

## *Theocracy Alert*

### Unintelligent by design and definition

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October 1, 2005—Who'd have thought that in the early twenty-first century so many supposedly educated Americans would be turning off their brains and embracing Jerry Falwell's notion that "The Bible is the inerrant . . . word of the living God. It is absolutely infallible, without error in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as well as in areas such as geography, science, history, etc."

On September 25, The Washington Post ran a [story](#) entitled "In Evolution Debate, Creationists Are Breaking New Ground: Museum Dedicated to Biblical Interpretation Of the World Is Being Built Near Cincinnati." The opening lines of the piece acknowledged the radical rewriting of history, biology, anthropology and archeology the museum represents:

The guide, a soft-spoken fellow with a scholarly aspect, walks through the halls of this handsome, half-finished museum and points to the sculpture of a young velociraptor.

"We're placing this one in the hall that explains the post-Flood world," explains the guide. "When dinosaurs lived with man."

"Velociraptor" refers to a genus of theropod dinosaurs that thrived in the [Late Cretaceous](#) period, 95–65 million years ago. The period is called the "heyday" of dinosaurs. It ended with their mass extinction 65 million years ago. That's at least 64,000,000-plus years before [homo sapiens](#) appeared on planet earth. The oldest fossil evidence for anatomically modern humans is about 130,000 years old.

But the "science" offered by the museum dedicated to [Young Earth Creationism](#)—which holds that the world and the universe are but 6,000 years old and that baby dinosaurs rode in Noah's ark—gets even more bizarre.

In referring to a replica of a Tyrannosaurus rex "with its three-inch teeth and carnivore's grin," museum guide and vice president Mark Looy said "We call him our 'missionary lizard.' . . . When people realize the T. rex lived in Eden, it will lead us to a discussion of the gospel. The T. rex once was a vegetarian, too."

Eden? T. rex a vegetarian with razor-sharp teeth and a carnivore's jaw capable only of rip, tear and swallow actions, not the chewing, grinding motion of herbivores? But then again, the Young Earth Creationist museum also features a display of [sauropods](#) playing with [human] children" in Eden.

Kenneth Ham, president of Answers in Genesis-USA, the organization building the 50,000 square-foot museum, issued the call to a new Dark Ages: "Evolutionary Darwinists need to understand we are taking the dinosaurs back. This is a battle cry to recognize the science in the revealed truth of God." Mr. Ham's view of "science" is immune from common sense and reality, as Michael Powell noted in his Washington Post article:

Ask Ham if he could accept evidence that conflicts with his reading of Genesis—proof, say, that a fossil is more than 6,000 years old—and he shakes his head.

Creationists believe man became mortal when God cast Adam and Eve out of Eden 6,000 years ago. Death did not exist before that.

"We admit we have an axiom: We have a book and it's the Bible and it's revealed history," says Ham. "Where the Bible teaches on science, we can trust it as the word of God."

For Ham and Young Earth Creationists, death came into existence about 6,000 years ago. So all the fossils of once living creatures that have been discovered throughout the world and that are *clearly* more than 6,000 years old must be fake. And they actually want this nonsense taught as science in public schools?

Fanatics and religion have always gone hand-in-hand. But what's truly disturbing is how many Americans seem to be heeding Ham's battle cry and call to a newer, even darker Dark Ages. Conducted by Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, the July 2005 [poll](#) found that: "48 percent [of the 2,000 respondents] said they believed that humans had evolved over time. But of those, 18 percent said that evolution was 'guided by a supreme being,' and 26 percent said that evolution occurred through natural selection. In all, *64 percent said they were open to the idea of teaching creationism in addition to evolution, while 38 percent favored replacing evolution with creationism.*" (Italics mine)

As disturbing as these results were, the "interpretations" offered by commentators [reported](#) in The New York Times were even more so. John C. Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum, said, "It's like they're [respondents] saying, 'Some people see it this way, some see it that way, so just teach it all and let the kids figure it out.'"

Aren't students in science classes there to learn what science is, not define it as they see fit? Using the science-is-whatever-you-think-it-is model, perhaps public schools should teach alchemy alongside chemistry and astrology alongside astronomy, and then let the students decide which is "science." Should that science-is-whatever-you-think-it-is mentality be carried into higher education, and beyond? How about into medical school? Instead of using the latest medical science to treat epilepsy, your physician would write you a prescription for an exorcism.

Even the reaction of Eugenie C. Scott, director of the National Center for Science Education and a prominent defender of evolution, was troubling. He reportedly was not surprised by the findings because "Americans react very positively to the fairness or equal time kind of argument."

Really? Tell that to same-sex couples who can't enter into civil marriage or secure family health benefits for their children because of biblical edicts politically applied to secular, real-world realities. "Science" is also a secular, real-world reality. "Creationism" is religious dogma. It is not science and it does not belong in public school science classes. Period. But those intent on teaching religious dogma as science in the public schools have a stealth weapon: "intelligent design."

Just days after Pennsylvania was in the news because of the 418-page grand jury report exposing decades of [horrific](#) child abuse by Catholic priests and equally horrific decades of cover-up by two Philadelphia cardinals, the state again made headlines, this time in relation to a [school district](#) that requires ninth-graders be taught "intelligent design" in biology and science classes.

The Thomas More Law Center is defending the Dover school district in its quest for "science." In the ["about us"](#) on its web site, the Thomas More Law Center describes itself as "the sword and shield for people of faith" and explains that: "Our *ministry* was inspired by the recognition that the issues of the cultural war being waged across America, issues such as abortion, pornography, school prayer, and the removal of the Ten Commandments from municipal and school buildings, are not being decided by elected legislatures, but by the courts." (Italics mine)

"Ministry"?

Richard Thompson, president and chief counsel of the Thomas More Law Center, claimed that “all the Dover school board did was allow students to get a glimpse of a controversy that is really boiling over in the scientific community.” While the Thomas More Law Center Ministry may perceive a boiling controversy, there is none in the scientific community, only in the politically motivated religious ones. Those are the same politically motivated religious communities that have been trying since the [Scopes Monkey Trial](#) to return Genesis to public school science classes.

In previous statements, Eugenie Scott had been more direct, more scientific: “The bitter truth is that there is no argument going on in the scientific community about whether evolution took place.” Correctly, Mr. Scott also noted that intelligent design supporters “seem to have shifted virtually entirely to political and rhetorical efforts to sway the general public.” That’s the nature and way of “ministry,” not science.

The attempts by religious fanatics and their various social and political organizations to replace science with Ham’s and Looy’s laughable notions of “[sauropods](#) playing with children” in Eden and T. rex on Noah’s ark, or to cloak such “thinking” in the guise of intelligent design have as much scientific credibility as the religion-based ethics of one of the Christian Right’s beloved politicians, the recently [indicted](#) Tom DeLay.

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