

Creation Answers

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Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer of Creation Education Materials on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creationary research within the reach of Christian families and provide up-to-date reliable information on the creation issue. Wayne Spencer is a creation researcher and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and contributed to radio programs for the Institute for Creation Research.

This newsletter is especially for Christians in the DFW Metroplex. It is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. This newsletter is provided free of charge on request. It is provided as an Adobe Acrobat file or a plain text e-mail. The Adobe Acrobat Reader, available for download on the internet, is the best way to view the newsletter.

There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to Wayne at w.spencer@attglobal.net. Privacy is respected by preventing recipients from seeing each other's e-mail addresses.

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the **DFW Creation Net** web site. You'll also find a variety of articles, teaching aids, and how to contact creation organizations. <http://pws.prserv.net/creation/creation.htm>

A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

Greetings. I'd like to thank all who have shown interest in this newsletter. I appreciate the kind comments I have received. If something in this newsletter brings up other questions, e-mail me and I will be glad to answer your question or recommend some other source that will help.

I am thankful for some ministry opportunities God has provided recently. As I write this I am preparing for a trip to Houston to speak to students at St. Thomas University, to a college student creation club. Also, I will be doing taping in an interview on the phone for the radio program of the Institute for Creation Research in California (ICR). If your church or home school group would like a creation speaker, I may be available or I can make some recommendations.

In this issue an important series begins called "Introduction to Creation Biology." This will continue over several issues of the newsletter.

Wayne Spencer
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In this issue...

- ! Introduction to Creation Biology, Part 1
- ! The *Creation Activities for Kids* book.

Introduction to Creation Biology, Part 1

Wayne Spencer

Many people first encounter the issue of origins in the subject of biology. Secondary and college students are exposed to an evolutionary approach to biology in school or college classes. The general idea of evolution has become an important part of the value system of our culture, thus it has influenced all subject areas in public education. The issue of the origin of living things is important because it says something about what it means to be human. Are we just extra-intelligent animals, or are we uniquely created for a divine purpose? Some attempt to combine these two ideas. This brings up challenging questions on how Christian values and beliefs relate to science. Evolutionary ideas have been entrenched into biology, geology, and astronomy. But for many years evolutionary theories have been challenged occasionally by evolutionist scientists who are nonchristians, evolutionist scientists who are Christians, and by others including myself who reject evolution and hold to Biblical creation. Certain aspects of the Biblical teachings on creation have direct implications contrary to accepted ideas of biological evolution. Yet, I would say that creationism is not contrary to science, if the issues are understood correctly.

This article is written to focus on some of the most important aspects of understanding biology from a creationary point of view. It will be in several parts in the Creation Answers newsletter. After studying the issue of creation and evolution for some years, spending many hours in university libraries, and having discussions with individuals of varied points of view, this is my attempt to pull together some main ideas. All of the ideas from creationism which follow are in need of further research and

refinement. Some of the following is based on creationist publications, some is based on personal correspondence with certain creationist biologists. Contrary to a common evolutionist misconception, there are plenty of young-age creationists with graduate degrees in the sciences. There are too many to ignore, though compared to the scientific community (practicing scientists and university professors) they are a small minority. As for myself, biology is definitely not my major field but I offer this information to anyone interested. I hope that the following will help avoid some misunderstandings of creationism that are very common, and help those just starting to learn about the issues.

The Biblical term “Kind” and modern Biology

Any biology course would teach about the Linnaean Classification system. This is a hierarchical system that places all living things in various groups based on important characteristics they have. The Linnaean system, from the largest category grouping down to the smallest, includes the following: Kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. Genesis 1 says that living things multiplied “according to their kind.” The implication of Genesis is that living things cannot cross the boundary of “kind.” Living things can change and adapt to their environment to some degree, but there is a limit to how far this change can go. Just where is this limit? This is an important question that creationists are researching. The limit is not at the species level, that would be the equivalent of saying that living things are all created a certain way by God and they do not change. Creationists do not believe this, however. Creationist biologists would say that the biblical term “kind” does not correspond in any simple way to any term from the Linnaean classification system. Sometimes creationists would put “kind” at

either the genus or family levels, depending on what organism you are discussing. This would represent the limit of change. This leads to a view of Genesis that agrees very well with what modern biology and with what selective breeding tell us from experience. Evolution would imply that living things would go beyond reproducing “according to their kind” and would actually produce new kinds over many generations. Evolution requires large changes that we do not see occurring in the living world (such as from fish to amphibian for example).

In a creationary view of biology as I see it, there are positives and negatives. The positives are creationist attempts to reinterpret the facts from a creationary framework. The negatives are issues in which creationists point out scientific problems with some aspects of biological evolution. I will briefly mention three positives, four negatives, and one special issue that represents both a negative for evolution and a positive for creation. I am only providing a brief introduction to these ideas here. Of all creationist books and articles related to the life sciences, most of them would fall into one of the following subject areas.

