is needed at a particular time, or whether regular faculty can handle the load for the particular semester. Tenured and tenure track faculty make up only 31.9% of university teaching jobs in the United States, so Crocker's situation was not unusual. In fact, overlapping with her contract at GMU, she held another contract position to teach at Northern Virginia Community College.

Despite claims of being fired, Crocker was allowed to continue teaching and complete her GMU contract after the Department became aware of her ID instruction through student complaints. She was instructed to not teach about intelligent design and creation science, which was not part of the curriculum of the courses she had been hired to teach. Academic freedom does not mean the freedom to teach about anything you want, regardless of the expected content of your courses. And, far from having her academic career "come to an abrupt end", after leaving GMU, Crocker taught at NVCC, and additionally acquired in 2006 a postdoctoral position at the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, MD, working on T-cell signal transduction – an actual scientific investigation – suggesting that her reputation as a scientist was unaffected by the controversy over intelligent design.

The Claim

"Not only did she lose her job at George Mason, this highly qualified researcher suddenly found herself blacklisted, unable to find a job anywhere." (Ben Stein, Expelled)

The Facts

Neither Expelled nor Crocker offer any basis for the claim that she was blacklisted. Visiting lecturers lead a difficult existence in an era when there are more Ph.D.s being granted than there are tenured positions at universities. Were she blacklisted, it's hard to know why she would even be getting interviews.

Indeed, if she were blacklisted, we would not expect her to have had regular employment after leaving GMU. But after her contract at GMU ended and the controversy about her teaching methods surfaced, Dr. Crocker continued in another adjunct faculty position at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), where she continued to teach demonstrably false science, as well as creationism, and was even profiled in an article at The Washington Post to which she willingly contributed.

In January 2006, she began a year as a postdoc at the Uniformed Services University, where she researched and taught molecular biology techniques. Currently, Crocker has a job associated with intelligent design: she is employed as the executive director of the Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center, a national ID group for students, and, according to her web site, offers lectures to "churches and educational institutions" for fees ranging from $1,000 to $5,000. If she prefers now to work full-time promoting ID and her religious views, she is certainly entitled to do so. But that may be a preference rather than a necessity. In any regard, she continued to hold academic jobs after leaving GMU, so she could hardly have been blacklisted, nor does she offer any documentation for this very serious charge.

The Claim

"And I said I mentioned Intelligent Design on a couple of slides but I did not teach creationism" (Caroline Crocker, Expelled)

The Facts

In the above-mentioned article in the Washington Post, Crocker is described teaching her students a laundry list of discredited Creationist arguments. In a video on the Coral Ridge Ministries site, several of Crocker's slides are shown. Though it's not known whether Crocker used the same slides while teaching at George Mason, the Washington Post article provides evidence that they were part of her Northern Virginia Community College lectures. Her use of these slides suggests that Crocker shows either a shocking ignorance of evolutionary science, or a rather shameless willingness to distort the evidence.

The following are just a small sample of her erroneous and clearly creationist claims:

* Archeopteryx [sic] is a bird (like an Ostrich), not a reptobird
* Only one complete fossil, and has been questioned as a fraud

Archaeopteryx is indeed classified as a bird by scientists, but it is a transitional form because it possesses traits characteristic of birds and other traits characteristic of the ancestors of birds. Like dinosaurs, it has teeth and a long bony tail, as well as many other characteristics which modern birds lack, but it possesses feathers and other adaptations to flight, like birds. (See http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/archaeopteryx/info.html#features) Note that "reptobird" seems to be a term entirely of Crocker's invention.

Contrary to what Dr. Crocker's slide suggests, there are several well-preserved Archaeopteryx fossils, and while it is true that two non-paleontologists (astronomers!) claimed in the 1980s that the original fossil was a fraud, the allegation was quickly disproved. Even Answers in Genesis, the pre-eminent Creationist organization, lists this as a creationist argument against evolution that should not be used, because it was so easily disproven.

Eohippus is same as modern-day hyrax

EohippusThis argument also has a long creationist history, and is equally erroneous. Eohippus is an extinct member of the horse family, while the hyrax is a modern, rabbit-sized, mammal living in the Middle East and Africa. They were part of an early radiation of African mammals and are more closely related to elephants than to horses. Even a brief consideration of skulls makes it clear that these are two completely different animals. The rest of the skeleton and soft tissues also help differentiate hyraxes from horses.
A noble steed?
In another slide, titled "Scientists are confused", Crocker offers the following quote:

Gould and Eldridge [sic] (evolutionists): "There is no validation of the position that speciation causes significant morphological change."

Gould never wrote these words. Crocker's dishonest quotation follows from a long tradition of creationists misusing quotations from legitimate scientific sources – a problem we also find in Expelled.

Gould actually said "But continuing unhappiness, justified this time, focuses upon claims that speciation causes significant morphological change, for no validation of such a position has emerged." (Gould, SJ and Eldredge, N, "Punctuated equilibrium comes of age" Nature 366, 223-227, 1993). In other words, there is a question of the order in which speciation and physical diversification take place, not "confusion" over whether any link exists between such diversification and speciation. Crocker's erroneous quotation and mischaracterization of the author's intent show poor scholarship, and encourage her students to misunderstand key concepts.

The Washington Post article discussing Crocker's lecture at Northern Virginia Community College reveals her relying upon several more creationist talking points, all of which have been thoroughly debunked. These include:

Crocker "told the students there were two kinds of evolution: microevolution and macroevolution. Microevolution ...easily seen in any microbiology lab... is ... quite different from macroevolution. No one has ever seen a dog turn into a cat in a laboratory."

No evolutionary biologist ever proposed that "dogs turn into cats in a laboratory", and ironically, this would be disproof of evolution! Such rapid changes are exactly contrary to any expectation of evolutionary processes. Dogs and cats do share a common ancestor, but can no more turn into one another than you can transform into your cousins. If Crocker doesn't understand that, she is stunningly ignorant of basic evolutionary theory, and she has no right to force her ignorance on students. Furthermore, her misrepresentation of the "micro/macro" distinction is a standard creationist distortion of evolutionary theory.

