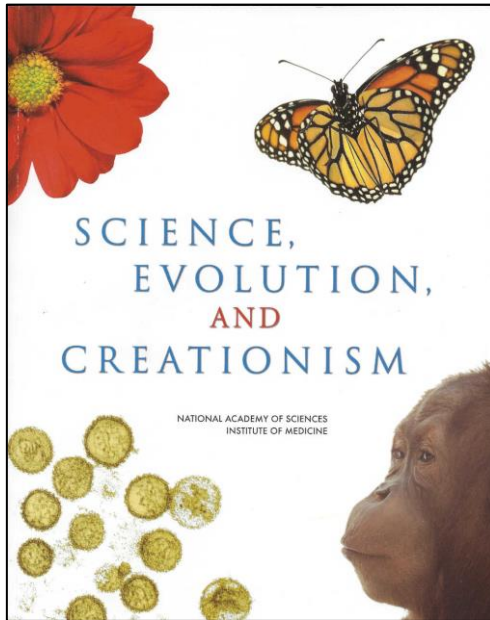


LSI Journal

a forum for diverse views consistent with Scripture

Creation / Evolution

a Confessional Lutheran view



Evolution Apologetics by National Academy

- *Devotion: Faith is Reality*
- *How Religious were Neanderthals?*
- *Dawkins: "Evolution a Leap of Imagination"*
- *Famous Evolutionist Admits: "We Do Not Know"*
- *Know Evolution: Human or Ape, No In-Between*

Winter 2017

Lutheran Science Institute

Creation / Evolution: a Confessional Lutheran view

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“Evolution Is A Leap of Imagination”

Cover photo: One of several evolution apologetics booklets written and published by the National Academy of Sciences. These booklets are important to the creationist in two ways. First: To correctly learn the claims of evolutionists. Second: To better understand that the goal of many leading evolutionists is to eliminate belief in a creator god. See a critique starting on page 8.

 Devotion

Faith is Reality

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. For our ancestors won God's approval by it. By faith we understand that the universe was created by God's command, so that what is seen has been made from things that are not visible. ...By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Hebrews 11:1-3, 7 (HSCB)

Here begins the Bible's great chapter on faith, which lists 20 individuals and groups of people¹ who trusted God's promises as sure and certain, and who looked forward to spending eternity with God in heaven.² The world would not judge some of these men and women as righteous, since the list includes a prostitute (Rahab), deceivers (Abraham and Jacob), and murderers (Moses and David, whom God also choose to write major parts of the Bible). Yet God declares that by faith these sinners "won God's approval," and later in verse 39 God says it again, "All these were approved through their faith."

Before listing these people of faith, God provides us with one general example of faith. "By faith we understand that the universe was created by God's command, so that what is seen has been made from things that are not visible." Every article of faith is believed by faith, including belief in creation. By faith we believe that "He spoke, and it came into being; He commanded, and it came into existence," (Psalm 33:9).

¹ In chapter 11, I count 16 individuals and 4 groups. Groups are those listed in verses 23, 29, 30, and 32.

² Heaven is mentioned in verses 13-16.

God begins this Scripture by revealing that faith is “reality” and “proof.” Through faith we can be certain that God created the universe from nothing, that 8 people survived a planet-wide flood aboard Noah’s Ark, that Jesus died on the cross and rose on Easter Sunday, and that we will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus our Savior. We cannot see these things with our physical eyes, but we can see them clearly through the vision of faith.



credit: Northwestern Publishing House, 2003, OT Bible Pictures for Multimedia.

Noah worships God upon leaving the ark

(Genesis 8:15 – 9:17)

Noah is our ancestor. He did not win God’s approval by obediently building an ark. He won God’s approval by faith, the same way we win God’s approval. Noah is an heir of eternal life and is now with God in heaven, because he has “the righteousness that comes by faith.” We have that same righteousness that comes by faith, the robe of righteousness we received from Jesus when he brought us to faith.

We Pray

Lord, send your Spirit to strengthen my faith as I read, hear, and contemplate your Word. Increase my trust in you and in your promises. I am a sinner who does not deserve any good from you, but in your amazing love you gave me faith and the righteousness that comes by that faith. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. How can I ever thank you enough? You are amazing. There is no one else like you. Protect me from the temptation of evolution, which seeks to shipwreck my faith through false claims about you, about your Word, and about your creation. Amen

-MSB

Feedback

Send your comments to Lutheran Science Institute, 13390 W. Edgewood Ave., New Berlin WI 53151 (or office@LutheranScience.org). Comments should be under 250 words. Longer submissions may be used as a guest editorial. Not all comments received can be used.

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Evolution Apologetics by the National Academy -Recommended Reading For the Creationist

Mark Bergemann

This article reviews and critiques three booklets published by the National Academy of Sciences. These booklets are important to the creationist in two ways. First: To correctly learn the claims of evolutionists. Second: To better understand that the goal of many leading evolutionists is to eliminate belief in a creator god.

Correctly Learning the Claims of Evolutionists

Some sources of information about evolution (sources including some websites, cable shows, and books written from either creationist or evolutionist viewpoints) may appear to be authoritative, but still present false descriptions of the evolution story. It is vitally important that our creation apologetic correctly describes the claims of evolution.

