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Special Interest Forum - Current topic Creation vs. Evolution

Start date of current Forum: 3/23/2006 • Forum will end 4/13/2006

From time to time, topics of discussion will come up that are not a good fit for the Letters to the Editor section . . . usually due to things like the length of the letters or the need to post responses sooner than once a week on Thursday.

The purpose of this forum is to provide an open discussion by recognized participants on subjects of public interest. It is not a platform for flaming, name calling, libel, personal attacks, defamation, foul language or bad taste. The publisher reserves the right to reject letters for any reason and they also reserve the right to discontinue the forum at any time for any reason.

Basic Rules:

1. No flaming, name calling, libel, personal attacks, defamation, foul language or bad taste.
2. Letters must be signed with your full name, address, phone number, and email address. Only your name and city/state will be posted with your letter.
3. Forum topic discussions will be limited to 3 weeks of exchange.
4. New letters will be reviewed and posted as soon as possible. Newest letters will be posted at the top.

The Seldovia Gazette values freedom of speech. We'll see how this goes, it's a lot of work for the Editors and if this gets out of hand, we will simply cut it off. We accept letters submitted by either: by email to tomg@seldovia.com or maryg@seldovia.com or by mail (ONLY if you also submit a computer CD contining the document) to Seldovia Gazette, P.O. Box 97, Seldovia, Alaska 99663.

3/28/2006: Pastor Jonathan Hoard

AThe more statistically improbable a thing is, the less can we believe that it just happened by blind chance. Superficially the obvious alternative to chance is an intelligent designer. @ - Dr. Richard Dawkins, Department of Zoology, Oxford University

AIn fact, evolution became in a sense a scientific religion; almost all scientist have accepted it and many are prepared to Abend @ their observations to fit in with it @ - H.S. Lipson, FRS, Professor of Physics, University of Manchester, UK

AOne cannot be exposed to the law and order of the universe without concluding that there must be design and purpose behind it all... To be forced to believe only one conclusion-that everything in the universe happened by chance-would violate the very objectivity of science itself...They [evolutionists] challenge science to prove the existence of God. But must we really light a candle to see the sun? It is in scientific honesty that I endorse the presentation of alternative theories for the origin of the universe,

flange and is moved by a motor that has many moving parts. This motor can reach 200,000 RPM and stop and reverse motion in a quarter of a turn. If any one of the many parts wasn =t present this oragnism would die. If anyone of the parts didn =t function, it would die. If any one of the parts was arranged out of order it would die. Feel free to believe that those parts came from no where and assembled themselves in proper time and form. But if you believe that, be honest with yourself and admit that is a belief not fact born out by observation. Irreducible Complexity is everywhere.Mr. Gain also made light of the story of the moon landing. But the science still stands. The data shows the moon to be less than 10,000 years old. Likewise, as mentioned before, our sun is fading. Slowly yes, but fading. Billions of years ago it would have been so close as to make life impossible. We all know what a slight change it would require in distance to drastically change this planets climate.

I agree with Mr. Gain that there are untold articles and books to

life and man in the science classroom. It would be an error to overlook the possibility that the universe was planned rather than happening by chance. @ - Dr. Werner von Braun

AAs by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth? The number of intermediate links between all living and extinct species must have been inconceivably great. @ - Charles Darwin

Indeed!

I too could go on and on. As time goes by more and more scientist are realizing the Agig is up @. This has brought about the emergence of AIntelligent Design @. ID is not merely another approach (or conspiracy) of fundamental Christianity. Christians know who the designer is. ID is the product of former evolutionists who realize that their interpretations do not hold up. I hold no affinity for ID. I would like to see God get the credit He is due.

However, ID has given us some helpful insights. One of which is AIrreducible Complexity @. Taking the mouse trap as an example: All five parts of a mouse trap must be present for it to function. Take away any one of them and it ceases to function. Functionality is important, because if something can =t function it can =t live and evolve. Mr. Gain did a fine job of making fun of the giraffe anecdote in my last letter but the facts stand as they are. A giraffe can only function as it is in it =s present state, anything less would prove fatal. The same goes with migratory birds that set out on flights to places they have never been, traveling over water most of the way, not only arriving at the right place but having been fortunate enough to store up just enough energy to make it. Take also the one celled flagellar bacteria also called the flagellar motor. A simple organism that moves itself with a tail. The tail is connected to the body by a

be read to support evolution. We were all raised with it. We all carried text books with fanciful pictures of prehistoric man as a hunched over brute. Pictures rendered from a mere tooth, later discovered to come from a pig. Asking evolutionists what they think of evolution is like asking Lenin what he thinks of Marx.