Biologists use "macroevolution" to describe the broad patterns and trends of the evolution and diversification of life over long stretches of time. Macroevolution includes such subjects as extinction, speciation, changes in traits over time, rates of change, adaptive radiation, and similar processes. To creationists, macroevolution is the change from one "kind" (in the Biblical sense of "created kind") to another, such as "a dog turning into a cat." Microevolution refers to changes in gene frequencies within a species. Microevolution is not "quite different" from macroevolution: microevolution is a necessary part of macroevolution, as the combined effect of microevolutionary changes produces macroevolutionary patterns. Despite Crocker's claim, macroevolution and microevolution do not exhaust the possibilities: there are evolutionary processes which are neither microevolutionary nor macroevolutionary.

Creationists accept microevolution, but, as in Crocker's lecture, reject macroevolution. Crocker's statement implies that microevolution is the primary evidence for macroevolution, when there is significant and overwhelming evidence for the latter in geology, biogeography, biochemistry, anatomy and genetics. For her to teach this would be further miseducation of her students.

In the 1950s, she said, scientists Stanley Miller and Harold Urey ran electricity through a soup of chemicals to show how chemicals on the early Earth could assemble themselves into the building blocks of life."... Crocker said that subsequent research had shown that chemicals used in the experiment did not exist on Earth 4 billion years ago. "The experiment is irrelevant, but you still find it in your books," she said.

Crocker's recitation of standard creationist attacks on origin of life research doesn't even accurately regurgitate their false claims! Informed creationists do not deny, as she does, that "chemicals used in the experiment did not exist on Earth 4 billion years ago," they deny that the atmospheric conditions of the Miller-Urey experiments accurately modeled the Earth's early atmosphere. Crocker presents this information as evidence that scientists are clinging to inaccurate experiments to prop up a failed theory. She ignores the results of the past 50 years of origin of life research. In the specific case of the Miller-Urey experiment, scientists have re-run the

experiment with revised conditions and obtained similar results.

She cited another experiment, involving researcher Bernard Kettlewell, who produced pictures of variously colored peppered moths on tree trunks to show that when the moths were not well camouflaged, they were more likely to be eaten by birds — a process of natural selection that influenced the color of the moths. "This comes from your book — it is not actually true," Crocker said. "The experiment was falsified. He glued his moths to the trees."

Another creationist shibboleth drawn from the discredited intelligent design book, Icons of Evolution, the "peppered moth experiment is a fraud" argument has been debunked for several years. Whether and under what circumstances moths were glued in place is a distraction from the main point of Kettlewell's (many) experiments which explained why the frequencies of light colored and dark colored moths changed in different areas in Great Britain. Kettlewell contended that birds differentially preyed upon moths that contrasted against different backgrounds, resulting in more dark colored moths in polluted areas and more light colored moths in cleaner areas. The staged photos of moths glued to a surface were to illustrate that dark and light forms of the moths contrast against light and dark backgrounds. Kettlewell additionally glued moths to trees to test whether birds ate this species of moth (they do).
Peppered Moths
But what Crocker and other creationists avoid reporting is that no moths were glued to trees during the actual experiments that clearly demonstrated natural selection for light and dark varieties in different environments. Thus, Crocker was lying to the students – or was profoundly ignorant of Kettlewell's research – in claiming that "the experiment was falsified." And in fact, while scientists have questioned certain aspects of Kettlewell's methodology, none doubt that his ultimate conclusion is accurate, and a recent replication of the experiments confirmed the original findings.

The journalist asked Crocker "whether she was going to discuss the evidence for evolution in another class. She said no. ... she saw her role as trying to balance the 'ad nauseum' pro-evolution accounts that students had long been force-fed." Her job at NVCC was not to "balance" the students' experience, but to provide them with an accurate introduction to modern biology. Because evolution is an important part of any beginning biology course, she failed to teach the curriculum, and short-changed her students by not teaching them standard science in favor of a lot of misinformation. That alone would have provided NVCC grounds for dismissal, had they sought them. If she took the same approach at GMU, they too would have been justified in firing her outright, though they did not.

It is entirely possible and even likely that Caroline Crocker was let go at the end of her contracts by George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College simply for staffing reasons: such is often (and many times, unfortunately) the fate of contingent faculty. GMU, in fact, has made this claim. But if Crocker was unable or unwilling to teach accurate science, and there is evidence of this, an institution would have been entirely justified in making a negative evaluation and not renewing her contract. Caroline Crocker is not a victim of scientific persecution, but the students who took her courses are victims of misinformation.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:03 am

Claims of scientific persecution? Expelled!

"A few months after this interview Baylor University shut down his research website once they discovered a link between his work and intelligent design." (Ben Stein, Expelled)
The Facts

Baylor UniversityRobert Marks's "Evolutionary Informatics Laboratory" website – touting intelligent design – was originally hosted on a Baylor University server. Concerned that the material on the website misleadingly suggested a connection between the intelligent design material and Baylor, administrators temporarily shut the website down while discussing the issue with Marks and his lawyer. Baylor was willing to continue hosting the website subject to a number of conditions (including the inclusion of a disclaimer and the removal of the misleading term "laboratory"), but Marks and Baylor were unable to come to terms. The site is currently hosted by a third-party provider.

This was not Baylor's first conflict with intelligent design. In 1999, the Michael Polanyi Center, a two-person ID think tank unaffiliated with Baylor's science or religion departments, was established at the university. Though the center only existed independently for about a year, it caused significant discord among faculty, many of whom were concerned that Baylor's excellent reputation for scientific research would be damaged by an association with ID. In October 2000, the center was integrated into Baylor's Institute for Faith and Learning, and shortly afterwards its director, William Dembski, was demoted for his failure to work collegially with other faculty, as indicated in a press release from Baylor University. Dembski was listed as an associate on Marks's Evolutionary Informatics Laboratory website.

Given this history, it was consistent for Baylor to be sensitive to attempts to portray it as sponsoring intelligent design: the science departments have been reluctant to be associated with a field they consider unscientific, and the issue has been a source of strife at Baylor for several years. In any event, the worst that happened to Professor Marks was that he had to remove his web site from Baylor's webserver. In no other way was his free speech impinged, nor have his work conditions changed in any way: he remains a Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Baylor, holding a full professorship in the School of Engineering and Computer Science. He continues to teach his courses and conduct research. Where is the harm?

