

Why Is Evolution So Popular?

Jack H. Williams

Jack is a native of Arlington, Texas. He was baptized into Christ in 1979. He is a 1982 graduate of the Brown Trail School of Preaching. Upon graduation he began labors with the 39th Street church of Christ in July of 1982. He has directed the annual Mid-West Lectures since their beginning in 1983. He is active in International Bible Studies and the Mid-West School of Biblical Studies which are works of the 39th Street church. He has written several tracts in the IBS series. Jack has held Gospel meetings in Texas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Tennessee, Nebraska, Missouri and Arkansas and spoken on several lectureships. He and his wife Lana have a son, Jarrod, who is a deacon at the congregation here, and a daughter, Mary. Jarrod and his wife Stacey have blessed Jack and Lana with two grandsons, Connor, age almost 3 and Cayden, born October of 2001. Mary is married to Robbie Shepherd and both are students at the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

“...in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).

Or

The world and all in it came about over vast eons of time due to the “modification of different lineages of organisms from common ancestors and the ongoing adaptation of organisms to environmental challenges and changes” effected by the mechanics of “natural selection and random genetic drift” (Keller)

Some ask, “What’s the problem?! Can’t we all just get along?!” But it is clear that the two concepts mentioned above are mutually exclusive - both cannot be true. This lecture series sets forth clear and irrefutable proof that the first concept, a six day creation by God, is the only acceptable and provable, Biblical, logical and scientific alternative. The question comes then, if the proof is so abundant and so clear, “Why is evolution so popular?” Let’s see if we can find some answers.

Recently (August of 1999) the Kansas board of education made what some deemed sweeping changes to the list of requirements for the students in their system. These changes were overthrown by the next board, but we can learn much from these events and the debate within them as to the “why” we are seeking. Notice what this board did:

! *They adopted new standards:*

The new standards, which are optional for local school districts, omit any mention of evolution from the high school standards. For 8th graders, the board changed the recommendations of the standards-writing panel to authorize only the teaching of “microevolution.” The board used that term to refer to changes over time within a species, rather than changes resulting in the evolution of one species into another. (ibid)

! *They rejected the recommendation of the science committee:*

The students will understand*:

That the theory of evolution is both the descent with modification of different lineages of organisms from common ancestors and the ongoing adaptation of organisms to environmental challenges and changes.

That biologists recognize that the primary mechanisms of evolution are natural selection and random genetic drift.

The sources and value of variation.

That evolution by natural selection is a broad, unifying theoretical framework in biology.

**Understand: "Understand" does not mandate "belief." While students may be required to understand some concepts that researchers use to conduct research and solve practical problems, they may accept or reject the scientific concepts presented. This applies particularly where students' and/or parents' religion is at odds with science. (ibid)*

Further, let us note some of the comments that were made of this decision by the American Atheists:

Now, Kansas is back in the news, again over the evolution debate. On Tuesday, the State Board of Education voted 7-3 to direct Commissioner Andy Tompkins to devise changes in a 94-page handbook outlining new teaching standards. The move is necessary since three national science groups say they will not permit the board to use their copyrighted materials because of the new position regarding evolution.

"The new standards omit much of evolution as a subject for statewide testing, including the theory that man and apes evolved from a common ancestor," notes the New York Times in a story about the Kansas evolution flap.

New guidelines will now be required since the National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Science Teachers Association say that they will not permit the Kansas board to use their materials. CBS news described the move as a "scientific blockade, courtesy of the three groups that write the nation's science standards."

Then from the "Education Week" website we read the following:

Some 60 miles west on Interstate 70, chemistry and physics teacher Jay Nicholson had an entirely different view of the new curriculum standards. In his eyes, they are a victory for open-mindedness. "The document does a very good job of encouraging critical thinking and the examination of data," said Mr. Nicholson, who holds a doctorate in entomology, because it leaves teachers free to question the theory of evolution in their classrooms.

....

Even now, some biology teachers who are uncomfortable with evolution skip it for all but advanced students, said Mr. Nicholson, the teacher and entomologist. At most, he added, the change in the standards will let students and teachers question evolution and discuss competing explanations for the diversity of life forms.

