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High Priest of Evolution Reveals His Religion

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On Wednesday, August 11, 1999, the Kansas Board of Education adopted new science standards for statewide testing of students that no longer require knowledge of evolution as a way to describe the emergence of new species—for instance the evolution of primates into *Homo sapiens* (macro-evolution)—while requiring knowledge of “micro-evolution,” changes that occur within a single species. The decision gives a mild snub to the theory of evolution credited to Charles Darwin. Apparently the Board decided that 140 years of research involving thousands of scientists spending millions of dollars had failed to produce sufficient evidence to confirm the theory.

Scientists, professionals, and academics appealed to the Board on behalf of modern science that removing an important concept like evolution from life sciences and biology would intellectually cripple students. Nothing in biology, it was claimed, makes sense except in light of evolution. On the other side were mostly parents who were concerned with what their children were being taught.

As soon as the decision was cast, the propaganda war began. Darwinists have discovered that the best way to silence those who question evolution is to marginalize them through ridicule and character assassination. They characterized those who supported the new guidelines, including parents, as bible-thumping fundamentalists, dangerous pseudo-scientists, flat earthers, etc. Unfortunately, much of the stereotyping was done by journalists who did not stop for an instant to find out what the issues were, who the parties were or what they believed. The Chicago Tribune chanted, “intellectual chicanery.” The Boston Globe saw “evolving creationist” fundamentalists. The Washington Post decried “literal belief in biblical creation stories.”

The issues discussed at Kansas, however, go beyond disagreements with church doctrines to concern for the safety of children. After the Littleton massacre, parents testifying before a congressional subcommittee on the matter claimed that removal from the classroom of prayer, the Ten Commandments, and other biblical teachings on human behavior created a climate favorable for murderous behavior. That may be true, but I believe it is not the whole story. The congressional testimony did not adequately explore the thought systems that have replaced the abolished biblical doctrines.

Science, real science—the work that ferrets out empirical facts about the nature that surrounds us—has been co-opted by an ancient philosophical/religious doctrine the origins of which can be traced back to at least 400-700 years before Christ. Known today variously as scientism, evolutionism, metaphysical naturalism, and Darwinism, this doctrine has been so effectively interlaced with science that it is often difficult for the scientist, much less the layperson, to separate the two.

Though secular in perspective (Darwinists claim the natural world is all there is), Darwinism nevertheless functions much like a religion. Darwinists have their own creation story (macro-evolution), their own creed (the Humanist Manifesto), their own “messiah figures” (those who come claiming, “Come, follow us. We know the ways of life.”), their own clergy (those whose task it is to preach the “truth” as revealed by the high priests), and their own priesthood (those who pass down to the masses their latest ruminations in naturalistic thought).

One of the “high priests” of evolution is Harvard professor of zoology, Stephen Jay Gould. Like other leaders of the Darwinian faith, Gould has taken special pains to assure the masses that evolution is only about science, that science and religion function in two separate domains, and that there should be no conflict between the two—as long as religion stays within its proper realm. Problems arise only when Christian fundamentalists, who don’t understand science, try to make science fit their personal theologies. Writing in the August 21 issue of *Time Magazine*, Gould reasserted this doctrine: “No scientific theory, including evolution, can pose any threat to religion—for these two great tools of human understanding operate in complementary (not contrary) fashion in their totally separate realms: science as an inquiry about the factual state of the natural world, religion as a search for spiritual meaning and ethical values.”

Many religious leaders have bought the ruse. However, as is so often the case, those with the most the lose are usually the ones who take the effort to become the best informed. Conservative Christians have discovered that while science may be neutral on religious issues, Darwinism is not. The real conflict is between two equally religious belief systems. Darwinists, however, with assistance from misguided media, have been astonishingly successful at painting the issue as one of a small group of ignorant fundamentalists pitting their outdated biblical myths against the studied results of empirical science. Thus, by making it appear to be nonreligious, Darwinism can appear to be no threat to religion and by making it appear to most churchgoers that there exists no conflict between Christianity and evolution, Darwinists have effectively mollified the opposition and have been free to rob the store.