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:05 am

Claims of scientific persecution? Expelled!

"I was not taking a position in favor of creationism, I was writing about intelligent design.... And having merely written on a subject was enough to put you on this blacklist. If you give any credence to it whatsoever, which means just writing about it, you're just finished as a journalist." (Pamela Winnick, Expelled)
The Facts

Winnick's earliest known writing on intelligent design appeared in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette during the adoption of the Pennsylvania science education standards in late 2000. At the time, her articles regularly used phrases and characterizations about evolution that derived from intelligent design talking points. Her position did not necessarily support intelligent design in particular, but communicated the general notion that "fairness" required access to the marketplace of ideas and that students were somehow poorer for not hearing about intelligent design (and similar alternatives that falsely claimed scientific status).

However, this relatively innocuous coverage was only the beginning. In February 2001, Winnick interviewed intelligent design proponent Michael Behe with a collection of softball questions and presented his answers uncritically. Later that year she wrote a review of PBS's Evolution series where she criticized it for not covering "the Intelligent Design movement, which began about a decade ago when serious scientists – many with doctorates from prestigious universities – began to tackle evolution on scientific grounds." This is not "just writing about" intelligent design. This is an endorsement.

So Winnick was advocating intelligent design. Even so, this sounds like a poor basis for being blacklisted as a journalist – but there is no evidence that this ever happened. As a supposedly "blacklisted" reporter, Winnick continued to write for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette until August 2002, almost two years after she began her supposedly career-ending articles on intelligent design; she continues to write occasional guest columns for them (including an anti-evolution opinion piece in December 2005), and has written recent articles for the Weekly Standard and the Wall Street Journal.

She also wrote a book, A Jealous God: Science's Crusade Against Religion, published in 2005, which was described by the foundation funding her research as "analyzing why there seems to be little tolerance for teaching creationism in America." The book received a negative review from a writer at her previous employer, the Post-Gazette – which nonetheless still publishes her work.

So no evidence was presented in Expelled that Winnick was blacklisted as a journalist, and there's evidence to the contrary. She may have been criticized for her shoddy journalism or for advocating bad science – Jeffrey Shallit describes her book as "not a fair, reliable,

or objective look at the battles between science and religion," for example – but it is insupportable and absurd to characterize such criticism as blacklisting.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:06 am

Claims of scientific persecution? Expelled!

The Alliance for Science, a citizen's group in Virginia, sponsored an essay contest for high school students on the topic "Why I would want my doctor to have studied evolution," to highlight the important role of evolution in the medical sciences. Physician Michael Egnor posted an essay on an intelligent design blog in response, claiming that evolution was irrelevant to medicine. This was more a statement of Egnor's ignorance about evolution than a reflection on evolution's place in medicine.
The Claim

"When neurosurgeon Michael Egnor wrote an essay for high school students saying doctors didn't need to study evolution in order to practice medicine, the Darwinists were quick to try and exterminate this new threat." (Ben Stein, Expelled)
The Facts

Although most physicians accept evolution, there have certainly in the past been antievolutionist physicians; Egnor's views are hardly a "new threat." Criticism of the essay came not only from the university professors and researchers who supposedly make up "Big Science", but from Egnor's fellow medical professionals, who recognized Egnor's arguments as old hat, and another attempt by creationists to co-opt the respectability of a white coat:

After my having written repeated debunkings of various physicians who are creationists (mostly of the "intelligent design" variety), in retrospect I should have seen this one coming. I should have seen that the Discovery Institute, eager to use anyone they can find whom they can represent to the public as having scientific credentials (never mind whether those credentials have anything to do with evolutionary biology) and thus dupe the public into seeing them as having authority when they start laying down ignorant brain farts about how they "doubt Darwinism," would settle on physicians. After all, as I have pointed out before, until recently medical schools taught little about evolutionary biology (that is, if they taught anything at all about it), and as a result all too many physicians, particularly the ones whose undergraduate majors were not biology, tend to be no more knowledgeable about evolution than your average lawyer....

The reason that a contest with such a topic was thought to be a good idea, I'd guess, is because evolution-ignorant creationists like Dr. Egnor are constantly attacking evolution in a manner that you don't see other of the basic sciences that form the basis of medicine ever being attacked. – "Orac", an oncologist and surgeon, in Train wreck, thy name is Egnor! Blog post, Respectful Insolence.

What's going on here is that Egnor dislikes evolution and is hoping to de-emphasize its importance. Why? It is possible that he earnestly and sincerely believes that evolution has not contributed to his art. It is possible that he earnestly and sincerely believes that recognizing the validity of evolution would render his life meaningless or without value. It is possible he is a cynical liar and he wants no readers of the Discovery Institute Ministry of Media Complaints who credit his perspectives to enter or do well in medical school. (Hey, if true, he wouldn't be the first surgeon who knew better about evolution but still advocated for ID only to make a buck, gain a little influence, or exhibit some sort of other ulterior motive.) Whatever his motivations may be, readers should not credit his testimony: he is at least dead wrong.

Further, his perspectives are very difficult to distinguish from ignorance advocacy. Egnor first came to attention when a blogger at Time magazine criticized him for not being an expert in evolution. He has stated that he does not use evolution, but this is more an admission of a willful disregard for the evolution he does use and upon which his art is based. Taken together, along with his assurance that the only contribution evolution has made to medicine was eugenics, his writings bespeak the dangerous combination of ignorance and arrogance, traits altogether common with creationists, but that shine in Dr. Egnor to such an extent that a neologism should bear his namesake." – Burt Humburg, a physician, in Egnorance: The Egotistical Combination of Ignorance and Arrogance. Blog post, The Panda's Thumb.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:08 am

Claims of ID as science? Expelled!

Summary

Expelled's main theme is that intelligent design is under systematic attack by "Big Science" – the scientific establishment – which refuses to recognize its scientific validity because of a previous commitment to atheism and materialism. In truth, the arguments of intelligent design have been examined by the scientific community and found to be lacking in both utility and accuracy. If mainstream science declines to accept intelligent design, it is the fault of the intelligent design advocates, who have not performed the research and theory-building demanded of everyone in the scientific enterprise.