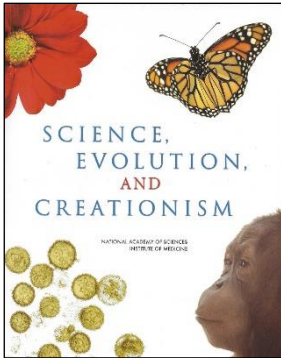
There is no source more trustworthy for helping us correctly learn the claims of evolution than the National Academy of Sciences. The National Academy of Sciences is a group of leading scientists formed by act of Congress, a group who advises the US president. The Academy has written many books which teach evolution. A series of three booklets not only teach evolution, but also condemn creation. I recommend the most recently published of the three, *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*, as the most concise and useful. For that reason, this article will center on that booklet, and end with a few comments on the other two.

Eliminating Belief in a Creator God

Some internationally known champions of evolution viciously attack Christianity with wild claims, such as accusing creationists of child abuse for teaching their children about creation and even for teaching their children that there is a god. Books by many evolutionists and certainly those by scientific societies avoid such outrageous claims. Therefore, some readers might expect these Academy booklets to simply state their case for evolution and not directly attack Christianity. Those readers would be mistaken. The Academy is very clear that teaching creation is not only unscientific, but also harmful. They claim that Christians have no business teaching creation as the origin of the universe, since origins are not in the domain of religion.

Note these three National Academy of Sciences booklets are EVOLUTION APOLOGETICS. They attack Christianity. They are written to:

1. Teach select details of the evolution story.
2. Convince the reader:
 - That “Deep Time” (billions of years) is reality.
 - That there never was a global flood on earth.
 - That all living things including people are related by common ancestry.
 - That Christians should believe this and the rest of evolution. (The Academy claims evolution fits well with Christianity.)

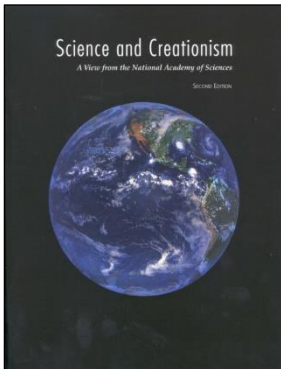


Science, Evolution, and Creationism.

by the National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2008. 88 pages, softcover, \$14.95.

Free pdf at

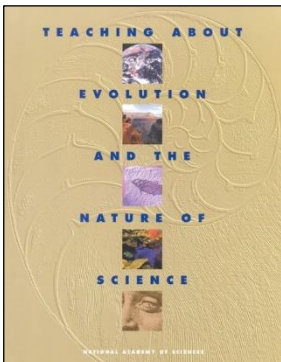
www.nap.edu/catalog/11876.html



Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences, 2nd Ed.

by the Steering Committee on Science and Creationism, National Academy of Sciences. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999. 48 pages, softcover, out of print.

Free pdf at www.nap.edu/catalog/6024.html



Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science.

by the Working Group on Teaching Evolution, National Academy of Sciences. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998. 150 pages, softcover, \$19.95. Free pdf at

www.nap.edu/5787

Unless otherwise noted, the following comments refer to the first of these three booklets, *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*. Quotes from the second booklet are denoted as “2nd ed.”

The back cover of the print version of *Science, Evolution, and Creationism* (not in pdf version) states, “For educators, students, teachers, community leaders, legislators, policy makers, and parents who seek to understand the basis of evolutionary science, this publication will be an essential resource.”³

The preface states that this booklet is the 3rd edition of a booklet with another title, *Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences, 2nd Ed.* (the second booklet reviewed in this article).

Recommended Pages

Most of chapters 1 and 2 (pages 1-12 and 17-35; pdf 18-29 and 34-52) briefly explain many claims of evolution including, natural selection, definitions of science/theory/fact, the evolution of stars and planets, the origin of life, biological evolution, and human evolution. These 31 pages are a great resource for correctly learning many claims of evolution, and have often been quoted in LSI Journal articles over the past five years. The remainder of the book is devoted to condemning creation as an unscientific, unreasonable, and harmful belief.

“Only” A Theory

It is common for creationists to falsely claim, “Evolution is only a theory and has not been proven.” In science, a theory is overwhelmingly held as true. Theories do not become “laws” or “facts” as more evidence is accumulated. All three books define

³ Also stated on the web page under “read the full description” at www.nap.edu/catalog/11876.html

“science” and scientific words like “theory” and “fact.” The Academy writes on page 11 (pdf 28),

The formal scientific definition of theory is quite different from the everyday meaning of the word. It refers to a comprehensive explanation of some aspect of nature that is supported by a vast body of evidence. ...The theory of evolution is supported by so many observations and confirming experiments that scientists are confident that the basic components of the theory will not be overturned by new evidence. However, like all scientific theories, the theory of evolution is subject to continuing refinement as new areas of science emerge or as new technologies enable observations and experiments that were not possible previously.

Stellar and Solar Evolution

Many people think of evolution as biological only, but the evolution story starts with the Big Bang, which is claimed to have produced time and space. It is further claimed that the stars and planets formed later on their own. Pages 18-21 (pdf 35-38) give a quick overview of stellar and solar evolution. The Academy describes evolution as beginning with the Big Bang (page 18; pdf 35),

Biological evolution is part of a compelling historical narrative that scientists have constructed over the last few centuries. The narrative begins with the formation of the universe, the solar system, and the Earth, which resulted in the conditions necessary for life to evolve.