This issue at hand here is not science. At issue is our belief system by which all of us approach life and interpret what we see. I am as close minded as Mr. Gain. I believe that the God of the Bible created this world and I interpret what I see around me from that foundation. Those who don =t believe the God of the Bible interpret their world based upon that BELIEF system.

As for this belief system (fundamental Christianity and creationism) being a danger to our children; I can only tell you what I teach here. The Bible tells children that God made them special and with purpose, that God loves them more than anything and will never stop loving them. That out of that love, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for their sins and forgive them, and make them God =s children. It tells them that God will teach them how to live in this world so that they honor God and bless others. It teaches that God wants to produce in them love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control, (stop me if this is too scary) and that God wants them to live forever with Him in Heaven. I know, sometimes I scare myself. If you can =t take my word for it you can always stop in- there is no secret handshake.

As for me being a fool, I am honored and humbled to wear that badge. (Curious? Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

As for me being a liar, well, time will tell.

This is my last submission on this subject. I am always willing to talk personally. I want to thank the Seldovia Gazette for this forum.

For His greater glory,
Jonathan Hoard

3/26/2006: Hank Giesecke

Regarding the Creation/Evolution issue. Several points need to be kept in mind:

1. The debate is usually framed by the evolutionists as science (meaning evolution) versus religion (Creation). Your dictionary defines science as systematized observations and experimentation. Can the experiment of the origin of the universe be run again? No. Can the experiment called the origin of life be run again? No. hence, both "theories" are belief systems.

2) There are and continue to be huge consequences for this worldview called Humanism, based upon evolution. Let me cite just a few. If we are all just evolved pond scum, then life is not at all valuable and we can easily justify killing the unborn (over 43 million so far!) The teen suicide rate is huge today - in many cases because teens - at that important point in their life - see no purpose because they are being told they are just some sort of cosmic accident.

Since 1963, when the Bible and prayer were taken out of schools such things as violent crime, drug abuse, child abuse, suicide, etc.

Now the challenge is to see which "model" best fits the physical evidence and laws. When you examine, even superficially, the assumptions of evolution you find them wanting. For example, you do not get living (organic) material from inorganic (rock). It is called biogenesis - living material comes only from living material. No exceptions. Sorry.

There has been a lot of recent study on the issue of information. Our DNA is our "supply" of information about every facet of us as a living being. If, as evolution postulates, we came from single celled organisms (See #1 - ie. cannot get living material from rock), they have roughly 100 base pairs in their DNA chain. We as humans have 3 Billion base pairs. We are packed with information. Where would it come from?

By the way. Lest the evolutionists bring up natural selection - no one argues against natural selection - where the weak are weeded out. BUT natural selection does not add and cannot add any information.

Darwin in 1859 saw cells as just blobs of material. No good microscopes. Now we well know that every living thing must do 5 functions ALL AT ONCE. If, for example, you can take in nutrition but cannot give off waste you won't last long. Evolution argues that all the functions would have evolved, and come into existence, slowly over long periods of time. Cannot happen that way.

have all gone up dramatically. The cost to America in both dollars and lives ruined is staggering.

WORLDVIEWS HAVE CONSEQUENCES!!!!

Does it ever dawn on evolutionists (Humanists) that the primary reason America has been the light of the world, the most successful nation in the history of the world, is because it was founded on a Biblical worldview - which is based on Truth. We were made in His image, He created everything and so He knows how it works and yet we humans think we're in charge. (It would be like getting a new machine and ignoring the instruction manual!!!) How sad for us personally and as a nation.

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3/20/2006: Kevin Gain

Mr. Hoard's letter uses the typical "shotgun approach" where Creationists throw out numerous accusations which are impossible to adequately address within the time/space constraints of the forums they choose. They must do this because not a single one of their claims will stand on it's own merit. They try to pretend that a public battle of sound bites is equivalent to the rational discussion of scientific knowledge that takes place every day in the scientific community. Understanding science requires understanding complex concepts, not believing what you are told or being able to parrot a few phrases. It is very sad that we seem to be entering a new "Dark Age" where the pursuit of understanding is labeled "Liberal Intellectual Elitism" and truth is more and more being defined by uniformed opinions and not by facts.