The Claim

"Intelligent design was being suppressed in a systematic and ruthless fashion" (Ben Stein, Expelled).
The Facts

Intelligent design has not produced any research to suppress. When prominent ID proponent Michael Behe was asked about his research, and why "you don't do those tests?" he responded, "I myself would prefer to spend time in what I would consider to be more fruitful endeavors." If even proponents of ID do not think it is a fruitful enterprise, why should the scientific community take any interest in it?

As shown elsewhere on this site, the supposed cases of suppression offered in Expelled are dishonest attempts to make mountains out of molehills and to create martyrs where martyrdom does not exist.

Intelligent design is scientifically unproductive, and this perhaps explains why scientists like Guillermo Gonzalez and Michael Behe publish far fewer papers after they become attracted to intelligent design. Ultimately, intelligent design's lack of success in science departments is the fault of the flawed and unscientific nature of intelligent design itself, not the result of bias in the scientific community.

The issue is not the suppression of ID, but the lack of warrant for its scientific claims. And ultimately, ID has an uphill struggle to demonstrate that it is, indeed, science. The fundamental problem with intelligent design as science is that intelligent design claims cannot be tested. Scientific testing requires that there be some set of phenomena which are incompatible with your idea. No observation could possibly be incompatible with a claim that an "intelligent agent" (whom everyone recognizes as God) acted to, say, introduce information into a system. Untestable claims are not scientific claims. Regardless of their attractiveness as religious ideas (although many people of faith strongly reject intelligent design) intelligent design has not passed muster as science.
The Claim

Referring to evolution, scientists "say the debate has been settled, that the issues are settled." (Bruce Chapman, Expelled)
The Facts

Scientists have been researching evolution for 150 years, and it continues to be well supported by new research. Modern evidence for evolution derives from fossils, from genetics, from the development of organisms, and from many other fields unimaginable to Darwin or even to early 20th-century evolutionary biologists.

The nature of the scientific enterprise is for scientists to debate different explanations vigorously until research changes people's minds, and a consensus gradually emerges. But even a consensus view is capable of being modified and in rare instances, even replaced. That living things descended with modification from common ancestors – the big idea of evolution – has been part of the scientific consensus now for over 100 years. It is conceivable, of course, that any well-founded theory could be overturned (as evolution itself overturned earlier ideas), but the more confirmatory evidence accumulates, the less likely this is to happen. Expelled expresses the opinion that the universal support of evolution in the scientific community is the product of some sort of bias or ideological inflexibility. It is, on the contrary, the result of decades of hard scientific work, building theory and conducting research. Similarly, the failure of intelligent design can readily be laid at the feet of its advocates, whose main activity appears to be to carp about the success of evolution.
The Claim

"Neurosurgeon Michael Egnor is already taking a design approach to his study of the human brain. [...] Jonathan Wells is also making progress using Intelligent Design theory in his research on cancer." (Ben Stein, Expelled)
The Facts

These claims to be applying "design" in science rest on a weak foundation, since the term "design" is used in inconsistent and in confusing ways throughout the movie. The Discovery Institute's Paul Nelson describes "design theory" as "the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as a result of intelligence," though that definition presupposes that we know when something is or isn't the result of intelligence. Walter Bradley, however, seems to think that the question central to design is how to distinguish whether life and other phenomena "arise by some type of intelligent guidance or design," while Ben Stein and several of his interviewees seem to think that ID is about determining whether God intervenes directly in the world around us.

Egnor's and Wells's examples of "design" research, though, fit none of these three disparate definitions. Instead, Wells and Egnor use a tortured and discredited analogy in which cellular and anatomical structures composed of many interacting parts are compared to a machine which a human made from many interacting parts. Because a machine requires an intelligent human to assemble these parts to make a functioning product, Egnor and Wells assume that their structures require an intelligent agent to plan them and put them together. "Design" in this sense refers to a "purposeful assemblage of parts," implying both function and origin.

But scientists commonly speak of the "design" of structures in an informal sense of "parts working together to produce a function," as the "design" of the elongated wrist bones of a deer, which produces a leg capable of fast running. The study of structure and function is common in medical and other biological research; there is much utility in finding out how something works. This work can be done – and ordinarily is done – without making any assumptions of "design" in the intelligent design sense: that there needs to be a guiding hand purposefully assembling those parts.

Wells claims that "the underlying cause of cancer is 'chromosomal instability,' or damage to extra-genic structures – not mutations to individual genes." As biomedical researcher Ian Musgrave points out, though, "this knowledge seems to have eluded most researchers in the field (see this review and this comprehensive review [link removed; broken] as typical examples)." Musgrave then cites numerous examples of successful cancer medicines which specifically target "mutations to individual genes," concluding, "I hardly need to make the point that researchers were guided by experimental and observational evidence (such as experimental evidence of mutations, generation of tumours by transferring mutant genes, mouse transgenic models etc. etc.) rather than blind allegiance to Darwinist dogma."

Based on his incorrect beliefs about the basic biology of cancer, Wells speculates that chromosomal instability must result from problems in the functioning of a cellular organelle called the centriole. He proposed, supposedly on the basis of "intelligent design," that centrioles operate like turbines, which spin and produce something called the "polar ejection force," which drives chromosomes apart when a cell divides. Wells made certain predictions on that basis, as a scientist should do, and as it happens, the predictions of this model turn out to be wrong. The polar ejection force does not depend upon the centriole, since the force still exists when centrioles are absent, or when they are not configured the way Wells describes. Even before Wells published his speculation, a research group had submitted a paper which went beyond speculation, actually showing that a molecule called a chromokinesin generates the polar ejection force.

How Wells responded to this refutation of his hypothesis concerning the link between centriole structure and cancer is revealing. Even though refutations of his hypothesis have been known to Wells for over a year, he continues to repeat the disproven claim in Expelled and in publications. Intelligent design advocates are anxious to promote Wells's work as an example of how intelligent design can function as real science. Unfortunately, Wells's work fails on three accounts as an example of this desire. First, the hypothesis is wrong: it reflects a misunderstanding of how cancer works and it makes incorrect predictions about how cells operate. Second, it is unclear what role (if any) "design" plays in the claims, since an investigator might have come to the same erroneous conclusions without the overlay of a design inference. Third, by not incorporating criticisms and corrections into his model or, if necessary, abandoning his model and moving on to another research area, Wells illustrates that intelligent design is not as interested in actual scientific discovery as it is in clinging for propaganda purposes to a scientific-sounding example of "intelligent design in action".

