

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

The Church of Darwin

By PHILLIP E. JOHNSON

A Chinese paleontologist lectures around the world saying that recent fossil finds in his country are inconsistent with the Darwinian theory of evolution. His reason: The major animal groups appear abruptly in the rocks over a relatively short time, rather than evolving gradually from a common ancestor as Darwin's theory predicts. When this conclusion upsets American scientists, he wryly comments: "In China we can criticize Darwin but not the government. In America you can criticize the government but not Darwin."

That point was illustrated last week by the media firestorm that followed the Kansas Board of Education's vote to omit macro-evolution from the list of science topics which all students are expected to master. Frantic scientists and educators warned that Kansas students would no longer be able to succeed in college or graduate school, and that the future of science itself was in danger. The New York Times called for a vigorous counteroffensive, and the lawyers prepared their lawsuits. Obviously, the cognitive elites are worried about something a lot more important to themselves than the career prospects of Kansas high school graduates.

Two Definitions

The root of the problem is that "science" has two distinct definitions in our culture. On the one hand, science refers to a method of investigation involving things like careful measurements, repeatable experiments, and especially a skeptical, open-minded attitude that insists that all claims be carefully tested. Science also has become identified with a philosophy known as materialism or scientific naturalism. This philosophy insists that nature is all there is, or at least the only thing about which we can have any knowledge. It follows that nature had to do its own creating, and that the means of creation must not have included any role for God. Students are not supposed to approach this philosophy with open-minded skepticism, but to believe it on faith.

The reason the theory of evolution is so controversial is that it is the main scientific prop for scientific naturalism. Students first learn that "evolution is a fact,"

and then they gradually learn more and more about what that "fact" means. It means that all living things are the product of mindless material forces such as chemical laws, natural selection, and random variation. So God is totally out of the picture, and humans (like everything else) are the accidental product of a purposeless universe. Do you wonder why a lot of people suspect that these claims go far beyond the available evidence?

All the most prominent Darwinists proclaim naturalistic philosophy when they think it safe to do so. Carl Sagan had nothing but contempt for those who deny that

discovers facts and religion indulges fantasy. The acceptable religious beliefs they have in mind are of the naturalistic kind that do not include a supernatural creator who might interfere with evolution or try to direct it. A great many of the people who do believe in such a creator have figured this out, and in consequence the reassurances merely insult their intelligence.

So one reason the science educators panic at the first sign of public rebellion is that they fear exposure of the implicit religious content in what they are teaching. An even more compelling reason for keeping

Evolution theory is having serious trouble with the evidence—but its proponents don't want an honest debate that might undermine their world view.

humans and all other species "arose by blind physical and chemical forces over eons from slime." Richard Dawkins exults that Darwin "made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist," and Richard Lewontin has written that scientists must stick to philosophical materialism regardless of the evidence, because "we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door." Stephen Jay Gould condescendingly offers to allow religious people to express their subjective opinions about morals, provided they don't interfere with the authority of scientists to determine the "facts"—one of the facts being that God is merely a comforting myth.

There are a lot of potential dissenters. Sagan deplored the fact that "only nine percent of Americans accept the central finding of biology that human beings (and all the other species) have slowly evolved from more ancient beings with no divine intervention along the way." To keep the other 91% quiet, organizations like the National Academy of Sciences periodically issue statements about public school teaching which contain vague reassurances that "religion and science are separate realms," or that evolutionary science is consistent with unspecified "religious beliefs."

What these statements mean is that the realms are separate because science

the lid on public discussion is that the official neo-Darwinian theory is having serious trouble with the evidence. This is covered over with the vague claim that all scientists agree that "evolution has occurred." Since the Darwinists sometimes define evolution merely as "change," and lump minor variation with the whole creation story as "evolution," a few trivial examples like dog-breeding or fruit fly variation allow them to claim proof for the whole system. The really important claim of the theory—that the Darwinian mechanism does away with the need to presuppose a creator—is protected by a semantic defense-in-depth.

Here's just one example of how real science is replaced by flim-flam. The standard textbook example of natural selection involves a species of finches in the Galapagos, whose beaks have been measured over many years. In 1997 a drought killed most of the finches, and the survivors had beaks slightly larger than before. The probable explanation was that larger-beaked birds had an advantage in eating the last tough seeds that remained. A few years later there was a flood, and after that the beak size went back to normal. Nothing new had appeared, and there was no directional change of any kind. Nonetheless, that is the most impressive example of natural selection at work that the Darwinists have

been able to find after nearly a century and a half of searching.