Human Evolution

Some creationists think evolutionists teach that people descended from monkeys, chimpanzees, or apes, but that is incorrect. Evolutionists claim people descended from “ape-like creatures.” The Academy corrects this misunderstanding on page 24 (pdf 41): “Humans are not descended from chimpanzees or from any other ape living today but from a species that no longer exists.”

Homologous Structures

In a section titled, “*Common structures and behaviors often demonstrate that species have evolved from common ancestors,*” the Academy states (pages 24-25; pdf 41-42),

Evolutionary biologists call similar structures that derive from common ancestry “homologies.” Comparative anatomists investigate such homologies not only in bone structures but also in other parts of the body, and work out evolutionary relationships from degrees of similarity. Using the same logic, other biologists examine similarities in the functions of different organs, in the development of embryos, or in behaviors among different kinds of organisms. These investigations provide evidence about the evolutionary pathways that connect today’s organisms to their common ancestors. Hypotheses based on this evidence than can be tested by examining the fossil record. Sometimes, separate lineages independently evolve similar features, known as “analogous” structures, which look like homologies but result from common environments rather than common ancestry.

Consider what the Academy is saying. If two creatures have a similar feature (like a similar bone arrangement in a claw), evolutionists make one of two conclusions: 1) The two creatures descended from a common ancestor (“homologous structures”), or 2) That feature evolved twice independently (“analogous structures”).

Evolutionists completely ignore the possibility that similar structures are a result of common design. Evolutionists use science ALONE when writing the evolution story, and science does not consider miracles as a possibility. So if something is the result of a miracle, evolutionists will never reach that conclusion no matter how overwhelming the evidence for miracles, because they reject miracles as a possibility. They will accept non-miraculous explanations even in cases where the only available non-miraculous explanations are unreasonable (such as life from non-living chemicals).

While evolutionists claim similar structures are solid evidence for evolution, those similar structures are also solid evidence for creation. Creationists also analyze similarities in creatures when attempting to determine relationships between those creatures. Sometimes similarities do indicate common ancestry. For example, a creationist may conclude that the similar bone structures in several dinosaur species indicate that these dinosaurs probably descended from a common ancestor, a dinosaur. A creationist may also conclude that similar structures in several other dinosaur species indicate that those dinosaurs are probably of different created kinds and do not have a common ancestor.

Not Enough Water

The Academy commits the Straw man fallacy by misrepresenting creationist claims. The Academy alleges,

Some creationists believe that Earth's present form and the distribution of fossils can be explained by a worldwide flood. But this claim also is at odds with observations and evidence understood scientifically. The belief that Earth's sediments, with their fossils, were deposited in a short period does not accord either with the known processes of sedimentation or with the estimated volume of water needed to deposit sediments on the top of some of Earth's highest mountains. (page 38; pdf 55)

God could have provided enough water during the Noachic Flood to cover today's tallest mountains, but few creationists make such a claim. Creationists commonly assume the amount of surface water on earth today is about the amount of water used for the Noachic Flood. That amount of water would cover the entire planet and all the pre-flood mountains, which are assumed to be smaller than today's high peaks. The Academy off-hand rejects the Noachic Flood without even knowing the arguments creationists make. That is poor scholarship.

Creationist claims that the Noachic Flood may have deposited most fossils is in keeping “with observations and evidence understood scientifically.” To say otherwise ignores observations such as the sedimentation which occurred as a result of the 1980 eruption of Mount Saint Helens, which laid down layered sediments just like that seen at the Grand Canyon. Fossilization requires very rapid burial and that is exactly what a global flood would do. The Flood would form fossils in continental sized sedimentary rock layers, and that is exactly what we observe today.

Sequence of Fossil Layers

The Academy presents evidence as supporting millions of years. Yet that same evidence supports a planetary flood and an earth which is thousands of years old. The Academy summarizes a paragraph by contending (page 38; pdf 55),

The sequence of fossils across Earth’s sediments points unambiguously toward the occurrence of evolution.

This is NOT “unambiguous” evidence for evolution, because these same fossil layers are what would be expected from the Noachic Flood, which is evidence for creation. One would expect the location of Noachic Flood formed fossils to be dependent upon where those creatures were living, and on their ability to temporarily escape the rising flood waters. Fossils of bottom dwelling sea creatures such as trilobites would be in layers together. Fossils of sea creatures which were not bottom dwellers (most fish) and land animals would not be found with the trilobites. Then there would be layers of fish. Then there would be layers of land animals. The bigger land animals could escape flood waters for a while, while smaller ones like mice would be buried first. Fossils of people are not found with dinosaurs, trilobites, and many other creatures, because people did not live with those creatures. So the sequence of fossils is solid evidence for the Flood.