Mr. Hoard's letter is a regurgitation of only a teeny weeny microscopic sampling of the thousands of outrageous claims made by these clowns. All I can hope to do here is give a short response to a few of these claims and explore with you the nature of the Creationist subterfuge.

This ridiculous story that NASA was afraid that the lunar lander would sink in 100 feet of dust is a lie made up by Creationist,

- Eldredge, Niles, 1974. Stability, diversity, and speciation in Paleozoic epeiric seas. *Journal of Paleontology* 48(3): 540-548.
- Gingerich, P. D., 1976. Paleontology and phylogeny: Patterns of evolution of the species level in early Tertiary mammals. *American Journal of Science* 276(1): 1-28.
- Gingerich, P. D., 1980. Evolutionary patterns in early Cenozoic mammals. *Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences* 8: 407-424.
- Gingerich, P. D., 1983. Evidence for evolution from the vertebrate fossil record. *Journal of Geological Education* 31: 140-144.

Do you care to spend the time and make the effort? That's only ten papers! I read at least fifty just for an undergraduate project on Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning. There are many, many, more papers on transitional fossils readily available to anyone who cares to spend the time and make the effort. Creationists rely on the fact that hardly anyone in the general public has the time or the inclination to thoroughly review the scientific literature.

How about the claim that pressure in oil/gas wells proves that the Earth is "young". Pressure in oil/gas wells proves that these

Kent Hovind. NASA had sent the Surveyor probes to the moon years before they ever sent a manned spacecraft, as had the Soviet Union. They knew exactly what the surface of the moon was like long before Armstrong stepped on it because they had already sent unmanned probes. This moon dust story is, quite simply, a lie, and the idea that the moon should have more dust on it than it does if the world is really billions of years old is an old canard that has been debunked even by creationists like Andrew Snelling over a decade ago, and is no longer used by nationally known creationists. This nonsense is on par with Creationist claims that legends of Knights fighting dragons come from the "fact" that this is when the dinosaurs actually lived. As I said in my first letter, Seldovia was scraping the bottom of the barrel.

Now, regarding the still standard Creationist misrepresentation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics: They know very well that no one can adequately teach the Laws of Thermodynamics to someone who has never studied physics, in this or any other forum where they spew their nonsense. I suggest, if you are interested, you go take a couple freshman level physics classes at an accredited university. This will only take about six hours a week for about eight months. Let me just say this: The *overall* entropy of an isolated system can never decrease. However, the entropy of *parts* of the system can spontaneously decrease at the expense of an even greater increase in other *parts* of the system. The Creationists state flatly that entropy can never decrease; this is in direct conflict with the most fundamental law of thermodynamics that entropy equals heat flow divided by absolute temperature. Yes, the sun is "using up its energy" and it will certainly "burn out"- to use the colloquial - in a few billion years, but the Earth has been the recipient of some of that energy for the *last* few billion years.

Now lets try, or hopefully not try, the statement that " mutations are always seen to detract from a species, never improve it".If a gene in bird flu mutates in a way that allows it to infect human beings or other non-avian species and thus increases the occurrence of that new gene in particular and bird flu in general, let's see if the Creationists can simply deny it's existence and have it go away.

As for the long necked giraffe joke...A giraffe walks into a bar... and he runs into Francis Hitching who wrote *The Neck of the Giraffe*. He finds that Hitching claims to be a member of the Royal Archaeological Institute, which he is not. He finds that Hitching implies in the "Acknowledgements" of *The Neck of the Giraffe* that paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould had helped in the writing of the book, and that his book had been endorsed by Richard Dawkins, which it had not. When asked, Dawkins stated: "I know nothing at all about Francis Hitching. If you are uncovering the fact that he is a charlatan, good for you. His book, *The Neck of the Giraffe*, is one of the silliest and most ignorant I have read for years." The reference book *Contemporary Authors*, Vol. 103, page 208, lists Hitching as a member of the Society for Psychical Research, the British Society of Dowsers and of the

deposits are surrounded by substrate that is impermeable to oil/gas. Geologic events may allow the migration of some of these deposits into "young" oil/gas fields. You may then say, "young fields" not "young Earth" or "young oil".

