

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

*Readers are invited to submit reviews of current literature relating to origins. Mailing address: ORIGINS, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, California 92350 USA. The Institute does not distribute the publications reviewed; please contact the publisher directly.*

### A METHODOLOGICAL MANUAL

HOW TO THINK ABOUT EVOLUTION AND OTHER BIBLE-SCIENCE CONTROVERSIES. L. Duane Thurman. 1978. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 144 p.

*Reviewed by Richard D. Tkachuck, Geoscience Research Institute*

There are times when a reviewer questions his own competence. Doubts arise when after finishing the text he finds no significant criticism of the material and in fact wishes he had written it. Thurman has produced such a book.

Thurman's audience is the high-school and college student faced with the teaching of evolution which is in conflict with his/her religious background. Speaking to a Christian audience, the author begins by outlining the political controversies that started with Scopes in Tennessee, then moves to the California and Indiana school board problems. From these and several other examples, he demonstrates that the basis of the controversy is more a result of the two antagonists attempting to develop a position without using the same verbal framework or assumptions. The resulting misunderstandings with the emotional baggage that attends are posited to be the basis of the conflict. The next two chapters are directed towards how science works, data collection, facts, inferences, and interpretation. He clearly states that while facts must be used to gain inferences of information beyond the facts, these necessary inferences are freighted with potential error; thus, the limits of science are defined.

Thurman devotes two chapters to microevolution and macroevolution. These chapters are an excellent case study of the philosophical methods previously outlined. In the microevolution section he shows the factual basis for change within biological systems and establishes an area of wide agreement with those on both sides of the creation-evolution controversy. In the chapter on macroevolution, he brings clearly to the fore the real basis for the differences between the two sides. Using evolutionary authorities he attempts to establish the difficulty of demonstrating change at higher phylogenetic levels and clearly shows the liability

of making conclusions on the basis of incomplete data. In this, as in other chapters, his effort is not an exhaustive explanation of the data, but rather a philosophical framework for dealing with data.

The final chapters discuss the various theories of creation, and the book ends with a plea for the reader to listen to different ideas and to respect other opinions as being honest attempts in the search for truth.

The book might be faulted because it deals mainly with the speciation process and largely ignores creationist problems in such sticky areas as the geologic column and dating mechanisms. However, the author's intent was not to answer problems but to provide a methodology whereby the reader is able to approach any difficult area. In fact, the author emphasizes this facet to the exclusion of mentioning his own personal beliefs. This is a frustrating yet cunning ploy which drives the student to determine for himself what methods he uses to establish his own belief system.

The book is remarkably free from errors with the possible exception being the statement on p 121 that present life forms are largely dissimilar from fossil forms. For many mammals this is not the case. Also, the chart on p 96 seems too simplistic for the concepts presented. These do not distract from the text in a significant manner.

This book is written primarily for creationists, and I hope that Thurman will write a companion volume with the evolutionist as his intended audience. Such a book, if widely read, would do much to eliminate the acrimony and misunderstanding between the two camps.

*How to Think About Evolution and Other Bible-Science Controversies* is strongly recommended for classes in philosophy of biology and creationism.