

EDITORIAL

BEYOND DESIGN

When one steps into a new position somewhat unrelated to past work experiences, it is most natural to take furtive glances around one's new environment to determine what has gone on before, the present state, and the future goals of the organization just joined. In the case of an executive editor, one also reads what other similar publishers are producing, making a conscious or unconscious evaluation of one's present publication with the "competitors." Details such as type styles, layout design, and a handful of other procedural items demand immediate comparison. A thoughtful period later develops as one reads the articles found in the various publications. Comparisons here are not so easily made.

Since opening my office several weeks ago, I have spent considerable time reading the various creationist publications. Our files contain examples of a worldwide production, some with slick, professional copy, others obviously printed in the basement of the editor's home.

A review of these various publications causes one to form several generalizations. Some of the following have arisen. 1) There seems to be a strong attempt to relate creationism with Christianity and certain faith statements about Christ. This bothers me somewhat, for could there not be Jewish or other non-Christian creationists? 2) There seems to be a pervading feeling that the evolutionary scientist is somehow dishonest with the data that surrounds him. These scientists are sometimes pictured as vindictive, loaded with bias, and, though not spoken but certainly implied, out to destroy church, morals, family, and other noble ideas.

These implications cause me some discomfort. After six years of graduate school and five postdoctoral years, I can remember no such incidences in which these characteristics arose. I have seen strong views held, to be sure, but attempts to destroy what others hold dear were remarkably absent.

A third theme that seems to dominate is the idea that creationism is more scientific than is evolution. While holding similar views, I am deeply troubled by what is sometimes presented as scientific proof. Perhaps the most dominant argument is that of design. Examples of complexity are cited and compared with present technology. Since a wide gap exists, the conclusion is quickly drawn that a Designer was responsible. While the argument from Design has real validity, it is freighted with certain problems. When what was complex and not understandable at one time becomes ordinary as technology advances, there is a reaction among the general populace to reduce the original force and sophistication of the observation.

One needs only to observe the bewildering pace of events occurring in the area of recombinant DNA to see how quickly the knowledge that was once the purview of the most educated is now spoken of freely by the common man. Indeed, the common man loses his sense of awe in the complexity and demands new miracles to satisfy his needs.

Creationists have been strongly criticized recently in scientific and popular literature for cloaking religious views in scientific skins. Perhaps some of the accusations are true. The basis of all science is an attempt to understand the universe that surrounds us. Since nature only grudgingly discloses its secrets, one must probe with tools hoping to get at how things were, are, and will be. Science thus examines the surrounding universe by proposing hypotheses and then testing them. This active process demands that nature is predictable and that from these tested hypotheses and theories, general descriptions of the properties of the surrounding universe can be made. It is here that many creationists think that science ends, when in reality it is merely the beginning. For it is the theory that is the wonder of science in that it allows one to predict results in as-yet-untried experiments. The better the theory, the more accurate the prediction. This is indeed science at its best.

Proponents of evolutionary theory claim that evolution is a testable hypothesis. In the areas of microevolution (i.e., speciation, adaptation, etc.) much success has been achieved. Creationists have generally taken these data and have found them compatible with their views. This is peripheral, however, to the general observation that creationists at any level of their theory have largely failed to provide testable hypotheses that originated with a model that includes the Biblical record. Until we who hold to the creationist views can demonstrate that creation/flood theory can better predict results in unknown areas, that the theory allows one to design better experiments, then we must accept, at least partially, the charge that we are not really scientists.

Origins is a journal devoted to creation/flood theory research. In it we have attempted and will continue to attempt to make a sound contribution toward a rational and careful development of theory with predictive value. Failure to do so will result in having a group of people talking to themselves about meaningless things.

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