To make the story look better, the National Academy of Sciences removed some facts in its 1998 booklet on "Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science." This version omits the flood year return-to-normal and encourages teachers to speculate that a "new species of finch" might arise in 200 years if the initial trend towards increased beak size continued indefinitely. When our leading scientists have to resort to the sort of distortion that would land a stock promoter in jail, you know they are in trouble.

If the Academy meant to teach scientific investigation, rather than to inculcate a belief system, it would encourage students to think about why, if natural selection has been continuously active in creating, the observed examples involve very limited back-and-forth variation that doesn't seem to be going anywhere. But skepticism of that kind might spread and threaten the whole system of naturalistic belief. Why is the fossil record overall so difficult to reconcile with the steady process of gradual transformation predicted by the neo-Darwinian theory? How would the theory fare if we did not assume at the start that nature had to do its own creating, so a naturalistic creation mechanism simply has to exist regardless of the evidence? These are the kinds of questions the Darwinists don't want to encourage students to ask.

Kansas Protest

This doesn't mean that students in Kansas or elsewhere shouldn't be taught about evolution. In context, the Kansas action was a protest against enshrining a particular worldview as a scientific fact and against making "evolution" an exception to the usual American tradition that the people have a right to disagree with the experts. Take evolution away from the worldview promoters and return it to the real scientific investigators, and a chronic social conflict will become an exciting intellectual adventure.

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Evolution

Atlanta's Set-Aside Program Is Unconstitutional

This week, another chapter opens in the legal struggle for equal protection when the city of Atlanta will be sued over its Minority and Female Business Enterprise program, which sets aside 34% of its public contracts for minorities and females. The suit is scheduled to be filed by the Southeastern Legal Foundation this week in federal district court.

Atlanta will have a tough time making its case. Since 1989, when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its landmark *City of*

Rule of Law

By Matthew J. Glavin

Richmond v. Croson decision, not one government-sponsored race preference program has survived court scrutiny. All have fallen under the weight of the venerable anti-discrimination and equal protection provisions of the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

That law is clear: The government must guarantee equal protection for all people. It must not discriminate against individuals on the basis of skin color or ethnicity. Gender and race cannot legally be primary determining factors for allotting public contracts.

Upholding the equal protection guaranteed by the Constitution has been the major victory of the civil rights movement. The deep South underwent the painful transition from government-sanctioned segregation to constitutionally guaranteed equal protection 35 years ago. Government-sanctioned discrimination against anyone based on the color of their skin was wrong 40 years ago, and it's just as wrong today.

At its inception in 1975, Atlanta's set-aside program was designed to redress years of demonstrable discrimination by city government. Under the program, many minority- and female-owned businesses were given an unprecedented opportunity to participate in the marketplace. But today, the program is administered by a minority-controlled city government that will have to prove in court that it discriminates against minority-owned businesses in order to keep its set-aside program. That simply doesn't pass the straight-face test.

Nevertheless, Atlanta's official response to the impending court challenge has been venomous. Mayor Bill Campbell has declared in the press a "fight to the death" in defense of the city's set-aside program, promising that "we will not be browbeaten into submission by any judge."

It's hard to see what the city's leaders are so worried about. City officials themselves have recently asserted that they do not discriminate and will not start discriminating against minority-owned businesses. Bizarrely, they defend the city's program with allegations of "marketplace discrimination" by majority-owned contractors with whom they do business; a set-aside program doesn't address this problem in any event. Never mind, we are told, the city still needs a race preference program.

The problem is, the city doesn't enforce its own current anti-discrimination laws. Ordinances on the books enable the city to

take action against individual contractors who discriminate. Revoking a contract, ensuring that the contractor never works for the city again, and financial penalties are a few of the remedies available to the city against lawbreaking businesses. But research reveals that Atlanta has not utilized this important power in the past decade. That might be a good place to start.

In the *Croson* decision, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor made it clear that race pref-

Atlanta might look to successful race-neutral affirmative action programs in New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Milwaukee and Miami.

erence programs were the last resort to redress current discrimination. Race-neutral alternatives, including local and small business enterprise programs, must first be tried and fail before any race preference program can be legally considered. In any event, the government entity must prove that specific, continuing discrimination against minority- and female-owned businesses actually exists in the discrete marketplace.

In order to prove such discrimination, the government entity is required to conduct and update a detailed statistical analysis, called a disparity study, of the relevant industries and occupations that are considered for public contracts. Atlanta and Fulton County, Ga. (in which Atlanta is located) jointly commissioned a disparity study to support their respective programs. In June, a federal district court ruled that the Fulton/Atlanta study was "fatally flawed" and declared the Fulton

race preference program unconstitutional. Atlanta's identically flawed program appears doomed to the same fate.