Though the date of the Kansas Board of Education’s rather insignificant decision still rings loudly through the propaganda mills of the media, another date, June 25, 1999, will eventually ring louder, I believe. Writing an editorial in the magazine *Science*, the frontispiece of the prestigious National Association for the Advancement of Science, Stephen Jay Gould launched a direct attack on religion thereby exposing the true religious nature of Darwinism. After quoting Psalm 8 “Thou has made him a little lower than the angels...thou madest him to have dominion...thou has put all things under his feet.” Gould went on to state, “Darwin removed this keystone of false comfort more than a century ago, but many people still believe that they cannot navigate this vale of tears without such a crutch.” Ending the article, Gould admonished his readers, “Let us praise this evolutionary nexus, a far more stately mansion for the human soul than any pretty or parochial comfort ever conjured by our swollen neurology to obscure the source of our physical being, or to deny the natural substrate for our separate and complementary spiritual quest.”

Here Gould has gone much farther than the occasional witty jabs of fellow high priest, Richard Dawkins (“Evolution has made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist”) or the late Carl Sagan, who, writing in the introduction of Stephen Hawking’s book, *A Brief History of Time*, claimed naturalistic evolution leaves “nothing for a creator to do.” Gould has proposed to substitute for Christianity and other religions, “a far more stately mansion for the human soul...”

The question that confronts us and is the focus of the remainder of this essay is: Why did Professor Gould choose this hour to break with Darwinism’s tenuous accommodation with religion? Why did Gould abandon a successful strategy that has allowed Darwinists to co-opt America’s educational institutions while good people slept? Gould is a master tactician and surely the timing and wording of his editorial were not accidental. Furthermore, from letters to the editor of *Science*, the immediate reaction of scientists to his epiphany was outrage. What does Gould hope to gain by what amounts to an open admission of the religious foundation of Darwinism, a betrayal of a secret that has been well-kept for decades?

One reason why Gould may have departed from the ruse of accommodation with religion is Darwinists’ perceived loss of control of the scientific and educational world. Three events have come together lately to make this possible. First, deep from within the biological sciences there has arisen a group of scientists who are promoting intelligent design (ID), the concept that a intelligent agency was involved in some stages of life’s origin and dispersal. Drawing from recent advances in molecular biology and information theory, the ID theorists have come to recognize that purely naturalistic evolution cannot possibly explain every step in the emergence of living organisms. The discovery of minimum irreducible complexity in biomolecular structures utterly falsifies the foundational premise of Darwin’s theory, namely that biological organisms arise through gradual accumulation of small mutational changes. Furthermore, there is no known source of information apart from intelligent design. Darwinists have been unable to imagine how the immense information content of the highly specified DNA genetic code might have arisen by chance,

let alone design a scientific experiment and collect data to explain it.

So far, the ID scientists have resisted attempts by Darwinists to silence them. Vilification has not worked. Marginalization has not worked because many of the IDers are biological scientists who actually do the research. Attempts to stereotype them as fundamentalists seeking to promote biblical creation stories, which may play well with the media and others predisposed to Darwinism, have served to radicalize the ID scientists.

Second, with the breakup of the iron curtain and the parting of the bamboo curtain, the biological sciences are enjoying a global renaissance of sorts. Biological scientists in Asia, particularly China, do not hold blind allegiance to Darwin as do their colleagues in the West. They seem disposed to requiring the theory to fit the data rather than making the data fit the theory. Hostilities with American Darwinists during a recent biological conference held in China prompted one Chinese scientist to remark, “In China we can question Darwin but we can’t question the government; in America, you can question the government but you can’t question Darwin.”

Third, though they nearly completely control educational institutions from kindergarten through graduate school and virtually monopolize all forms of the media, Darwinists have discovered through recent polls that fewer than ten percent of Americans believe in the totally random, unsupervised, impersonal, godless origin-of-life story promoted by the Darwinists. Many more Americans believe in some form of evolution directed by a supernatural agency. Fully half of Americans don’t believe in macro-evolution at all. Seven of ten Americans think evolution should be taught along with the scientific evidence that does not support evolution. Obviously attempts to indoctrinate American school children into a Darwinistic view of life have not been as successful as was hoped.