At this point I'm going to stop addressing Mr. Hoard's #2 birdshot. As you can see this is becoming quite tedious. I would apologize for my lack of diligence if it weren't for the fact that there are many thousands more of these ridiculous claims floating around out there. If even one tenth of one percent of this nonsense had any merit, the entire scientific endeavor would come crashing down. They do not, it has not and it will not.

When the Creationists are not telling outright lies, they count on the massive gap between what is known by science and even the literate public. They oversimplify and misrepresent very complex concepts in physics, geology, paleontology, chemistry and biology and pander to the general public who do not have the necessary background in science to investigate their claims - all for the sake of clinging to a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Remember, scientists don't just pretend to understand science. They have spent their whole lives studying, and are out there every day working to better understand the natural world in which we live. Hopefully that understanding will be used for the betterment of mankind - not that corporately owned politicians necessarily use this knowledge for anything other than lining their own pockets or try to subvert it to continue to line their own pockets.

We are watching jobs that require knowledge of science and math be shipped out to other countries where young peoples minds are not poisoned with the notion that science is "only a belief system" and "my uninformed opinion is as valid as any scientist's"

I personally believe (among other things) that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are working for the Enlightenment of all sentient beings ...but this belief has nothing to do with science and furthermore I am not trying to use government institutions to force it on school children

I suggest Mr. Hoard stick with expositions on his Personal Jesus until he has taken the time and made the effort to understand at least the basics of Biology, Chemistry, Physics etc...and to keep it out of the schools unless he would like to participate in a class on Comparative Religion.

The Jains (the World's sixth largest religion) have a story about the blind men and the elephant: The first blind man walks up to the elephant, touches its foot and says, "The elephant is a rock". The second touches the elephant's leg and says, "The elephant is a pillar". The third touches the elephant's trunk and says, "The elephant is a pipe". The next blind man touches the elephant's tail and says, "The elephant is a rope. If these blind men were honest

American Society of Dowsers. His writings include: *Earth Magic, Dowsing: The Psi Connection, Mysterious World: An Atlas of the Unexplained, Fraud, Mischief, and the Supernatural and Instead of Darwin*. The giraffe walks out of the bar.

If anyone wants my old Vertebrate Biology textbook, it's yours.

Lets explore the claim that there are no transitional fossils. I would ask that you begin with a perusal of the following papers published in scientific journals:

- Caldwell, M. W. and M. S. Y. Lee, 1997. A snake with legs from the marine Cretaceous of the Middle East. *Nature* 386: 705-709.
- Conway Morris, Simon, 1998. *The Crucible of Creation*, Oxford University Press.
- Cronin, T. M., 1985. Speciation and stasis in marine ostracoda: climatic modulation of evolution. *Science* 227: 60-63.
- Domning, Daryl P., 2001a. The earliest known fully quadupedal sirenian. *Nature* 413: 625-627.
- Domning, Daryl P., 2001b. New "intermediate form" ties seacows firmly to land. *Reports of the National Center for Science Education* 21(5-6): 38-42.
- Eldredge, Niles, 1972. Systematics and evolution of *Phacops rana* (Green, 1832) and *Phacops iowensis* Delo, 1935 (Trilobita) from the Middle Devonian of North America. *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* 147(2): 45-114.

seekers of truth, they would sit down, discuss their findings and try to come to some rational conclusion about the nature of the elephant (as is done in the scientific community) or simply enjoy their own perception. If these blind men were Religious Fundamentalists or Holders of any other Rigid Ideology, they would immediately begin condemning each other to Hell if not sending each other there directly, over their tiny little perception of the rather large Elephant.

Our own personal experience of the Devine or God, or what have you, is way more subjective than the verifiable workings of the Material World we are all experiencing, and are not easily shared with or explained to people who we feel have not had the same experience, although, if we look closely we will see there is no one who has not had this experience. The cultural interpretation of that experience may prevent us from truly sharing what it means to be human with other human beings. When Christians get Saved in a Church, they call it being filled with the Holy Spirit. Hindus may call it the Opening of the Heart Chakra. And Buddhists engaged in the Powa practice may experience a perception of the Oneness of All Being. I personally remember the first time I looked at, and understood the workings of, a marine estuary and equate that with my personal experiences of all of the above.