Creation Promoted By “Small Groups”

The Academy is factually incorrect in its attempts to minimize the number of creationists. They make it seem like there are rather few creationists in the USA, when they know that more than half the country is creationist (using the Academy’s definition of “creationist” in their words below). The Academy asserts (pages 37-38; pdf 54-55),

In the United States, various views of creationism typically have been promoted by small groups of politically active religious fundamentalists who believe that only a supernatural entity could account for the physical changes in the universe and for the biological diversity of life on Earth. But even these creationists hold very different views. Some, known as “young Earth” creationists, believe the biblical account that the universe and the Earth were created just a few thousand years ago. Proponents of this form of creationism also believe that all living things, including humans, were created in a very short period of time in essentially the forms in which they exist today. Other creationists, known as “old Earth” creationists, accept that the Earth may be very old but reject other scientific findings regarding the evolution of living things.

A 2014 Gallup poll found that 42% of Americans are creationists who believe that “God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so.” Another 31% are creationists who believe “Human beings have evolved over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process.” Only 19% believe “Human beings have evolved over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God had no part in this process.”⁴ It is because the majority of Americans believe God created (some “young Earth” and some “old Earth”) that the Academy writes and updates these evolution apologetic books. If only “small

⁴ Gallup, May 8-11, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/21814/evolution-creationism-intelligent-design.aspx>

groups” were promoting creation, then the Academy would not have to put its resources into condemning creation.

Many of these creation believing Americans belong to LARGE church bodies and other groups which promote creation. Most churches promote “old Earth” creation, while a much smaller number promote “young Earth” creation. The number of people associated with just the following “young Earth” groups makes the point that there are LARGE groups advancing creation. The church bodies, school systems, and other groups listed below each teach “young Earth” creation. [Some individuals belong to multiple groups.]

373,000 members, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

41,000 enrollment, WELS early childhood – gr. 12 school system.⁵

2,097,000 members, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS).

221,000 enrollment, LCMS early childhood - grade 12 school system.⁶

36,000 enrollment, LCMS Concordia University all 10 campuses.⁷

15,000,000 membership, Southern Baptist Convention.

500,000 readership, Institute For Creation Research, *Acts & Facts*.⁸

287,000 visitors in 2015 to the AIG Creation Museum in Kentucky.
Millions have toured in 8 years.⁹

Billions of Years Compatible With Christianity?

The Academy argues that Christians can believe in billions of years without harming their faith. The two are “fully compatible.” The president of the Academy, president of its Institute of Medicine, and the booklet committee chair sign the preface, which they end with the claim,

As *Science, Evolution, and Creationism* makes clear, the evidence for evolution can be fully compatible with religious

⁵ <http://synodadmin.welsrc.net/download-synodadmin/official-synod-reports/?wpdmdl=3263&ind=fQXmuSxKVhKp9dO085aziKKmOuLaCUxO5c33simCXPi4VVKIPjbCpbBTzguwfTXA>

⁶ <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcms&id=2959>

⁷ <http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/cus-enrollment>

⁸ Henry M. Morris, “Sowing And Reaping,” *Acts & Facts*, vol. 46 no.1 (2017): 7.

⁹ <https://assets.answersingenesis.org/doc/articles/about/annual-report-2015.pdf>

faith. Science and religion are different ways of understanding the world. Needlessly placing them in opposition reduces the potential of each to contribute to a better future. (page xiii; pdf 14.)

Quotes from religious leaders who believe in billions of years are printed on four pages under the title, “Acceptance of the evidence for evolution can be compatible with religious faith.” The Academy continues this theme throughout the booklet,

Religious denominations that do not accept the occurrence of evolution tend to be those that believe in strictly literal interpretations of religious texts. ...Attempts to pit science and religion against each other create controversy where none needs to exist. (page 12; pdf 29.) ...Science and religion are different ways of understanding. Needlessly placing them in opposition reduces the potential of both to contribute to a better future. (page 47; pdf 64) ...Newspaper and television stories sometimes make it seem as though evolution and religion are incompatible, but that is not true. Many scientists and theologians have written about how one can accept both faith and the validity of biological evolution. (page 49; pdf 66.) ...The study of science need not lessen or compromise faith. (page 54; pdf 71)

The Academy desires that all Christians reject the historical account of creation revealed by God in Scripture, just as many Christians already do. Those Christians who do not reject creation are charged with pitting science and religion against each other. Yet it is evolution which attacks the very core of the Christian faith. Evolution denies the need for a Savior, and the doctrines of man, original sin, actual sin, the fall into sin, the law, and death. Death is the penalty for sin, not the means God used to create. Evolution and Christianity ARE pitted against each other.

Does Science Disprove Religion?

The booklet concludes with a Q&A, and the final question is, “Does science disprove religion?” The Academy’s answer begins with the words (*italics in original*),

Does science disprove religion? Science can neither prove nor disprove religion. Scientific advances have called some religious beliefs into question, such as the ideas that the Earth was created very recently, that the Sun goes around the Earth, and that mental illness is due to possession by spirits or demons. But many religious beliefs involve entities or ideas that currently are not within the domain of science. Thus, it would be false to assume that *all* religious beliefs can be challenged by scientific findings. (page 54; pdf 71.)

Stop Teaching Creation

The Academy declares that the origin, age, and workings of the universe and everything in it are the domain of science and not the domain of religion. Religion should not intrude on science by teaching creation. The Academy continues its answer to the question, “Does science disprove religion?”