For now, many Kansas districts are sitting tight--or even advancing the cause of evolution. When Ms. Holderread met last month with teachers in the 1,100-student Kaw Valley district to rewrite the local science curriculum, the group used the science standards devised by the National Research Council and the Kansas standards-writing committee's original draft -- both of which describe evolution as a unifying framework in biology. "There wasn't a discussion on the evolution; the thinking was, 'Of course it will be there,'" Ms. Holderread said. "It was business as usual." (Keller)

WORLDLY INFLUENCES WHICH INCREASE THE POPULARITY OF EVOLUTION

The quotations above give us much information as regards the "why" of evolution's popularity, *especially among the educational leaders in our society*. Popularity amongst the teachers and administrators of our schools will of course result in popularity among those they influence. Among the reasons we see are:

1. **Atheistic (Humanistic) bias**

It is an "either/or" proposition... If God is, creation is, If God is not, evolution is. The American Atheists website is filled of course with material as to why, in their mind, one ought to deny God. They have and will use the full force of their influence to fight anything, creation included, that will work in opposition to their cause of the denial of God and any reliance upon Him. One is shocked as they realize the power this group has. One need only look to the signers of the Humanist Manifesto I and II to realize the danger before us. These documents profess the rejection of God and the necessity of realizing man as the ultimate in all that exists (The Supreme Court has recognized Humanism as a religion, though anti-God). As one peruses the list of signers it becomes obvious that the list of those openly antagonistic toward God and organized religion (and thus anything that supports them) are largely those in positions of teaching or administration in institutions of learning. Our children are being influenced daily by many who realize that as regards evolution it *is* an "either/or" proposition and they will do whatever (even to the degree of intellectual dishonesty) to uphold their anti-God bias.

2. “Bullying” by influential “groups that write the Nation's science standards”

Note that when Kansas passed their new guidelines, the National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Science Teachers Association stated they would not allow the Kansas board of education to use their materials. The atheist's web site referred to this as a "scientific blockade, courtesy of the three groups that write the Nation's science standards."

In addition to the influential groups there is also great “peer pressure” among teachers to follow the “accepted norm”. Any teacher who would dare to take a stand against evolution in the classroom is often subjected to pressure from their peers to conform to the “norm” and accepted standards.

3. Fear on the part of some who teach, that they will be faced with “critical thinking and the examination of data”

Remember the quotation from the article by Keller and others:

‘The document does a very good job of encouraging critical thinking and the examination of data,’ said Mr. Nicholson, who holds a doctorate in entomology, ‘because it leaves teachers free to question the theory of evolution in their classrooms.’

At most, he added, ‘the change in the standards will let students and teachers question evolution and discuss competing explanations for the diversity of life forms.’

That is what many teachers do not want! The truth is that even a grade school child can make a trained “educator” look foolish by a few well thought out questions (such as why one would teach the law of biogenesis and then deny it by teaching evolution?!). The experience of some has been that educators do not want true education (examination of the evidence and formulation of belief based on that examination), rather they want rote memorization of the supposed facts that have been passed from one biased educator to another without examination or questioning.

4. Parrots as teachers...

In the article by Keller we are told of one incident in which the curriculum was discussed. The outcome was: “There wasn’t a discussion on the evolution, the thinking was, ‘of course it will be there.’” The rational is that this is what they were taught in the humanistic colleges (some sadly “Christian”), thus that is what they will teach – without question. While we are amazed at a “dumb animal” such as a parrot being able to repeat phrases they have had repeated to them – shouldn’t we expect more from those whom we pay to educate our children and ourselves?

SOME BIBLICAL REASONS THAT ALLOW EVOLUTION TO GROW IN POPULARITY

While the reasons above have a great influence, they *should* be negated by the influence of the Word of God among those who profess to follow Him. But obviously there is a failure here also. Among many denominations the question of evolution and creation is either disregarded or is treated with a compromising attitude, thus producing such doctrines as the “gap theory,” the “day age theory” and other forms of what they like to call “theistic evolution.” One wonders how any student of the Bible could accept such ungodly doctrines. Let’s see if we can ascertain some answers.

1. **Lack of teaching is a leading cause of acceptance of evolution amongst “religious” people.** The apostle Paul made plain the process whereby true Christianity is propagated from generation to generation: *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).* The word of God is that “armour” that will enable us to stand against the “wiles” of the devil (Ephesians 6:11-18), yet many are not taught today how to use this God given armour. Are we preparing members to face the onslaught of false teaching on evolution and creation? Are we preparing our children to face the humanistic teaching they will get in “higher education”?

