

Evolution Bill Needed to Enforce Separation of Church and State

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Editor:

Wow! If anyone questions the importance of Sen. Pauline Eisenstadt's bill, SB 155, please read John Baumgardner's response in the Los Alamos Monitor on Feb. 27.

The First Amendment to the Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Baumgardner's tirade illustrates the awesome importance of this amendment to our religious freedom, and from whom we need protection!

Baumgardner somehow translates a science discussion into equating evolution with the "moral outlook that Hitler and Stalin used to justify the brutal political executions of tens of millions of their citizens." So scientists (including me!) who use evolution to understand the natural world are equated with Hitler and Stalin! I don't think such accusations are worthy of a response.

It is difficult to improve on the wonderful letter by student Eric Wally Walstrom. I wouldn't even try if Baumgardner had not challenged me to provide references concerning evolution. It would take many issues of the Monitor to just cite the authors and publications in this field. Furthermore, Baumgardner would probably still claim that no books or articles satisfy his particular requirements. After all, he knows as well as I that a hundred years of evidence have confirmed evolution beyond any doubt; only fanaticism prevents him from comprehending - "O foolish people, Without understanding, Who have eyes and see not" (Jeremiah 5:21).

Nevertheless, for more objective readers, here are just a few recent items of the thousands of books and articles published on this topic (I am a physicist; a biologist would likely have a different list):

Averof and Cohen, "Evolutionary origin of insect wings from ancestral gills," Nature, February 1997; Tim M. Berra, 1990, "Evolution and the Myth of Creationism," Stanford University Press; R. L. Cann, M. Stonck, A. C. Wilson, "Mitochondrial DNA and human evolution," Nature, 325, pp. 31-36, 1987; Francis Crick, "Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature," W. W. Norton, 1982 Richard Dawkins, "The eye in a twinkling," Nature, 368, pp. 690-691, April 1994; Niles Eldredge, 1982, "The Monkey Business: A Scientist Looks at Creationism," NY: Washington Square Press; Douglas J. Futuyma, 1983, "Science on Trial: The Case for Evolution," NY: Pantheon Books; Stephen Jay Gould & Niles Eldredge, "Punctuated equilibrium comes of age," Nature, 366, pp. 223-227, November 1993; Stephen J. Gould, "Evolution as Fact and Theory," Discover, pp. 34-37, May 1981; James A. Hopson, "The Mammal-like Reptiles," The American Biology Teacher, 49, No.1, pp. 16-26, January 1987; D. Jablonski, "Larval ecology and macroevolution in marine invertebrates," Bulletin of Marine Science, 39, pp. 565-587, 1986. Philip Kitcher, 1982, "Abusing Science: The Case against Creationism," MIT Press; Chris McGown, 1984, "In the Beginning... A Scientist Shows Why the Creationists Are Wrong," Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books; Ashley Montagu, Editor, 1984, "Science and Creationism," Oxford University Press; Ofer Bar-Yosef and Bernard Vandermeersch, "Modern Humans in the Levant," Scientific American, pp. 94-100, April 1993; Pope John Paul II, Message to Pontifical Academy of Sciences, October 22, 1996.

These items alone contain thousands of additional references to the published scientific and creationist literature, including pointing out glaring errors, omissions and distortions in creationist arguments. For more references, check out the web page: <http://www.natcensci.org>; there is a good bibliography at <http://earth.ics.uci.edu:8080/origins/biblio/index.html>. Additional material can be found in almost any textbook on biology, geology, cosmology, paleontology, archaeology, anthropology, etc.

If there were the slightest shred of truth in Baumgardner's attacks on evolution, he would most certainly win the Nobel Prize almost immediately. John, don't argue with me in the pages of the Monitor. Please submit your arguments and evidence to any reputable scientific journal. You will certainly convince me and the Nobel Prize committee when these are published. Unless, of course, you continue to assert that almost all the world's scientists and Pope John Paul II are part of an atheistic conspiracy, and secret followers of Hitler and Stalin!

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