With the weight of legal precedent tipping the scales against Atlanta's program, Mayor Campbell and Atlanta's other leaders now have an opportunity to lead the national trend toward development of legal race-neutral affirmative action programs for local and small businesses.

For inspiration, they might look to successful race-neutral affirmative action programs such as those developed in New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Milwaukee and Miami-Dade County. These programs (most of which grew out of successful legal challenges to race-based programs) focus on the fundamentals: waiving bonding requirements for small, startup businesses; matching small, local businesses with larger companies that help them develop a workforce and participate in the contract bidding process; crucial set-asides guaranteed for small and local businesses that truly need the help. Many of the current models use the "empowerment zone" concept as the basis for integrating small and struggling businesses into the mainstream marketplace.

Whether voluntarily or by court order, Atlanta's race preference program will end. The impact will be felt across the nation, as ever more governments—federal, state, and local—turn their attention to the next era in affirmative action. As a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, we must remove the remaining roadblocks of race preference.

Mr. Glavin is president of Southeastern Legal Foundation, a public-interest law firm in Atlanta.



Mayor Campbell

EDUCATION -
Evolution

Today's debate: Evolution and education

A defeat for education standards

OUR VIEW Kansas creationism vote wounds wider push for education quality.

Over the past decade, nearly every state has established standards of learning. And little by little, teachers, parents and even reluctant students have bought into the common-sense idea that each educational subject should include clearly defined lessons for students to master.

Yet just as some states are crediting standards for their first measurable academic gains in years, the reform has hit a roadblock: resistance from groups that see neutral, professionally developed standards as a threat.

The latest blowup came last week when the Kansas Board of Education decided that the theory of evolution shouldn't be part of the state's science-education standards.

By caving in to pressure from critics who believe evolution threatens their concept of God, the Kansas board commits three educational sins: It cheats Kansas students of fundamental knowledge about science. It imposes one group's religious beliefs on others in public schools. And more broadly, it threatens the standards movement by suggesting that legitimate course content can be manipulated.

Evolution is the process of how living things, from single cells to plants to animals, change over time in response to the conditions they confront. It is the central organizing principle biologists use to understand the living world and its origins. And understanding evolution is the key to understanding such vital processes as how bacteria resist antibiotics.

But as a result of the Kansas board's actions, evolution won't be included on the science-assessment tests Kansas students take — at least until the board is replaced, as the governor has suggested. Nor will it be part of the state's science curriculum that Kansas teachers use.

The teaching of evolution is a popular target in many states, but certainly not the only one. In 1995, a national group writing history-education guidelines tried so hard to make sure teachers included those overlooked in the past — notably women and minorities — that it left out many traditional "heroes."

And last November, a survey by the American Federation of Teachers found that New Jersey's social-studies standards are impossibly vague. The problem? Committees that wrote them were so anxious to avoid favoring one constituency over another that they left out important chunks of history.

Each attempt to manipulate educational standards undermines the credibility of this valuable reform tool.

Because evolution deals with the origin of life, teaching it always will be controversial. But it can be presented in a way that respects religious diversity. The National Academy of Sciences provides educators with a useful guidebook on how to do so.

Political pressure in such circumstances is, of course, inevitable.

The goal of educational authorities is to ensure that the boards charged with developing standards are insulated from the pressures — not corrupted by them.

Move encourages freethinking

OPPOSING VIEW Questioning theories is part of science education.

By Beverly LaHaye

When Kansas' Board of Education set new state science standards, disgruntled liberals painted it as a religious-right attack on evolution. In reality, it was a return to freedom, federalism and fairness in Kansas' public schools.

The idea of "tolerance" that liberals embrace when they advance their agenda was quickly swept under the rug when the possibility of state-mandated teaching of evolution arose. The fact that the movement failed is a victory for all of us.

Instead of allowing the state bureaucracy to dictate that every schoolchild be taught one narrow theory of the Earth's origins, the state board of education established standards that allow children to explore various theories in the science classroom.

Critics argue that Kansas students who have not been spoon-fed an evolution-only science diet may be ill-prepared for college entrance exams. But what could be better preparation for university life than exercises in freethinking and critical analysis, as students compare different theories?

Critics fear this move will "force teachers to raise questions" about the validity of evolution. In a free society, raising questions and exploring a theory's validity should be an innate part of the educational process. Historically, it has been the totalitarian societies that suppressed such activities in schools.

