

NEWS AND COMMENTS

AN UPDATE ON THE TEACHING OF CREATION IN CALIFORNIA

In April 1974 the California State Board of Education voted unanimously to include the following statements in the social science framework:

Part of humankind's long intellectual history has been the grappling with the question of human origins. In virtually every culture, whether ancient or modern, accounts of human origin have been part of the system of beliefs held by the people of that culture.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has been the most influential religious factor in Western civilization, human origin has been explained as an act of divine creation as described in the Book of Genesis. The development of scientific theories of origin in the nineteenth century both added to the variety of explanations of human origin and encouraged a re-evaluation of earlier explanations. For some, the conflict of beliefs caused by the scientific theories has been sharp enough to force them to choose between their system of belief and the evolutionary explanations offered by science. Others have found it possible to accept scientific accounts of human evolutionary development while still holding to a belief in divine creation. Still others believe that the concept of divine creation is scientifically valid.

These various views of human origin, together with various approaches to the relationship between religious belief and scientific theory, must be seen as part of the intellectual and cultural diversity of our society. These representative views of origin are studied in the social sciences because they make significant contribution to human systems of belief and values.

Although this framework was adopted in April 1974, it was not printed until January 1976. Because of a similar issue in Tennessee at that time (see *Origins* 2:96-97), and because of the strong anti-creation sentiment in the scientific community, it was felt the first step should be to place the topics of human origins and the early history of mankind in the social science texts. This was also done to avoid the complication of legal charges from evolutionary scientists.

Significant advances towards including creation in the elementary textbooks of California have been made. A number of books that were eventually adopted for the social sciences in 1975 contained some creation concepts, and a number of evolutionary ideas formerly stated as facts in science texts are now presented only as theories.

Because of the unprecedented two-year delay in the printing of the social science framework, and because of the urgency of including creation theory along with evolution, the State Board of Education adopted the following statement as an addendum to the social science framework.

The State Board of Education had determined that the appropriate place for discussing the subject of origins is in the Social Science classroom, K-12. Books on the approved matrix for Social Science do not include an adequate study of the various views of human origin. Notwithstanding, when the matter of origins is studied in Social Science classes, various alternatives should be presented appropriately.

This directive was distributed throughout all the school districts of the State of California to be added to the social science framework, thus informing the school districts that the Board does expect creation to be included in the teaching of the history of early man.

A definite victory has been won by the creationists in having materials on creation printed in the textbooks, and in notifying all school districts in the State of California that they are expected to teach alternate views when dealing with the subject of origins.

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of Education