Egnor also proceeds from a strained analogy between a machine and a naturally occurring object, in this case the brain and a device to reduce vibrations, a "pulsation absorber". He believes that looking at engineering solutions to structural problems (in his field, protecting the brain against too-strong flows of blood from the arteries) provides unique insight. Perhaps, but it remains unclear why a link between an engineered solution to a mechanical problem and a structural solution to a biological condition is evidence of "design." Recognizing similarities between a machine and a biological structure does not prove that both structures are designed, only that there is a successful solution to a shared problem; there may be multiple solutions to a problem, from either an engineering or a biological perspective.

While it is not clear how the assumption of design advances the claims by Wells or Egnor, evolution – common ancestry – is of considerable assistance when researchers are investigating biological structure and function. Comparing the same structure across several related species, scientists can discover similarities and differences that help organisms deal with different environmental challenges. With that knowledge, pharmaceutical researchers can develop more effective drugs to block infectious diseases, and can trace the lineage of medicinal plants, identifying relatives which may contain life-saving compounds. Agricultural scientists can see which traits help wild species in difficult environments and genetically engineer the traits into crops, allowing them to thrive in harsh environments. Other researchers use knowledge of the traits shared within a family of insects to refine pesticides and target only harmful families, leaving others unharmed. The evolutionary perspective has been much more fruitful than the intelligent design alternative that suggests an intelligent agent produced complex biological structures for reasons unknown and by means unknown (see Nesse, R, and GC Williams, Why We Get Sick, 1994, Times Books).

The Claim

Intelligent Design deserves a place in academia: "What about academic freedom? I mean, can't we just talk about this?" – Ben Stein, Expelled

The Facts

Actually, intelligent design is talked about in academia. Teaching about intelligent design in higher education institutions is not forbidden, or censured, and in fact, new courses are added every year. Indeed, the intelligent design-promoting web site ResearchIntelligentDesign.org proudly lists "100+ universities and colleges" that officially include "intelligent design in their lesson plans". These courses generally examine intelligent design objectively and in an appropriate context, and their instructors do so openly. So intelligent design has, in fact, entered academia, although not quite in the fashion its advocates might prefer. What they seek, of course, is for intelligent design to be accepted as a valid scientific alternative to evolution. They have failed to make a convincing case for it, yet they seem to believe that they have an entitlement to a place in academia.

On the contrary, new ideas are not automatically installed in universities and classrooms: they must earn their place. The intelligent design movement diligently promotes the idea that intelligent design belongs in science classes, even while acknowledging that progress in the laboratory is lagging. In 1998, Discovery Institute personnel drafted a strategy document, commonly called the Wedge Document. The authors laid out a multi-phase plan, beginning with research, building up to a wholesale cultural renewal, including

inclusion of intelligent design into public school classrooms. The promises of this document, compared to the actual accomplishments of the movement, are telling

The Wedge Document proposed that by 2003 they would have "Thirty published books on design and its cultural implications (sex, gender issues, medicine, law, and religion)" and "One hundred scientific, academic and technical articles by our fellows." They are nowhere near that benchmark even five years past their deadline, especially in the critically important "academic and technical articles" category. And yet, they described this first phase, "Research, Writing and Publication" as "the essential component of everything that comes afterward. Without solid scholarship, research and argument, the project would be just another attempt to indoctrinate instead of persuade." They lack solid scholarship, research, and argument; yet the project is continuing.

The second, indoctrination, phase, has been far more successful. This phase was to include:

...production of a ... documentary on intelligent design and its implications.... Alongside a focus on influential opinion-makers, we also seek to build up a popular base of support among our natural constituency, namely, Christians. We will do this primarily through apologetics seminars. We intend these to encourage and equip believers with new scientific evidences that support the faith, as well as to "popularize" our ideas in the broader culture.

Expelled is clearly a part of that agenda, and the fact that they have released this film before completing, or even making a serious effort at "the essential component of everything that comes afterward" is a sign where their priorities lie.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:16 am

Claims of ID as science? Expelled!

Summary

Expelled's main theme is that intelligent design is under systematic attack by "Big Science" – the scientific establishment – which refuses to recognize its scientific validity because of a previous commitment to atheism and materialism. In truth, the arguments of intelligent design have been examined by the scientific community and found to be lacking in both utility and accuracy. If mainstream science declines to accept intelligent design, it is the fault of the intelligent design advocates, who have not performed the research and theory-building demanded of everyone in the scientific enterprise.
The Claim

"Intelligent design was being suppressed in a systematic and ruthless fashion" (Ben Stein, Expelled).
The Facts

Intelligent design has not produced any research to suppress. When prominent ID proponent Michael Behe was asked about his research, and why "you don't do those tests?" he responded, "I myself would prefer to spend time in what I would consider to be more fruitful endeavors." If even proponents of ID do not think it is a fruitful enterprise, why should the scientific community take any interest in it?

As shown elsewhere on this site, the supposed cases of suppression offered in Expelled are dishonest attempts to make mountains out of molehills and to create martyrs where martyrdom does not exist.

Intelligent design is scientifically unproductive, and this perhaps explains why scientists like Guillermo Gonzalez and Michael Behe publish far fewer papers after they become attracted to intelligent design. Ultimately, intelligent design's lack of success in science departments is the fault of the flawed and unscientific nature of intelligent design itself, not the result of bias in the scientific community.

The issue is not the suppression of ID, but the lack of warrant for its scientific claims. And ultimately, ID has an uphill struggle to demonstrate that it is, indeed, science. The fundamental problem with intelligent design as science is that intelligent design claims cannot be tested. Scientific testing requires that there be some set of phenomena which are incompatible with your idea. No observation could possibly be incompatible with a claim that an "intelligent agent" (whom everyone recognizes as God) acted to, say, introduce information into a system. Untestable claims are not scientific claims. Regardless of their attractiveness as religious ideas (although many people of faith strongly reject intelligent design) intelligent design has not passed muster as science.
The Claim

Referring to evolution, scientists "say the debate has been settled, that the issues are settled." (Bruce Chapman, Expelled)
The Facts

Scientists have been researching evolution for 150 years, and it continues to be well supported by new research. Modern evidence for evolution derives from fossils, from genetics, from the development of organisms, and from many other fields unimaginable to Darwin or even to early 20th-century evolutionary biologists.