Sincerely, Kevin Gain

3/16/2006: Mark Janes, Seldovia, AK

Dearest Editors:

I hope I am not the only one responding the recent letters regarding creationism seen here. (As usual, Mom in Dallas had the scoop before me and called and let me know.) What a treat to read Mr. Hoard's and Mr. Gain's letters in the same issue of the Gazette. It is March in Seldovia, time for some controversy! But really, we all need to consider such issues, formulate opinions and put them into actions by voting.

I respect Mr. Hoard's faith and its impact on his life and I agree with Mr. Gain's points regarding the history of this debate, but I feel they both missed a very important point of this entire debate.

This debate is only marginally about how an individual's faith and spirituality interacts with the world. Those are intangible and can't be debated. And as Mr. Gain pointed out creationism has been debunked a long time ago as a scientific theory. I look at the issue from another perspective: How faith and religion are being used to shape our community, this country, and the world.

The focus on fringe issues to the detriment of the mission government is counterproductive. An example would be this obsession with gays. First they don't get abortions, and really, the number of homosexuals trashing marriages here in Seldovia or anywhere is probably not statistically measurable, the heterosexuals are doing a fine job of trashing marriage themselves.

I find this injection of religion into government scary and dangerous, as did people 217 years ago when they wrote "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ..." FIRST words of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. They were serious, and understandable so, as they were seeking to escape the arbitrary rule of a politician "ordained" by God, King George III. Irony aside, it is wise compromise. They mandated: Do religion on you own time, don't assume that everyone wants it, and don't mix it with governmental functions.

The beauty of the Constitution is that it grants rights to individuals and prevents government (us, collectively) from

The rebirth of the Stokes Monkey trial in the cloak of Intelligent Design is not really about science versus faith or even a search for truth. Just as the original trial was used to create division in this country and exploit it for political gains, so is the promotion of Intelligent Design.

I contend that the very act of people adopting a label on the political spectrum, such as "right wing, conservative", "left wing, liberal" as a sign of faith is setting oneself up to be used as a political tool by a few in our society for gains in power and wealth. Many in the religious community might welcome this expression of power, an incorporation of our religious "heritage" and a morality brought to bear in our government. But the facts don't support it. 26 years after Ronald Reagan and his cadre of Republicans rose from the ashes of Watergate, by admittedly using issues important to evangelicals and fundamentalists, I really don't find our government on any higher moral ground and arguments certainly can be made to the contrary.

Using God in politics has never been about good government: government, when done correctly, solves collective problems well, faith deals with spirituality. It is fine that people who are running for office may have a faith in a higher power, but mostly I want them to have the skills and intelligence too effectively, legislate, judge and administrate a complex and sophisticated enterprise.

overreaching. In fact many of the Constitutional framers thought that the mixing of religion and politics would ultimately be worse for religion than politics. Many in politics appeal to the lowest common denominator, dwelling in a very cynical place; faith and religion shouldn't even be seen in the same neighborhood.

But if we must use our individual faith to inform us on the politics, I beseech you to not just consider science texts, or reproductive rights or the structure of the family or who should have sex with whom. Let's use faith and morality to inform us on global warming and its effects on the "unborn," consider the cost of health care and its impact on the nuclear family, consider the morality of saddling our children and their children with an exploded national debt. Finally I wish faith would inform us on the effects of a war on the young and innocent and on our collective soul; I know that it some instructions on these issues came from a guy named Jesus. Or was it Vishnu? Or Mohamed? Or Buddha? Or Elvis?

Thanks for the rant and as usual follow the money!

Mark Janes

3/9/2006: Pastor Jonathan Hoard, Seldovia, AK

In May of 1969 when Neil Armstrong took that "giant leap for man kind" the world, and especially the NASA scientists held their breath. Why? Because science (the practice of observation and calculation of what is seen) told the NASA engineers that space dust accumulates on the moon at a rate of 1 inch per ten thousand years. They had taken this data into account when fitting the Eagle lander with large, round "snow-shoe" like feet. We all have seen the picture of Mr. Armstrong's foot print, but maybe we forget that his next statement referred to the firmness of the moons surface. The picture shows maybe a half inch of dust. The fact is, the science wasn't wrong, but the BELIEF system of the scientist was!