2. **A liberal handling of the Word of God enables the teaching of evolution to make great headway in the religious world.**

The Lord made it very clear that His disciples were to follow “all things” that He taught (Matthew 28:18-20). Liberalism parades the idea that certain of these matters are “unimportant.” In the church we have for years heard the supposed distinction between gospel and doctrine – an ungodly attempt to put certain of God’s teachings on a higher plane than others. Others foolishly make such statements as “Christ didn’t die for_____ (and here you can insert any popular doctrine liberals would like to diminish). Yet many become so enamored by their ideas of what’s important that they omit other matters. In doing so they fail to realize the ramification of their teachings. Note for example that if evolution is true (and not important to teach about it), then:

! Jesus was a liar (Matthew 19:4 - male and female were made “at the beginning”)

! Paul was a liar (1 Corinthians 15:44 - “the first man Adam was made a living soul”)

But if these passages which plainly contradict the teaching of evolution are false, what else that they said is false? But not only is the problem with passages regarding creation. What if

! Jesus didn’t really mean it when He said baptism was essential to salvation (Mark 16:16)?

! Jesus was wrong when He said the kingdom would come during the lifetime of some of those who stood with Him (Mark 9:1)?

- ! Jesus was not serious when He said the only reason one can divorce and remarry is if he or she puts away a spouse for fornication (Matthew 19:9)?
- ! Paul was mistaken when he said there is but one church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4) and that church is the body of the saved (Ephesians 5:23)?

Choose any other doctrine that the many denominations and many in the church seem to think we can “agree to disagree” on. If in fact these are unimportant, then why should we expect anyone to take seriously the teachings on creation?! The plain fact is that if Jesus lied, then we have no Savior! If Paul, Peter and the other writers were mistaken, then what is there in the Bible that we can rely upon?! How dare we let the liberal handling of God’s Word continue without challenge!

3. **A lack of nobility has allowed numerable people to become prey to the false doctrine of evolution.**

In Acts 17:11 we are told that God considered those in Berea to be “noble” because they searched the scriptures daily to see if that which they were taught was in accord with that teaching. While it is true that there is a responsibility to teach the Word and to teach it faithfully, the responsibility will always come to rest with the individual. No matter what any “learned” individual may say, I have the personal responsibility to examine the Scriptures as to whether it is true. Let’s apply this principle to the teaching of such men as John Clayton. In his “Does God Exist” ministry he claims that Genesis 1:1 speaks of a creation that included prehistoric man, dinosaurs and such. These were all destroyed and then after a gap of great time the creation of Genesis 1:2 and following occurred. Now he is an educator and so many think what he says must be true – so they fail to be noble and search the Scriptures. One need not read one verse to see that he and any others who seek to allow for the teachings of evolution in any form are false teachers – “for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day...” (Exodus 20:11). One need not be “learned” to realize that someone is lying – and it is not God! The lack of nobility allows Satan to continue to use false teaching.

4. **Spiritual cowardice enables the doctrine of evolution to continue in popularity.**

Paul, whose example we are to follow (1 Corinthians 11:1) was clearly “set for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17). When he was confronted with error he could not help but take a stand for righteousness (cf. Acts 17:16-17). Each child of God has a divine charge to contend for the faith (Jude 3) yet many are afraid to fight for that they know is right! If we look to the example of Paul again we see why he had such courage – “his spirit was stirred in him” (Acts 17:16). Too many try to live for Christ while retaining their heart and spirit for themselves, thus they are not “stirred” when the things of God are spoken against. We need to follow the example of Paul when he was “crucified with Christ” – he gave his all to Christ. Spiritual cowardice is not possible when my heart belongs to God.

5. **A lack of love for the Truth allows evolution to gain a foothold in the religious world.**

The apostle Paul spoke of the tragic end of those who failed to love the Word of God:

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;
because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be
saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11)

One who does not LOVE God's Word can easily believe a lie. Yet it is plain that many do not love the Word or else why would they allow liberalism to go unchallenged? Why would they allow such translations as the New International Version and others which change the truth of God to conform with the doctrines of man? One who loves the Word will study it, apply it and stand boldly for the truth it proclaims.

CONCLUSION

Why is evolution so popular? NOT because of any proof in any realm of science. NOT because of the failure of the Word of God to be upheld by all standards. It is popular because of such worldly ideals and actions as ...

- Atheistic bias
- Bullying and peer pressure from "academic" sources
- Fear of critical thinking and examination of the FACTS
- Teacher's merely "parroting" what they have been taught

In addition we find problems in the religious world such as ...

- Lack of teaching
- Liberalism
- Lack of nobility (willingness to search)
- Spiritual cowardice
- Lack of love for the truth

Let us reject the worldly philosophies and hold fast to God and His Word. Then and only then will we cease to be a part of the problem of the acceptance and popularity of false doctrines such as evolution.

Works Cited

American Atheists (nd). "Kansas Evolution Debate Flares Again; Changes Ordered In Teaching Standards", <http://www.atheists.org/flash.line/evol6.htm>

Keller, Bess and Coles, Adrienne Coles (9/8/1999), *Education Week*, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1999/01kan.h19>