

Evolution Supports Atheism: A response to Tom Ribe

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Editor:

Tom Ribe, in his 9/1/96 letter, attacks "creation science" as "perversion," "dangerous," "anti-scientific," "anti-intellectual," and "miseducation" on the level of Bevis and Butthead. Obviously, since he uses such emotionally-charged terms, he considers it a major threat. But if one looks past all the emotion, what are Mr. Ribe's real concerns?

At one level, he expresses concern about the quality of science education and the future ability of our society to deal with disease epidemics, climate change, and environmental stewardship. But at a deeper level, it is clear his concerns are ideological, no, but rather, spiritual.

Let us explore then the impact on science if, as I have urged recently, evolution's exclusivistic place in the schools is replaced with a policy that allows the flaws in the evolution hypothesis, or any other origins hypothesis for that matter, to be freely discussed and debated. Will students' ability to reason critically be hindered or stimulated?

I wager students' understanding of evolution, including both its strengths and weaknesses, will be dramatically enhanced. Certainly, present methods are not producing high science literacy in our schools. How can students not be better trained and equipped to participate in the scientific enterprise than they are now if some critical thinking is permitted?

But just how large a role does the theory of evolution play in the modern practice of science anyway? At the laboratory, I know of only one individual whose Ph.D. research focused on the specific topic of evolution, and currently he does computer science. I conjecture that if tomorrow evolution were accepted by everyone to be utterly false, very little in the way science as actually practiced would change. The theory of evolution serves primarily a

religious function - it is the materialist/atheist creation myth. Very little in the day-to-day practice of science actually depends on whether it is true or false.

So why is Mr. Ribe so agitated? It is because he realizes his atheistic worldview is threatened. He desperately appeals to a "constitutional separation of church and state" as a last-ditch defense against the dreaded assault. But this so-called separation of church and state, is nothing but an atheist twisting of the First Amendment to mandate state atheism.

Yet nothing could have been further from the intent of those who framed our Constitution. The founding fathers of our nation in no way intended the establishment clause to mandate atheism. Rather, the First Amendment was intended to protect, promote, and guarantee freedom of religious expression.

If merely the idea of criticizing the evolution hypothesis from a scientific standpoint evokes such intense reaction for Mr. Ribe, it is hard to imagine what he will do on the day of judgment when before the great white throne, "the books are opened ... and the dead are judged from the things which are written in the books, according to their deeds." I earnestly suggest he make appropriate adjustments now before it is too late.

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