It has long been put forward that the Bible is in conflict with science. Long before the world's leading intellectuals were in fear of falling off the edge of the earth, Isaiah recorded in chapter 40:22, that God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth. True, the Bible is not a science book. True also, that the Bible is a BELIEF system requiring faith, but it clearly isn't blind faith. Believing God created the world is not the biggest step of faith people are taking today. It takes far more faith to BELIEVE that everything came from nothing. That life came from rock. That order came from disorder. That a prince came from a frog.

We have all most likely known someone born with 47 chromosomes. As loving and genuine as these people are, none of us would call Down Syndrome an evolutionary miracle. Mutations are always seen to detract from a species, never improve it. In addition to that, an intermediate type has never been found either living or in the fossil record.

I am not a scientist and I will quickly admit that there are many who know much more than I do. But the honest observation of design requires a designer. How else could a giraffe lean his head down to a pool of water without the blood pressure in his head killing him. Evolution can not explain the many tiny valves in the giraffe's neck that stop blood flow for a moment while his head is down and then reacts by pumping the blood up to the brain when the head is raised again. How many giraffes had their head explode before they decided to evolve. The fact is, that anything less than a complete giraffe couldn't drink, couldn't procreate, couldn't live and couldn't evolve. The closer we look at this world of ours the more we will see this principle nearly everywhere we look.

I am not speaking for the "Intelligent Design" movement. I have never met or spoken with anyone who promotes it. I am not

A scientist who observes the water color painting on your wall, seeing the various colors, identifying purposeful brush strokes, seeing a pattern in it's presentation, never concludes that billions and billions of years must have been required for the paper to form out of nothing, the paint to form out of nothing, and the paint to arrange itself in such a manner that it would represent something as specific as a fishing boat sailing out of the harbor. Instead, though he wasn't present when the painting was done, and may not know the one who did the work it is a simple conclusion to make that there is an artist. You don't have to be a medical professional to see the design of a human eyeball.

The fact is that evolution is a belief system. The god of evolution is TIME. This is why every few years a new study comes out increasing the time from the beginning of the universe. The effort is to use time to explain the complexity of the universe. But time doesn't help evolution it hurts it. From what we observe we see the universe winding down, as the second law of thermodynamics explains. We can observe earth's gravitational hold on the moon slowly weakening. We are losing our moon. However, if the universe were billions or even millions of years old Neil Armstrong drowning in dust would be the least of our worries. We would be drowned twice a day by horrible tides. Likewise, our sun is losing both mass and diameter. This is being measured. Millions of years ago the earth would have been uninhabitable with a much larger sun. Another observable fact is that there is still very high pressure in the oil and gas wells, pressure that would have dissipated over millions of years. Observation tells us that our universe is winding down not up.

Evolution stands on the claim that things are progressing upward. This too isn't proven out by observation. One of the most complex parts of living matter is the chromosome. One would think that man would be at the top of the chromosome list or at least near the top. Not true. We know man has 46 chromosomes. We also know a silk worm has 56 and a fern 480. Beyond that we can see that evolution of chromosomes isn't a benefit.

speaking for the Christian community or for any organization. This is what I believe. I believe there is design clearly evident in our universe. I believe the Bible tells me who that designer is. Is it faith? Yes. Most certainly. Is it a blind leap out into an unintellectual darkness? Absolutely not. God has shown His handiwork in the Creation. Everything from beauty for the sake of beauty to the emotions of anger or joy that we feel while reading this, that cannot be explained any other way. He has shown His handiwork in the images of my unborn babies sucking their thumbs. In the beating of my heart to my cognitive thought. And most importantly in the forgiveness I know in my life for all the junk I have done and the change that He alone has produced in me. In the corner of the painting is His signature.

If this makes me a "Bible thumping, born again, right wing fundamentalist, creationist", then I will proudly wear that badge. If by all that we simply mean that I believe in the God of the Bible, that I take Him at His Word and I am allowing Him to create in me the person He wants me to be. If this offends some folks I can't apologize for that. But I can sympathize, I am offended by all kinds of things as well. If you want, we can get together and go over them. That's part of life in this melting pot. Thankfully we still have the first Amendment that allows us all the freedom to speak our mind.

Everybody believes something. Everybody believes in some kind of god. Our belief systems shape the way we live and think in this life. The God of the Bible has passed the test. I am so thankful He got my attention and so thankful for the joy that comes from knowing Him as He intended me to do, through Jesus Christ, my Savior.