As science continues to advance, it will produce more complete and more accurate explanations for natural phenomena, including a deeper understanding of biological evolution. Both science and religion are weakened by claims that something not yet explained scientifically must be attributed to a supernatural deity. Theologians have pointed out that as scientific knowledge about phenomena that had been previously attributed to supernatural causes increases, a “god of the gaps” approach can undermine faith. Furthermore, it confuses the roles of science and religion by attributing explanations to one that belong in the domain of the other.

(page 54; pdf 71.)

I see this quote as an attack on even those Christians who believe God used evolution and billions of years to create. Such Christians accept every part of the evolution story but still have God involved at certain points along the way, such as making non-living chemicals into the first life form, and breathing the Breath of Life (soul) into the first humans. Such Christians may be seen as having a “god of the gaps” theology, where things “not yet explained scientifically must be attributed to a supernatural deity.” The Academy condemns even these Christian evolutionists by asserting, “It confuses the roles of science and religion by attributing explanations to one that belong in the domain of the other.” Here the Academy asserts that the only source of knowledge about the origin, age, and workings of the universe is science. The Academy claims that religion has nothing to say about these things, as these things are in the domain of science and outside the domain of religion.

Second Booklet

The second booklet, *Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences, 2nd Ed.*, begins with a great two page long (pages 1-2, pdf 12-13, 2nd ed.) explanation of science and definition of the scientific terms, “Fact,” “Hypothesis,” “Law,” and “Theory.” Several LSI Journal articles over the past five years have quoted from these pages. The Academy writes on page 2 (pdf 13) [2nd ed.],

Fact: In science, an observation that has been repeatedly confirmed and for all practical purposes is accepted as “true.” Truth in science, however, is never final, and what is accepted as a fact today may be modified or even discarded tomorrow.

Page 6 (pdf 17) [2nd ed.] has an amazing claim,

For those who are studying the origin of life, the question is no longer whether life could have originated by chemical processes involving nonbiological components. The question instead has become which of many pathways might have been

followed to produce the first cells.

It seems to me that the Academy is being disingenuous here. They have no idea how non-living chemicals self-assembled into the first living creature. Even expert evolutionists admit this (see *We Do Not Know* elsewhere in this issue of the LSI Journal). Additionally, evolutionists have NEVER questioned “whether life could have originated by chemical processes involving nonbiological components.” Evolutionists arbitrarily reject even the possibility of God being the source of life. Once one rejects God, the only remaining possibility is that life “originated by chemical processes involving nonbiological components.”

The Academy criticizes creationists on Page 8 (pdf 19) [2nd ed.],
Special creation or supernatural intervention... is seen as unalterable, and evidence is sought only to support a particular conclusion by whatever means possible.

The preceding charge is as applicable to evolution as it is to creation. Many basic assumptions of evolution are “seen as unalterable.” Evolutionists will never alter their arbitrary denial of a creator god, their belief in deep time (millions and billions of years), or their rejection of a global flood on earth (even though they propose global floods on other planets). Evolutionists support these assumptions “by whatever means possible.” Because evolutionists reject a creator god, they make countless assumptions, then “evidence is sought only to support” those assumptions.

For example, evolutionists:¹⁰

- assume hydrogen gas molecules self-assembled into stars.
- assume rocks self-assembled into the earth.
- assume polar ice layers represent years, not individual storms or

¹⁰ Paragraph based on: Mark Bergemann, *Did God Use Evolution to Create?*, presented at LutherDays, September 17, 2016.

- day/night warming/cooling.
- assume the Oort Cloud exists, while claiming zero evidence for it.
 - assume non-living molecules self-assembled into life.
 - assume similarities between animals are due to common descent, instead of common design.
 - assume soft tissue from dead dinosaurs remains soft for 60 million years.
 - assume rock layers were deposited over millions of years, even though the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens showed that it can happen in months.

Third Booklet

This third and lengthier booklet, *Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science*, is similar to the booklets reviewed above, but with more depth and with additional content. It begins with the question, “Why Teach Evolution?,” then has 15 pages listing many reasons. Significant space is devoted to the history of science, especially the development of the Theory of Evolution. The last half of this booklet is devoted to helping teachers plan lessons for K-12 science, especially evolution. There are also three multi-page “dialogs,” two of them between teachers, and one of a teacher explaining evolution to her class.

Mark Bergemann, a retired electrical engineer, holds a B.S. from UW–Milwaukee. He serves as president of the Lutheran Science Institute and as Evangelism Board chairman at Good Shepherd’s Evangelical Lutheran in West Allis WI.

“We Do Not Know”

World renowned evolutionist Paul Davies¹¹ writes in *Scientific American* (underlined words referenced below),

We do not know the process that transformed a mishmash of chemicals into a living cell, with all its staggering complexity.

...We are almost as much in the dark today about the pathway from nonlife to life as Charles Darwin was when he wrote, “It is mere rubbish thinking at present of the origin of life; one might as well think of the origin of matter.”¹²

This is an amazing admission from an expert in the evolutionary theory of how life began. His words mean that over the past 150 years, evolutionists have learned almost nothing about how non-living chemicals became the first living thing. This champion of evolution claims that in 1859 Darwin was “in the dark” as to how life began without a creator, and we are still “in the dark” today. I agree. No one knows how non-living chemicals could ever self-assemble into life, even over an infinite length of time.