For the positives, where creationists are working to provide a better way of understanding the facts, the first would be intelligent design. 1) In the last few years there has arisen what is now called the Intelligent Design Movement, which is influencing scientific circles more and more. This is the general idea that there is a Creator-God who has created things for a purpose and that there is a complexity in how things are made that demands that a Creator deliberately planned and arranged things to be as they are in nature. 2) Another major subject area of creationist research is in the subject of classification. How should we classify living things? Creationists are trying to develop a new classification scheme known as Baraminology, which attempts to avoid following evolutionary concepts. 3) A third major area of creationist

work is a Biblical and scientific issue, about how to understand life before Noah’s Flood and at the time of Creation. This is about the question of how is life different now than when it was originally created. This is a very important question; a number of other questions about understanding biology depend on how you answer this question. There is not currently a consensus among creationists on many questions in this area. 4) The last issue is called homology, which from the evolutionary view is about arguing for evolution based on the similarities between organisms. Creationists have shown this can be both a problem for evolution and a positive that supports the idea of intelligent design in living things.

Now for the negatives. These are areas where creationists attack evidences often presented for evolution. 1) One key area has been the matter of the problems with the mechanisms of evolution (especially mutations and natural selection). 2) Another major issue is the concept that the first living cells formed by natural processes from simple organic chemicals. This is basically the idea that your ancestor was an amino acid. The staggering complexity of living cells has pointed out devastating technical problems with the evolution of life from chemicals. 3) The third main topic area in the negatives is cell biology and molecular biology. This is a subject in which there has been incredible scientific advances in recent years. 4) A fourth area creationists have addressed for years is embryology. Though the basis of the idea has been clearly disproven since the 1800’s, evolutionists and often modern textbooks still use the argument that the developing embryo goes through stages like its evolution. All these issues are important to address in what follows.

Two terms should first be defined that are very important for understanding the issue of how much living things can change.

Microevolution is a term for small changes in a type of living thing, changes that take place through the reproductive process. *Macroevolution* is a term for large scale changes in living things. Macroevolution is where the controversy lies. Macroevolution says that there is no limit to how much living things can change, given enough time and the right circumstances. Creationists say that there are limits to how much change is possible. Creationists have acknowledged microevolution for years, so creationists and evolutionists generally agree on small scale changes in living things. Living things are made so that over generations the characteristics of their bodies are able to change in minor ways. This is very good because it makes living things able to adapt and survive as conditions change.

Here is a very important point not adequately explained in many biology courses and textbooks. For thousands of years, man has been able to do selective breeding of livestock and plants to make some desirable trait emphasized and more common. This is how we have cows that are specialized for producing milk (dairy cows) and how we can cross various flowers or grain-bearing plants to get various colors or other characteristics. Also, in observing animals in the wild, we see how conditions like the climate or food available can make one variety of bird more common than another, even though they are both the same type of bird. Charles Darwin, in the 1800's, became well known for observations like this of finches on the Galapagos islands. He watched them and found that the size of their beaks seemed to be related to what kind of food they ate and where they lived. All these kind of changes that we can really see and study or produce in the real world are microevolution. The kind of changes required for macroevolution could not be seen in real living things even if macroevolution were true because they take too long. So, basically microevolution happens, and biology textbooks

give a variety of examples of it that we can see in real life. But, macroevolution is never seen happening, nor could it ever be seen happening. Creationists acknowledge that living things can change, but they maintain the changes are limited. On the other hand, evolutionists believe that over long periods of time and many generations, larger changes can take place by the same mechanisms that produce the small changes we can see. But, the mechanisms of microevolution cannot explain macroevolution.

Resources

Creation Activities for Kids is a book of approximately 100 pages of helpful teaching aids for anyone instructing children about creation and evolution. The book was developed several years ago while I was Vice Chairman of a creation organization in Wichita, Kansas. There was a talented group of teachers and home-schooling parents there who organized activities for children on creation. The book contains a variety of graphics, transparency masters, and descriptions of hands-on teaching ideas that work with kids from pre-school through middle school ages. I have sold this book to churches for use in Vacation Bible School programs and to many home-schooling parents. Most of the individuals who contributed to this book are very experienced in working with children. All the activities in it were used in creation meetings or conferences. You can see some examples of the contents of this book on my web site, DFW Creation Net (see page 1 for the URL address). The DFW Creation Net site has a section called "Teaching Aids". One page tells how to make a scale model of Noah's Ark. The cost of the book is \$16 plus shipping (plus tax for Texas residents).

Wayne Spencer