The nature of the scientific enterprise is for scientists to debate different explanations vigorously until research changes people's

minds, and a consensus gradually emerges. But even a consensus view is capable of being modified and in rare instances, even replaced. That living things descended with modification from common ancestors – the big idea of evolution – has been part of the scientific consensus now for over 100 years. It is conceivable, of course, that any well-founded theory could be overturned (as evolution itself overturned earlier ideas), but the more confirmatory evidence accumulates, the less likely this is to happen. Expelled expresses the opinion that the universal support of evolution in the scientific community is the product of some sort of bias or ideological inflexibility. It is, on the contrary, the result of decades of hard scientific work, building theory and conducting research. Similarly, the failure of intelligent design can readily be laid at the feet of its advocates, whose main activity appears to be to carp about the success of evolution.

The Claim

"Neurosurgeon Michael Egnor is already taking a design approach to his study of the human brain. [...] Jonathan Wells is also making progress using Intelligent Design theory in his research on cancer." (Ben Stein, Expelled)

The Facts

These claims to be applying "design" in science rest on a weak foundation, since the term "design" is used in inconsistent and in confusing ways throughout the movie. The Discovery Institute's Paul Nelson describes "design theory" as "the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as a result of intelligence," though that definition presupposes that we know when something is or isn't the result of intelligence. Walter Bradley, however, seems to think that the question central to design is how to distinguish whether life and other phenomena "arise by some type of intelligent guidance or design," while Ben Stein and several of his interviewees seem to think that ID is about determining whether God intervenes directly in the world around us.

Egnor's and Wells's examples of "design" research, though, fit none of these three disparate definitions. Instead, Wells and Egnor use a tortured and discredited analogy in which cellular and anatomical structures composed of many interacting parts are compared to a machine which a human made from many interacting parts. Because a machine requires an intelligent human to assemble these parts to make a functioning product, Egnor and Wells assume that their structures require an intelligent agent to plan them and put them together. "Design" in this sense refers to a "purposeful assemblage of parts," implying both function and origin.

But scientists commonly speak of the "design" of structures in an informal sense of "parts working together to produce a function," as the "design" of the elongated wrist bones of a deer, which produces a leg capable of fast running. The study of structure and function is common in medical and other biological research; there is much utility in finding out how something works. This work can be done – and ordinarily is done – without making any assumptions of "design" in the intelligent design sense: that there needs to be a guiding hand purposefully assembling those parts.

Wells claims that "the underlying cause of cancer is 'chromosomal instability,' or damage to extra-genic structures – not mutations to individual genes." As biomedical researcher Ian Musgrave points out, though, "this knowledge seems to have eluded most researchers in the field (see this review and this comprehensive review [link removed; broken] as typical examples)." Musgrave then cites numerous examples of successful cancer medicines which specifically target "mutations to individual genes," concluding, "I hardly need to make the point that researchers were guided by experimental and observational evidence (such as experimental evidence of mutations, generation of tumours by transferring mutant genes, mouse transgenic models etc. etc.) rather than blind allegiance to Darwinist dogma."

Based on his incorrect beliefs about the basic biology of cancer, Wells speculates that chromosomal instability must result from problems in the functioning of a cellular organelle called the centriole. He proposed, supposedly on the basis of "intelligent design," that centrioles operate like turbines, which spin and produce something called the "polar ejection force," which drives chromosomes apart when a cell divides. Wells made certain predictions on that basis, as a scientist should do, and as it happens, the predictions of this model turn out to be wrong. The polar ejection force does not depend upon the centriole, since the force still exists when centrioles are absent, or when they are not configured the way Wells describes. Even before Wells published his speculation, a research group had submitted a paper which went beyond speculation, actually showing that a molecule called a chromokinesin generates the polar ejection force.

How Wells responded to this refutation of his hypothesis concerning the link between centriole structure and cancer is revealing. Even though refutations of his hypothesis have been known to Wells for over a year, he continues to repeat the disproven claim in Expelled and in publications. Intelligent design advocates are anxious to promote Wells's work as an example of how intelligent design can function as real science. Unfortunately, Wells's work fails on three accounts as an example of this desire. First, the hypothesis is wrong: it reflects a misunderstanding of how cancer works and it makes incorrect predictions about how cells operate. Second, it is unclear what role (if any) "design" plays in the claims, since an investigator might have come to the same erroneous conclusions without the overlay of a design inference. Third, by not incorporating criticisms and corrections into his model or, if necessary, abandoning his model and moving on to another research area, Wells illustrates that intelligent design is not as interested in actual scientific discovery as it is in clinging for propaganda purposes to a scientific-sounding example of "intelligent design in action".

Egnor also proceeds from a strained analogy between a machine and a naturally occurring object, in this case the brain and a device to reduce vibrations, a "pulsation absorber". He believes that looking at engineering solutions to structural problems (in his field, protecting the brain against too-strong flows of blood from the arteries) provides unique insight. Perhaps, but it remains unclear why a link between an engineered solution to a mechanical problem and a structural solution to a biological condition is evidence of "design."

Recognizing similarities between a machine and a biological structure does not prove that both structures are designed, only that there is a successful solution to a shared problem; there may be multiple solutions to a problem, from either an engineering or a biological perspective.

