

Chapter 1

Presenting the Case For Creation - Leonard Brand

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There are several common pitfalls that should be carefully avoided as we witness for Creation truth. First of all, the information we use should be accurate. No matter how correct our theology is, if we try to support it with incorrect scientific evidence our words will not have much influence on anyone well enough informed to recognize our errors. Much of the material that has been published in support of Creation is full of errors and should not be used. Sometimes Christians feel a burden to defend Creation and proceed to write books or journal articles on the scientific evidence for Creation without having the scientific training to match their zeal.

Sound evidence that supports our belief in Creation is plentiful. With this good information available it is unfortunate when use is made of incorrect information that only makes one look foolish. It is well worth the effort to check the accuracy of any scientific data before we use it in public presentations or private studies on Creation. None of us is well trained in all fields, but if we work together we can help one another avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Not long ago I was reading the text of a sermon written by a very able and successful evangelist. The good work that this man does is certainly worthy of commendation. Unfortunately, in his efforts to point out errors in the evolution theory he used information that is false. This situation contains lessons for us all. His errors cannot be explained as hearsay evidence that he carelessly pulled out of his head. He did his homework - he read a book on the scientific evidence for Creation and used the information he found in that book. However, he did not recognize that some books on Creation have been written by persons who are not adequately trained, and that even though these books sound convincing and have a good conservative ring, they may contain information that is out of date or even completely false.

When we are speaking on subjects out of our field of training, the only safe policy is to contact someone who is trained in that field and ask him to check our material for accuracy.

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Even the specific choice of words and expressions are often important. For example, some think evolutionists believe that men evolved from monkeys. Actually they believe that men evolved from apelike ancestors. The difference between those two statements may seem unimportant to us because it is a small detail compared to the real issue concerning the origin of man. But it does matter, because if we say it wrong we will sound uninformed to biologically educated persons in our audience, with the result that they may miss the main point we are trying to make.

Frequent Mistake

Another frequent mistake is that of tearing down evolution instead of building up Creation. We should carefully avoid statements that ridicule evolutionists, make them look foolish, dumb, uninformed, or in any way tend to make them look bad. Our purpose should be to win noncreationists to a belief in Creation. Such individuals will only be turned away by ridicule.

If, after we carefully, lovingly, and tactfully present the case for Creation, a person still chooses to reject it, at least we have done what we could. However, if a person listens to us talk about evolution and feels insulted and disgusted by what he hears, it is time for us to reevaluate our tactics.

In presenting our case for Creation there will be times when it is necessary to say why we think Creation is just as scientifically reasonable as evolution, and why evolution is not a proven fact. When we do that we must do so carefully and tactfully in words sprinkled with liberal amounts of love and concern, not scorn. We like to remind people that the evolutionists fell for the Piltdown Man hoax, while we forget that creationists have made some blunders too.

The reason evolutionists believe evolution is not that they are incapable of knowing better. They believe evolution because they are convinced that there is strong evidence supporting it, and they are not aware that there is a reasonable alternative. Some persons may accept evolution because they don't want to believe in God, but it is not for us to judge that. To us the idea of "monkeys turning into men" seems like foolishness, and thus it becomes tempting to make fun of that idea. But it does not seem foolish to a noncreationist, and we can hope to win his heart and open his mind to the workings of the Holy Spirit only if we respect his present beliefs and try to open his eyes by presenting positive evidence to show that it is reasonable to believe in Creation.

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Most of us are inclined to want proof for what we believe, and when we present the gospel message we like to have some kind of proof to back up what we say. Especially when we are talking about Creation it is impressive to be able to say that we have scientific proof for Creation. These so-called proofs can be an illusion, however. We have abundant evidence to support our belief in Creation, but that is not the same as proof. Science can do some things very well, such as studying physiology, or physics - subjects that can be handled experimentally. Events that occurred only in the past and are not now occurring cannot be studied experimentally. In studying such events a scientist has only limited, circumstantial evidence to work with.

Consequently, science is working under a critical disadvantage in studying past events. A scientist can develop a theory about the past, and that theory may be very useful to him in his research. We must always recognize, however, that theories about past events are only theories, and are based on personal interpretation of sketchy bits of evidence, and not on solid experimental data.

The origin of life and the origin of the major types of plants and animals are examples of past events about which science cannot provide compelling evidence, because nobody can go back in time and see what actually happened. Much of the evidence that is used to support evolution also fits Creation. For example, the type of evidence that is commonly used in the evolution theory as support for descent from common ancestors can also be interpreted as good evidence of design by a common Designer (God).

To me the available scientific evidence fits Creation much better than evolution; but the more deeply I study into the nature of the scientific method, the stronger becomes my conviction that neither evolution nor Creation can be scientifically proved. My only basis for certainty regarding Creation is my absolute confidence in the God who gave us the book of Genesis.

A Defensible Alternative

If we can't prove Creation, what can we say? There is a lot we can say! There are many positive lines of evidence that we can use to show that Creation is a reasonable and scientifically defensible alternative to evolution. For more than 100 years many scientists have been developing the evolutionary concept of origins and have amassed an impressive amount of data to support their theory. Actually these data fit the Biblical account of origins just as well, but most people don't

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know that. Our task is to let the world know that belief in Creation is consistent with the best evidence science has to offer. If we do that in a tactful and positive manner that does not arouse unnecessary prejudice, using only evidence that is accurate (to the best of our knowledge), God can use our words to reach those who are searching for truth.

In summary, we can maximize our ability to reach noncreationists if we (1) have the accuracy of our scientific source material checked by trained scientists whom we trust, (2) spend our time presenting the evidence for Creation, rather than tearing down evolution, (3) never make fun of evolution or evolutionists, and (4) beware of both so-called proofs of Creation and disproofs of evolution (science does not provide such proofs, and God never promised them; He only promised us adequate evidence on which to base our faith).

What Difference Does It Make?

Some Christians believe that evolution was God's method of creation. Wouldn't it be easier simply not to worry whether people believe in evolution or not? What difference does it make? It makes a lot of difference. Our concept of God and of the meaning of human existence will be affected by our attitude toward the Creation story of Genesis. It makes the difference between a loving God who values each human life supremely and a god who would sacrifice untold numbers of individuals in an evolutionary process.

Charles Darwin ended his book *The Descent of Man* by saying, "Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future. But we are not here concerned with hopes or fears, only with the truth as far as our reason permits us to discover it."

As creationists, we are trying to come to a more complete understanding of truth, just as Darwin was; but we are also concerned with hopes and fears. In the evolution theory of man's origin the emphasis is on the survival of the species, and the individual is doomed to extinction. We agree with Darwin that man has reason to look for a higher destiny in the future; but this destiny is offered by the Creator, who personally placed mankind at the "summit of the organic scale," not by an impersonal evolutionary process. This Creator is so supremely interested in the value of each individual that He died to assure that destiny.