Moreover, one wonders how much confidence advocates of evolution have in the theory if they are afraid of a little scrutiny from schoolchildren.

Many of the controversial issues tearing at our nation today come down to this tyranny of the elite: government leaders, educational experts and Hollywood moguls with nothing but contempt for America's parents.

The problem is that the liberals just don't trust parents and local school boards to make responsible decisions for their children's education. And that's as condescending as it is offensive.

Kansas has not forbidden the teaching of evolution; it simply has recognized — in a spirit of federalism — that decisions of what theories are taught belong at the local level, and that parents, not overbearing bureaucracies, know what's best for their kids.

Beverly LaHaye is founder and chairman of Concerned Women for America.

Tony pros, tacky public tout ugly contemporary house design

By Robert Wilson

The distance between the public and architects isn't getting any narrower, judging by a recent issue of *Architectural Record* honoring new house designs by some of the world's toniest architects.

To me, these houses are brutal and dehumanizing. The materials are often unattractive; the spaces vertiginous or plain boring. Trust me when I tell you that you wouldn't want to live in any of them.

Of the eight designs chosen by the magazine, the friendliest, pictured on the cover, was made almost entirely of unfinished concrete — the exterior walls, the patio, the floors, even the chimney made of the same dull stuff. The roof is metal, but painted the same gray as the concrete.

What makes this house the friendliest? I think it's the fact that it actually has a roof. I mean a peaked roof that you can see from the ground, one the water rolls off. You know — a roof. If any of the other designs has a roof, too, you'd never know it unless you rented a helicopter.

Does a house have to have a peaked roof? Obviously not. Some of the most famous houses in the world don't. Monticello has a dome, of course, like an igloo. Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater and Philip Johnson's Glass House? Both flat roofs. Buckingham Palace, for that matter, also appears to be flat on top.

But if you're an architect and you want to say "house" to most of us, start with a peaked roof. Otherwise your house, like several of those in *Architectural Record's* annual feature, will be in danger of looking like something else — in one case, a community college campus, in another like a two-story red delivery truck comically dwarfing a neighborhood of sturdy (peak-roofed) cottages.

Others look like museums. One looks like an unfinished suburban post office.

My least-favorite design I think of as post-earthquake. The exterior walls lean in various directions; cinder blocks are piled precariously; screens and other metal elements of the exterior are allowed to rust.

What's going on here? As a journalist myself, I'm not going to shoot the messenger. Don't blame *Architectural Record*. I confess I'd jump for joy if the magazine ran a piece pulling down these houses of cards, rather than lavishly displaying them. But

magazines don't often bite the hands that feed them. You won't see my magazine attacking preservationists, or *The New Yorker* questioning the idea of living in New York.

No, I believe that these designs were chosen in good faith by standards that can be defended.

The problem is bigger, really, than these houses and bigger even than architecture itself. Most 20th-century art forms — certainly, painting, music, literature and architecture — have created a large gap between what people like and what its most serious practitioners do. One of Modernism's tenets was that ordinary people cannot be trusted to think for themselves. Art, like religion, required a priesthood of interpreters who could tell people what to like. The more ingrained this idea became, the less people trusted their own taste.

In my town, this sad diminishment is best illustrated by what I think of as the tale of two courthouses. The old courthouse, built in 1892, is a lovely, upswept, red-stone-and-brick affair, a very fine building for what was then a country town. The new courthouse, built in 1983, couldn't be uglier. Its squat, shapeless, horizontal profile screams a Stalinist love of function over form. It is horrible to think that an architect could have

conceived it, but it is heartbreaking that the great-grandchildren of those who built the original courthouse could have been satisfied with its replacement.

Architects are among the victims of a public that is architecturally indifferent or illiterate. Because we hunger for something architecturally good, and so little good was being done in domestic architecture for so long, we look to the past, wishing for fake colonials or Victorians, Palladian windows that face the blank wall of the neighbor's house, cute picket fences. This public uncertainty about architecture is certainly part of the popularity of the New Urbanism, a movement that uses traditional design to make neighborhoods more livable.

You can't blame ordinary architects for feeling frustrated at having to rearrange long-ago architectural elements rather than creating vigorous new styles for our own age, styles good enough to tempt future generations of homeowners. Still, that's no reason for their cutting-edge brethren to resort to concrete and cinder blocks. Build us contemporary houses we want to live in. But start with a roof the rain rolls off.

Robert Wilson is the editor of *Preservation* magazine.