Life Has “Staggering Complexity”

In Darwin’s day, single cell life (such as bacteria) was thought to be very simple, like a ball of jelly. One hundred fifty years later we know better. We have learned how extremely complex life is. We know the many extremely complex non-living chemicals needed for life and the tremendous number of sophisticated structures which must be

¹¹ Paul Davies, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, astrobiologist, best-selling author, and winner of many prestigious science awards.

<http://cosmos.asu.edu/>

¹² Paul Davies, “Many Planets Not Much Life –We Still Have No Idea How Easy It Is for Life To Arise-and It May Be Incredibly Difficult,” in *Forum – Commentary on Science in the News From the Experts*, *Scientific American*, September 2016, 8.

constructed from those chemicals, even for the simplest life form. Paul Davies correctly states above that “a living cell” has “staggering complexity.”

“In The Dark” About Life’s Origin

Evolutionists “do not know” and are “in the dark” about the origin of life, because they have “rejected” the truth of creation which God reveals in Scripture. They “willfully ignore” creation and the Noachic Flood.

Jeremiah 8:9 The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and snared. They have rejected the word of the Lord, so what wisdom do they really have?

2 Peter 3:5-6 They willfully ignore this: Long ago the heavens and the earth were brought about from water and through water by the word of God. Through these waters the world of that time perished when it was flooded.

Suppress The Truth

So many of those who reject creation also reject their Savior Jesus. They “suppress the truth” and will be “without excuse” when on Judgement Day they are condemned to eternity apart from the Savior they rejected.

Romans 1:18-22 For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools. -MSB

How Religious were Neanderthals?

by LSI Blog writer Warren Krug. Posted Dec 12, 2016.

There is still a lot of mystery surrounding these ancient humans, but they likely had some kind of religious faith.

A certain Spanish cave which once was inhabited by Neanderthals has piqued the interest of some archaeologists. Inside the cave is the grave of a toddler, and the grave is surrounded by 30 horns of animals such as bison and red deer. A hearth likely once provided heat with its fires. Archaeologist Enrique Baquedano has opined that these are the probable markings of a funeral ritual, but while the bones are real, the idea that a funeral ritual was once conducted in this cave is merely informed speculation.

Nevertheless, the Neanderthal funeral scenario has raised questions in the mind of anthropology professor emerita Barbara J. King. Did Neanderthals practice religion and how could we find out if they did, she wonders in a commentary published by NPR (National Public Radio). King says that “it is clear” these ancient people were our cousins, not our ancestors or members of our species *Homo sapiens*. Still, she admits they lived in Europe and Asia at times alongside our human ancestors. In fact, they likely interbred with humans. Some humans today carry Neanderthal genes.

As all informed people today will acknowledge, Neanderthals were not the dumb, brutish cave people they once were considered to be. We know they built complex structures, used feathers to ornament themselves, and hunted mammoths and other mega fauna with tools. There are other Neanderthal sites around the world with suggestions of ceremonial burials. But were these beings religious?

Some skeptics believe these hints of ceremonial burials all have natural explanations. Yet, when considering all the evidence, King believes some Neanderthals did indeed bury their dead with planning and care. But is there proof these people engaged with the supernatural or the sacred? We can't say today for certain why the Neanderthals buried their dead as they did.

As intelligent beings, Neanderthals probably considered life's mysteries such as the weather or the end of their lives. And anthropologist John Hawks of the U. of Wisconsin offered his opinion on the possibility Neanderthals were religious. He says that "there is really very little in most religious traditions that is different from what Neanderthals do. So I don't think it is at all improbable that the Neanderthals had a humanlike religious capacity." If religion is considered practice and not just belief, King writes, then the Neanderthals can be said to have had a religion.

Commentary:

First, it is most certainly not "clear" that Neanderthals were merely our "cousins" and not us. Isn't the fact they mated with humans and passed down their genes to modern humans proof that they must have been members of our human species as well? The ability to interbreed is usually considered the main characteristic of a species. So, even looking at these ancient people from a secular viewpoint, they should be considered fully human.

Secondly, consider all the other evidence that points to the intelligence and sophistication of Neanderthals, evidence which King did not mention. Some reconstructions of Neanderthals from fossils have made them look much more human than they are often pictured. They reportedly wore make-up, cooked their food, invented tools, were expert mariners, and had language skills. The Bible, of course, has no

room for semi-humans, non-human human ancestors, or even our “cousins.” Since they weren’t animals, they must have been humans.

However, where to place them in human history can be a challenge. Creationists admittedly are divided in their opinions. The most popular idea though seems to be that they were one of the nomadic tribes which left Babel after God confused the language of those disobedient people.

Were they religious? Almost certainly they were, in my opinion, although what kind of faith they had we probably will never know. Considering how easily the account of Noah’s Flood was passed down from generation to generation, these descendants of Noah likely would have retained knowledge of that great event and the reasons for it. In addition, modern science has discovered that humans are born with a penchant for faith in God and that atheists must reprogram their minds in order to separate themselves from religious faith.

The bottom line is that these ancient humans were either believers in the promised Messiah or they weren’t. If they truly believed, then they can look forward to eternal life with us in heaven because they were part of the world, as in “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Reference: Barbara J. King, “Were Neanderthals Religious? - a Commentary,” NPR, December 7, 2016.¹³

Warren Krug, a retired teacher, holds a B.S. from Concordia University –Chicago and an M.S. in education from Oklahoma State University. He serves on the board of the Lutheran Science Institute and is a member at Trinity in Caledonia WI.