Please feel free to let me have it or to ask me more about my Jesus. After all, for the time being we still live in a free country.

For His greater glory,
Jonathan Hoard

3/9/2006: Kevin Gain

I can't believe there are Creationists around who still call themselves Creationists. I thought they all jumped ship to the new, improved, supposedly Supreme Court friendly version that they're calling Intelligent Design Theory, since their first laughable attempt at subverting rational thought failed so badly. Seldovia was scraping the bottom of the Fundamentalist Literalist Christian propaganda barrel when it wound up with this outdated version of religious fundamentalism.

Rather than address this ancient and completely debunked fundamentalist fantasy, I would like to concentrate on their

There should be no conflict between religion and evolution, as science and religion deal with two very different kinds of truth. Although there is of necessity a conflict between Biblical literalist views of creation and modern science, the majority of Christians do not hold these views. Neither, do Buddhists, Hindus, Taoists, Jews, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, Sufis etc... Faith in God does not require belief in a literal interpretation of the Bible, nor does it require belief in the Male Deity concept of God "Who" is beyond all concepts. You are also not required to shake in your boots when Christian preachers threaten you with Hell.

newest idiotic attempt to force their religious beliefs on school children, as I'm sure they will get around to sending a new representative to Seldovia, probably during the third or fourth incarnation of this farcical nonsense.

This will take far longer than three hundred words but as no scientist or philosopher was allowed three days at the Church, I beg your indulgence.

Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake and Galileo died in prison for pointing out that the earth goes around the sun. Lucky for Darwin, by the time he rolled around, the Western World, unlike the Middle East where Fundamentalist Monotheisms developed, no longer allowed religious zealots to murder heretics. However, religious fundamentalists have a long history and copious experience in subverting the truth by whatever means available when it contradicts a literal interpretation of whichever book they believe in.

Intelligent design was invented at the Discovery Institute in Seattle - a right-wing Christian think-tank who's stated goal is to promote the teaching of Christian theology in public schools - after the 1986 Supreme Court ruling against a Louisiana law requiring the teaching of Creationism in public schools on the grounds that it violated the Establishment clause of the Constitution. "Intelligent Design" has nothing to do with science. They simply revamped creationism to try to sneak it by the Supreme Court. These Biblical Literalists have manufactured the "ID controversy" in the same way the "tobacco controversy" was manufactured by the tobacco companies. There is no controversy. ID is pure subterfuge.

Science, in a nutshell, is this: "The physical world is very complex, if we apply deductive reasoning to empirical evidence, we can understand how it works." The basic premise of ID is: "The world is very complex, therefore, (while we won't actually say Male Deity because we know how the Supreme Court feels about that) there is a Male Deity in the sky". Simply saying, "God did it" does not advance scientific understanding and has nothing to do with science and that is why the entire scientific community unequivocally dismisses it. Ideas of God belong to religion, not science.

More than 10,000 Christian clergy in America have already signed The Clergy Letter which is a statement of support for evolution in particular and science in general and an acknowledgement that "evolution is a foundational scientific truth". The Vatican Observatory Director says that the ID movement "actually belittles God" and notes that "science and religion are totally separate human pursuits. Science is completely neutral with respect to theistic or atheistic implications which may be drawn from scientific results". The rest of the world gets it. Even the rest of the Christian world has gotten over it. The only people who feel threatened by evolution are the loud and well funded Born-Again, Fundamentalist, Literalist, Apocalyptic, Messianic, Right Wing, Holier than Thou, One True Religion, Gerry-Fallwellian, Evangelical, American Christians.

It is extremely unfortunate that the entire scientific community and most of the Christian community was dismissed so callously by the Seldovia Gazette reporter who seemed dazzled by what I can only conclude was her first introduction to this pseudo-science and its deceptive rhetoric and obviously to science it's self.

If you wish to understand science you must study science. As with Buddhism, which deals with entirely different subject matter, there are no shortcuts through blind belief. In *Kitzmiller v. Dover* (2004-05) it became clear that even a right-wing Christian Republican Bush appointed judge could see through the blatant misrepresentation of fundamentalist literalist religious belief that is "intelligent design theory". As can any rational person disinclined to believe in talking snakes.

Sincerely,
Kevin Gain