Another reason why professor Gould may have departed from the Darwinist ruse of accommodation with religion is a growing suspicion of the underlying source of violence in our schools and our society. The lure of Darwinism is in its promise of unfettered licentiousness but its curse is purposelessness. Darwinists claim there is no God (therefore there is no accountability for our actions) and we are an accidental coming together of molecules on an insignificant planet near a minor star in just another galaxy (life has no purpose). It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to recognize the volatility of the mixture. Combining licentiousness with purposelessness for the disturbed mind is like touching an open flame to gasoline. In his *Science* editorial, Pastor Gould wrote, “Evolution liberates the human spirit.” With no accountability for our actions, evolution liberates the totalitarian, the despot, the “dog-eat-dog” capitalist, the child molester, and others who find their liberties in exploiting the weak.

Officials charged with explaining the “why” of the recent high school mass killings have been troubled by the “where” the killings took place. The “Law of the Old West” tends to reign in the black communities and ghettos of the inner cities where students arm themselves for protection, but these murders occurred in the sanitized education factories of prosperous white suburbs.

The perpetrators were troubled, yes, but bright—that is, bright enough to make the connect. If there is no purpose, if there is no accountability, if there is no way out of the pain and emptiness of life, then why not maximize the license and exit in a towering ball of flame. The Littleton killers committed suicide. A Gallup poll of teenagers who had considered or tried to commit suicide found that almost half (41 percent) cited depression or feeling worthless as the reason.

After having smeared our television screens with his heinous murders, Atlanta’s Mark Barton allowed police to corner him and then committed his “coup de grace.” Barton left behind letters describing the unbearable pain in his life and his utter hopelessness. Memories of Milwaukee serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, who not only killed but ate his victims, are now fading. However, in a *Dateline NBC* program that aired in 1994, Dahmer’s father had this to say. “If you don’t—if a person doesn’t think that there is a God to be accountable to, then—then what’s—what’s the point of—of trying to modify your behavior to keep it within acceptable ranges? That’s how I thought anyway. I always believed the theory of evolution as truth, that we all just came from the slime. When we—when we died, you know, that was it, there is nothing.....” Men hunt and kill animals for food. If the younger Dahmer had followed his father’s footsteps and had convinced himself that man is just another animal then what’s wrong with hunting and killing men for food?

Stephen Gould claims Darwinism would “liberate the human spirit.” Historically, the survival of the fittest message of Darwinism has provided rationale for some of the most outrageously uncivilized actions by “liberated believers.” One notorious practitioner of Darwinism wrote, “He who would live must fight; he who does not wish to fight in this world where permanent struggle is the law of life, has not the right to exist.” His book was *Mein Kampf*; his name was Adolf Hitler. Both Lenin and Stalin praised Darwin for liberating them from encumbering theology. Karl Marx wished to dedicate his book to Darwin. Darwinian philosophy has been foundational for moving abortion from crime to respectability. It is estimated that in this century somewhere between 100 million and 150 million human beings have met with untimely death at the hands of those who appealed to Darwin in some manner to justify their actions.

Darwinists of the first half century openly taught that blacks were being selected out of the human race. In that view, the infamous Tuskegee Experiment made sense. Darwinists taught that women were inferior to men since men were competing with animals and each other while women were staying home with children. The killers and bigots of the first half century have been replaced by the killers and bigots of the last half century. The players are different but the script is the same.

There may be other reasons for Stephen Gould’s apparently reckless attack on religion in his *Science* editorial. A contributing factor could be a growing conservatism among an aging population. Perhaps the prospect of a Republican president serving with a Republican congress could embolden constitutional challenges with efforts to require Darwinists to produce their evidence in a forum subject to cross examination.

This brings us back to the Kansas Board of Education decision. According to a knowledgeable source, the chairwoman of the Board requested evidence in support of macro-evolution. What she basically got in reply was, “We’re the experts, and that will have to do.”

After the media propaganda guns have silenced and we have opportunity to reflect on the issues, we may discover that the Kansas folks have much to teach us. There is little reason to teach as revealed truth an ideology for which vast amounts of supporting evidence are claimed but seldom produced, especially when that ideology is at the root of much destructive behavior.

Regarding macro-evolution, Darwinists have little to show for 140 years of research by thousands of scientists spending millions of dollars of research money. If macro-evolution eventually is proven as the mechanism for the origin and dispersal of life, the Kansas Board of Education and similar educational institutions will have to face the realities. Until the supporting evidence is in, educators have the right to defer accepting the theory—and teaching it, unless evolution is taught along with scientific data that refutes it. The message from the agricultural heartland is, “We don’t buy the milk before the cows come home.”