¹³ <http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2016/12/07/504650215/were-neanderthals-religious>

Human or Ape, No In-Between

Evolutionists claim many transitional forms between apes and humans. According to a 2016 survey, 14-24 year olds see this as the best evidence for millions of years.¹⁴ We know for certain from Scripture that every kind (not every species) of plant and animal was created during creation week only thousands of years ago. Those created kinds have diversified through natural selection into millions of species. (See the article, *Natural Selection*, in the Fall 2016 LSI Journal.)

Humans have always been humans. Apes have always been apes. How then do evolutionists claim to have bones of part human, part ape creatures? The evolution story is a mixture of reality and fabrication. Evolutionists' claims for human evolution are an example of that truth. Evolutionists start with real bones, fossils, and artifacts. These remains are from humans and apes who lived and died in the past. That is the truth part. Then the fabrication begins.

So how do evolutionists claim to have fossils of part human, part ape creatures? One way is to take fossils of our human ancestors and imagine ape-like attributes for those people. That is done with Neanderthals and Cro-Magnon Man. Another is to take fossils of extinct apes and imagine human-like attributes for those apes. That is done with the famous "Lucy" fossil and other types of australopithecines. Another way is to accidentally or even fraudulently combine fossils of apes and humans into one creature. The most famous example of fraud is the Piltdown man who was hailed as an apeman for over 40 years until the fraud was discovered in 1953.

¹⁴ Daniel A. Biddle, "Targeted Apologetics," *Answers –Building A Biblical Worldview*, vol. 12 no. 1 (Jan-Feb 2017), 48-51.

Anatomy expert and Confessional Lutheran Dr. David Menton¹⁵ has written a very good article¹⁶ (available free online) detailing how evolutionists create apemen. Menton explains,

Knowing from Scripture that God didn't create any apemen, there are only three ways for the evolutionist to create one:

1. Combine ape fossil bones with human fossil bones and declare the two to be one individual—a real “apeman.”
2. Emphasize certain humanlike qualities of fossilized ape bones, and with imagination upgrade apes to be more humanlike.
3. Emphasize certain apelike qualities of fossilized human bones, and with imagination downgrade humans to be more apelike.

These three approaches account for all of the attempts by evolutionists to fill the unbridgeable gap between apes and men with fossil apemen.¹⁷

Museums around the world show extinct apes with human-like features. The actual fossil bones of these extinct apes have ape-like feet and hands (for climbing trees), ape-like pelvises (allowing only short distance and unstable upright walking, just like modern apes), and ape-like skulls, but the imaginative models at museums replace some of these ape-like features with human features.¹⁸ The knuckle-walking¹⁹ *Australopithecus afarensis* is shown on the next two pages walking upright with human feet. It is easy to find many more examples of such grossly misleading museum displays.

[See photos on the next 2 pages.]

-MSB

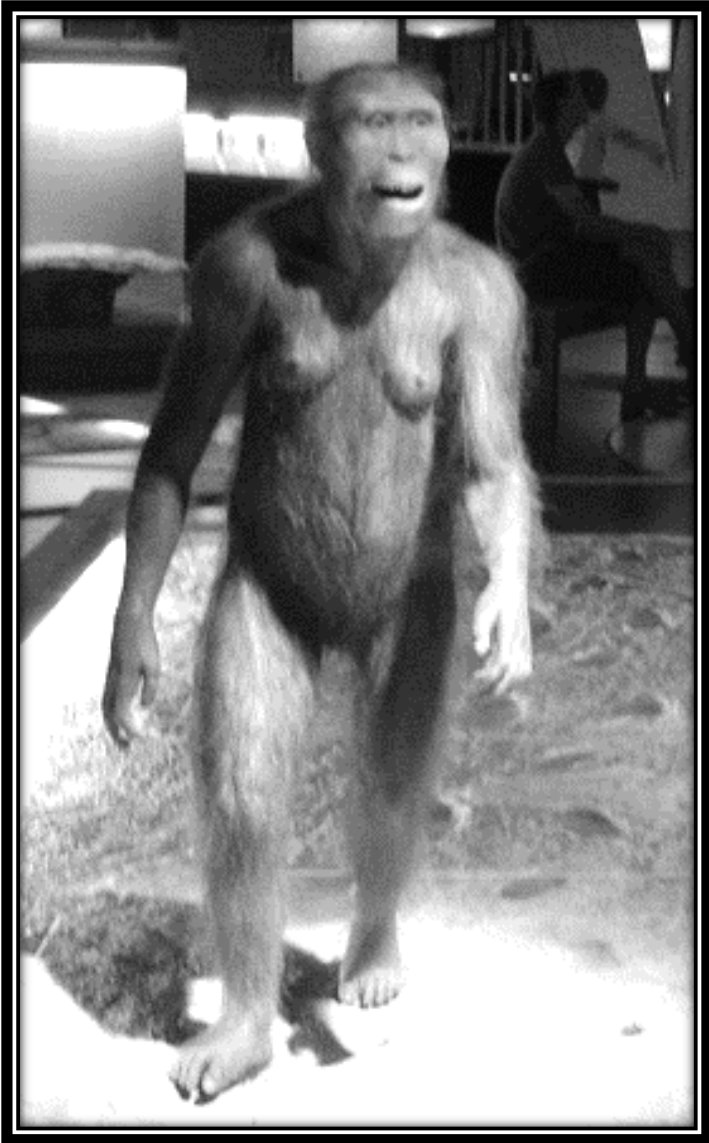
¹⁵ Menton was an assoc. professor of anatomy at Washington University School of Medicine from 1996-2000 and then served as assoc. professor emeritus. He also served as a consulting editor for *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*. His PhD is from Brown University in cell biology. He holds membership in a congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