While it is not clear how the assumption of design advances the claims by Wells or Egnor, evolution – common ancestry – is of considerable assistance when researchers are investigating biological structure and function. Comparing the same structure across several related species, scientists can discover similarities and differences that help organisms deal with different environmental challenges. With that knowledge, pharmaceutical researchers can develop more effective drugs to block infectious diseases, and can trace the lineage of medicinal plants, identifying relatives which may contain life-saving compounds. Agricultural scientists can see which traits help wild species in difficult environments and genetically engineer the traits into crops, allowing them to thrive in harsh environments. Other researchers use knowledge of the traits shared within a family of insects to refine pesticides and target only harmful families, leaving others unharmed. The evolutionary perspective has been much more fruitful than the intelligent design alternative that suggests an intelligent agent produced complex biological structures for reasons unknown and by means unknown (see Nesse, R, and GC Williams, Why We Get Sick, 1994, Times Books).
The Claim

Intelligent Design deserves a place in academia: “What about academic freedom? I mean, can’t we just talk about this?” – Ben Stein, Expelled
The Facts

Actually, intelligent design is talked about in academia. Teaching about intelligent design in higher education institutions is not forbidden, or censured, and in fact, new courses are added every year. Indeed, the intelligent design-promoting web site ResearchIntelligentDesign.org proudly lists “100+ universities and colleges” that officially include “intelligent design in their lesson plans”. These courses generally examine intelligent design objectively and in an appropriate context, and their instructors do so openly. So intelligent design has, in fact, entered academia, although not quite in the fashion its advocates might prefer. What they seek, of course, is for intelligent design to be accepted as a valid scientific alternative to evolution. They have failed to make a convincing case for it, yet they seem to believe that they have an entitlement to a place in academia.

On the contrary, new ideas are not automatically installed in universities and classrooms: they must earn their place. The intelligent design movement diligently promotes the idea that intelligent design belongs in science classes, even while acknowledging that progress in the laboratory is lagging. In 1998, Discovery Institute personnel drafted a strategy document, commonly called the Wedge Document. The authors laid out a multi-phase plan, beginning with research, building up to a wholesale cultural renewal, including inclusion of intelligent design into public school classrooms. The promises of this document, compared to the actual accomplishments of the movement, are telling

The Wedge Document proposed that by 2003 they would have “Thirty published books on design and its cultural implications (sex, gender issues, medicine, law, and religion)” and “One hundred scientific, academic and technical articles by our fellows.” They are nowhere near that benchmark even five years past their deadline, especially in the critically important “academic and technical articles” category. And yet, they described this first phase, “Research, Writing and Publication” as “the essential component of everything that comes afterward. Without solid scholarship, research and argument, the project would be just another attempt to indoctrinate instead of persuade.” They lack solid scholarship, research, and argument; yet the project is continuing.

The second, indoctrination, phase, has been far more successful. This phase was to include:

...production of a ... documentary on intelligent design and its implications.... Alongside a focus on influential opinion-makers, we also seek to build up a popular base of support among our natural constituency, namely, Christians. We will do this primarily through apologetics seminars. We intend these to encourage and equip believers with new scientific evidences that support the faith, as well as to “popularize” our ideas in the broader culture.

Expelled is clearly a part of that agenda, and the fact that they have released this film before completing, or even making a serious effort at “the essential component of everything that comes afterward” is a sign where their priorities lie.

You Creationists think your lying for God but your doing the Devil’s work.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:56 am

Remember never insult the messenger but lay waste to the message:

On molecular level genetics... gene mutations are not just additional, they are synergistic. They are not one for one. People who use straight linear statistical models for an argument against evolution, (this one has been made for a least the 30 years I’ve dealt with it) just don’t get the big picture. Yes the model is different mathematically, and if you’d bother to look at the recent postings out of genetics the last ten years, you’d know this. Instead I just get rehashed arguments from the Evolution Crusher so I’ll just have to school your lazy butt. Genes control other genes. One gene can cascade to turn on or off whole sets of genes. If you get a mutation in a Hox gene your in for big changes in body plan. So it ain’t an additive process. You sound smart, but once people realize your using a math model

that does not fit this evidence you are revealed to be just a parroting buffoon. Do you know about psuedogenes? Transposons? Look these up and see how there are muliple copies of genes being experimented with while the good ones keep working.... Paying attention? This simple mined 1+1 = 2 argument over gene mutations is shot down! God I love killing the horrible logic these people use.

On the fossil record. I love these people. They will say you can't cut string. If you cut it, then they say yeah, but you can't cut it there or there. Cut it in those places and they point to others spots between the cuts with the same statement. It's an endless game and it shows that you can not make demands on evidence! Even worse, with each new claim for an uncuttable string these claims just look stupider and stupider. This backwards and quite false logic has been used on evolution. Darwin moaned over the lack of intermediate fossils and predicted they would be found! Hey, how about that... a good scientific theory makes a prediction that is testable... guess what? We found those fossils. The Cambrian explosion was a testament to fact that hard body parts that fossilize well. But now, with electron microscopes, soft bodied life forms are now found in rock before the Cambrian ... why would people even look for them? Because evolution predicted they'd be there and oh my gosh, they were! But these people keep asking for transitions between transitions between transitions. How many times do we have to cut the freaking string before people stop making ridiculous demands of perfectly good paleontological records! ! I'll save the best for last here, the real fossil record is in our DNA! In the vast stretches between active genes lie the unused genes from every form of life that lead to us, even bacteria. What the hell are those genes doing there? They represent how the entire genome changed over time. With the genome project continuing to sequence all species, I predict a DNA fossil record that will be the final blow for this now quite repetitively stupid argument of "Where are the transitions?".

Did you catch that? All of you who say evolution is the same as creationism? Evolution makes predictions... testable ones. Creationism does not. There is a difference to anyone who makes this ridiculous argument. In fact, Creationists go out of their way to not predict anything. I'll make a simple prediction for you Creationists out there. Plant pollen is ubiquitous. It is in all sedimentary rock where flowers were. If Creationism is right there should be plant pollen in Devonian rock. Just find it and you put a dagger through the heart of evolution! What? Your not doing things like this to support your argument? That's right, because it's not there! That's why your not science and evolution is. If you keep on insisting on this argument after such a lucid explanation, then you are simply think you lying for God. All Creationism does is try to prove evolution wrong. Any middle school debater knows you don't prove A by disproving B. This is really crappy logic. Yet this is all these people have. And God bless them for it, because that's how science works. Evolution has been challenged for 150 years and is now stronger than ever because of it. Let me repeat this for you Creationists. You don't prove Creationism by looking for flaws in evolution, you just make evolution stronger. Find proof (proof is not an argument, that is philosophy, bring evidence to the table) for ID and publish... Hah! Like that will EVER happen!

