

*A Response to Gerald Skoog*

# CREATIONISM AND EVOLUTION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects freedom of belief, guarantees freedom of religious exercise, and prohibits establishment of religion. Government clearly violates a student's freedom of belief or freedom of religious exercise when public schools indoctrinate students in evolution and withhold the scientific evidence supporting creation, as my *Yale Law Journal* (1978) article shows. The legal theory is clear on this point although the courts have not yet reached its merits after a full trial. Skoog is not a lawyer, but his lack of legal training cannot excuse his suppression of these constitutional liberties.

Whatever his or her personal viewpoint is, a fairminded individual will want public schools to teach both the scientific evidence for evolution and the scientific evidence for creation. Academic freedom demands giving students a choice. Governmental neutrality requires presenting both sides. It is difficult to comprehend why some educators want to deny students the opportunity to hear both sides and instead want to indoctrinate them in their (the educators) own authoritarian dogma that must remain cele-

stially above challenge.

In the days of the Scopes trial, public schools banned evolution and indoctrinated students in the Bible. That was unfair. Now, most public schools ban scientific creationism and indoctrinate students in evolution; it is the Scopes situation in reverse. This too is unfair. Scientific creationism has been suppressed; it cannot compete solely because it has been barred from the marketplace. Evolutionists who respect constitutional liberties should welcome balanced treatment of scientific creationism, just as creationists who respect constitutional rights should support balanced treatment of evolution. Clarence Darrow, Scopes' lawyer, said, "It is bigotry for public schools to teach only one theory of origins."

Public schools can teach the scientific evidence for creation without using the Bible or theology. Scientific creationism is not just "biblical creationism without theological terminology"; it is the scientific evidence from geology, paleontology, physiology, and physics that indicates sudden creation. Scientific creationism is not religious simply because it admittedly harmonizes with some religious faiths; just as evolution is not religious simply because it harmonizes with Liberal Protestantism or Religious Humanism.

Rational people can differ about origins because, unlike most science, the matter cannot be proved in the laboratory; neither evolution nor

creation has been observed and neither can be experimentally verified. Both evolution and creation require faith. Evolution assumes the pre-existence of matter and the teleology of natural selection; just as creation assumes the pre-existence of a creator and the teleology of the creator's design.

The foes of academic freedom and of First Amendment liberties, however, are not content to disbelieve scientific creationism; they must deny public school students any exposure to that heresy from the established belief. In Skoog's words, "secular and sectarian damage will result" from teaching both views. The scientific creationists and their bills and resolutions, to the contrary, respect the right of others to teach and to believe evolution; they ask only that the scientific evidence for both theories be offered in public schools. Constitutional liberties, true education, and academic freedom will result from suppressing neither theory and teaching both. ■

#### References

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