¹⁶ David Menton, “Did Humans Really Evolve From Ape-like Creatures?” in *The New Answers Book 2*, ed. Ken Ham (Green Forest: Master Books, 2008), 83-93. <https://answersingenesis.org/human-evolution/ape-man/did-humans-really-evolve-from-apelike-creatures/>

¹⁷ Menton, 89.

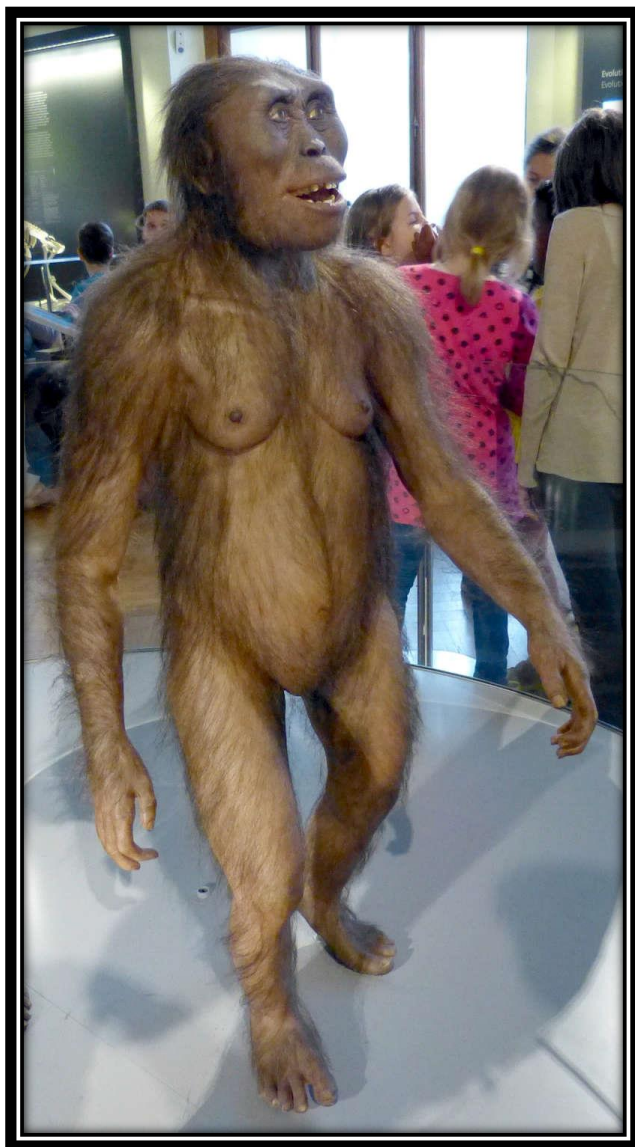
¹⁸ Menton, 86-91.

¹⁹ Menton, 91.



CosmoCaixa, a science museum in Barcelona, Spain.
Australopithecus afarensis.

credit: Airin at wikivoyage shared, via Wikimedia Commons, 2008.



Natural History Museum in Vienna, Austria.
Australopithecus afarensis.

credit: Wolfgang Sauber (Own work), via Wikimedia Commons, 2013.



graphic credit: 2016 Mark Bergemann

“Evolution is a Leap of Imagination”

Richard Dawkins is one of the world’s greatest defenders of evolution. He regularly derides those who believe in a supernatural deity. In the preface to one of his bestselling books, he wonders why “the vast majority of people” refuse to deny the supernatural and therefore refuse to accept god-less evolution. He lists reasons why he thinks people persist in religious belief and concludes with the truth that evolution is “contrary to all intuition,” and is “a very large leap of imagination ... a leap of the imagination so large that, to this day, many people seem unwilling to make it.”

Dawkins acknowledges that creation points to a creator, but then exchanges that truth for the lie of evolution (Romans 1:18-25). Like Caiaphas (John 11:49-53), Dawkins utters truth while trying to oppose the Kingdom of God (Dawkins mentions two truths: That creation points to a creator; That evolution is a leap of imagination).

Dawkins writes,

We are entirely accustomed to the idea that complex elegance is an indicator of premediated, crafted design. This is probably the most powerful reason for the belief, held by the vast majority of the people who have ever lived, in some kind of supernatural deity. It took a very large leap of imagination for Darwin and Wallace to see that, contrary to all intuition, there is another way and, once you have understood it, a far more plausible way, for complex “design” to arise out of primeval simplicity. A leap of imagination so large that, to this day, many people seem unwilling to make it. It is the main purpose of this book to help the reader make this leap.²⁰

-MSB

²⁰ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watch Maker*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), XIX.