For those of with "teach both sides" argument. Please note once again that the theory of evolution makes testable predictions. It always has, and has done so successfully. This is why it is Science No one argues about evolution, it is a fact. Go ahead an argue theory vs law all you want. I don't say theory, I don't say law, but I do say, as do the huge majority of biologists, evolution is a fact. Listen carefully now... it is the mechanism that is a theory, or actually many theories. Are you too simple to get this very real distinction? Sure there's debate here... IT'S SCIENCE! Theories for mechanisms for evolution have abounded for 150 years: Natural Selection, Punctuated, Lamarkian, Neo-Darwiniam... and on and on. All of these are various interpretations of the evidence on how evolution works. No one in biology argues evolution did not occur It is a fact that it did happen. The debate is and always will be how.

On top of this, ID is as anti-science as I can imagine. ID says " No, it is too complicated, we'll never understand this, God must have done it"... Spare me!! You people would of kept ringing bells and burning incense during the black plague! None of the above mentioned theories (natural selection, punctuated evolution) of the mechanism for evolution say God did it. However, that is what ID says. ID is Creationism and don't let anyone tell you differently. These Charlatans were caught red handed in court. They have taken the sheep's skin of Creation Science off the wolf of Creationism and traded it in for a shiny new polyester suit called ID. It's still a wolf and it's still religion and it does not belong in public schools. I will not teach Creationism/God/ID in a science class, not ever! Not until a new inquisition burns me at the stake! God help us all as the religious zealots think they lie for their gods to get them into our public schools.

Why don't we teach alchemy with chemistry? Astrology with astrogeophysics? Why not Intelligent Falling vs Gravity (which has never been proved just measured) Why don't we teach these controversies? Because they aren't sciences either, but I will tell you astrology and alchemy have more going for them than ID!

Lastly.
GOD EVOLVES!

I have PROOF from the BIBLE, GOD OWN WORDS OF TRUTH, that He has evolved! Lo and Behold as the eye for an eye god of the Old Testament EVOLVES into the turn the other cheek of the New.. Yes God evolves! Open your eyes! Satan has cast a shadow over the eyes of all creationist sinners. Open yourselves at the TRUTH. God Evolves! Darwin should be sainted for showing us the true path to heaven and divine inspiration! Blessed are the evolutionists who believe that we, made in God's image, must evolve as He does. Damn to all Creationists, they are the agents of Satan and will be damned to eternal hell fire.

GOD EVOLVES! GOD BLESS ST DARWIN!

sailor1031 Says:

March 29, 2009 at 9:41 am

I am glad to see that the state of texas is maintaining its reputation for mental acuity – no wait, that's "fatuity". Can't we just give it back to Mexico?

OBTW Fafarman; the male prostate gland is positive proof that there is no intelligent design.

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 29, 2009 at 2:41 pm

As I previously pointed out, a popular biology textbook, "Biology" by Ken Miller and Joe Levine, comes in regular, California, and Texas editions. But this is a high school textbook and California does not have statewide textbook adoption at the high school level, so why is there a California edition? And I though that in the last round of science textbook approvals in Texas in 2003, the "fundies" on the state board of education did not have enough votes to have weaknesses of evolution included in the textbooks, so why is there a Texas edition? Well, Eugenie Scott said in a video that Texas editions have some minor changes, but nothing substantial. So that explains why there is a Texas edition. It would be nice to know how these editions differ.

Ben Says (March 28, 2009 at 1:40 pm) —
–Larry, like a lot of people here, I simply scroll over your remarks. The problem is, all that scrolling is giving me cramps in my hand. Could you please write shorter comments so I won't have to scroll so much?–

Ben, you lousy troll, look at how much dtitle posted and you said nothing about that. And my stuff is mostly on-topic — dtitle hijacked this comment thread with off-topic comments.

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 3:34 pm

Larry bad way to debate by belittling the message (off topic my left foot) shows either you just can't read or make a decent argument or both> Better start praying Larry! You can always say the devil made you do it to our Evolving God!

dtitle Says:
March 29, 2009 at 4:18 pm

This is from Larry's Blog;

"Censorship will be avoided in my blogs — there will be no deletion of comments, no closing of comment threads, no holding up of comments for moderation, and no commenter registration hassles."

yeah sure, if you agree with them...

I posted comments & he does not post them, a lack of integrity to go along with your multitude of sins... Pray Larry Pray. St. Darwin will greet you at the Holy gates!

Larry Fafarman Says:
March 30, 2009 at 10:44 am

dtitle Says (March 29, 2009 at 4:18 pm) –
–I posted comments & he does not post them–

OK, I posted your comments. I delayed posting them for the following reasons:

(1) The comments were pretty stupid and were abusive. They made no worthwhile contribution to the discussion.

(2) One of the comments had an error of fact, and I wanted to delay posting that comment until I feel like spending the time to correct the error.

(3) The comments dared me to censor them. Accusing me of a desire to arbitrarily censor comments is a good way to get censored.

The comments are under the following post:
http://im-from-missouri.blogspot.com/2008/08/state-of-evolution-education-in-usa-and.html

Ben Says:
March 30, 2009 at 10:44 am

Larry said: “Ben, you lousy troll, look at how much dtitle posted and you said nothing about that.”

That is an unprovoked attack! How dare you! Another sure sign that you are firmly in the grip of Satan!

dtitle Says:
March 30, 2009 at 6:05 pm

Well, Larry did ost... a least he has a smidgeon of integrity. But as Ben noted: Yes Larry must insult all, check out all his blogs... he can’t admit to it, he’s a poor debater just for that reason alone Pray Larry pray ...

dtitle Says:
March 30, 2009 at 9:41 pm

We all need to remind the close minded ID’ers of Dembski’s Army (DA) that their metaphors mislead the masses. They are blind to the true path set forth By St. Darwin. Tell them to pray. Drive a Wedge in this Devil’s argument before they lead all the masses who are mesmerized by the Beelzebub’s words emanating through them. Tell them to pray! Tell them God evolves! Drive the Wedge like a stake through ID and Satan’s’s heart! It’s not to late to save these Creationists

SPREAD THE HOLY MESSAGE! GOD EVOLVES! DRIVE THE WEDGE THROUGH THE CREATIONISTS BEFORE THEY LEAD OUR CHILDREN DOWN THE ROAD TO HELLFIRE!!

Leave a Reply

Name

Mail (will not be published)

Website

Notify me of follow-up comments via email.

Submit Comment