



REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

JANUARY 2010

What's Happening?

Social Networking

RTB is now using several social networking sites. Check them out at: Twitter at http://twitter.com/RTB_official, Facebook (you can login through www.reasons.org/rtb-social-networking), and You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ReasonsToBelieve1>.

Radio Interviews

Listen to Hugh Ross on Moody Radio, Jan. 29 at 4:00 PM PST, and The Frank Pastore Show, Feb. 2 at 5:00 PM PST. Fuz Rana will be on KKMS Live, Feb. 3 at 3:00 PM PST, and The Frank Pastore Show, Feb. 4 at 4:00 PM PST. To listen live to the interviews, go to: <http://www.reasons.org/whats-new/media-interviews>.

We Do Presentations

The Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics. If your church or group is looking for speakers or discussion leaders, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. We are also happy to help you with questions and resources for your personal studies and/or efforts.

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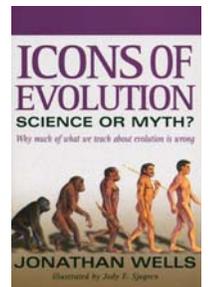
Icons of Evolution

JOHN MILLAM

"An icon is anything that has assumed a (symbolic) life of its own that goes far beyond the reality that it was intended to represent," says Dr. Jonathan Wells. He argues that the 10 most common "evidences" that are presented in discussions and textbooks as "proof" of evolution are really icons masquerading as scientific truth. As icons, these 10 arguments continue to be presented even though they fundamentally misrepresent the truth and that this misrepresentation has been known for a long time. The information below is summarized from J. Wells, *Icons of Evolution*, Regnery Publishing, Washington, DC, 2000.

1) MILLER-UREY

Textbooks still claim that the 1953 Miller-Urey experiment shows how life's building blocks may have formed on the early earth. The Miller-Urey experiment assumed a reducing atmosphere was present on the early earth, yet this is no longer believed today. Not only was the atmosphere not reducing, it must have contained significant amounts of oxygen (from the ultraviolet decomposition of water). All Miller-Urey type experiments containing even trace amounts of oxygen fail to yield any of the building blocks of life.



2) DARWIN'S TREE OF LIFE

Darwin's theory assumes a single primeval organism appeared and through mutation and natural selection gave rise to new species (lower level taxa), which proliferated and eventually gave rise to new families¹ (medium level taxa), and subsequently to totally new body plans (i.e., phyla;¹ high level taxa). This "bottom-up" pattern of diversification would appear as a tree, starting out with a narrow trunk that gives rise to many branches, each of with give rise to smaller branches. This so-called "tree of life" appears in biology textbooks, in much the same form as it did back in the time of Darwin. It is increasingly well known today that this pattern does not match what is found in the fossil record. The Cambrian explosion (c. 500 million years ago) is an event in the fossil record where almost all of the phyla that

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Thinking as Christians Part 1

DAVID PETERSON

This is the beginning of a series of articles on areas in our lives where faith intersects with “secular” thought, including apologetics (the defense of the faith) and a Christian worldview (how we think about the world).

In our culture, faith is often thought of as a subjective feeling, a matter of mere “values” and not the sort of “fact” or “truth” that science and other intellectual fields deal with. We are expected to keep our faith private, and not bring it into the “real world” of the workplace or the classroom. In return, it is assumed that objective facts can’t intrude upon the reality of our faith.

But God seems to have gone out of His way to make sure we don’t think of our faith as a mere abstract philosophy unrelated to the physical realities of science and history. He made the real world; He came into that real world in a real human body and died a real, physical death in it. He teaches us mostly through stories of real, historical people who lived in real, historical times and places. The Bible identifies dates and places and tells about eyewitnesses and visible evidence. Unlike most religions, ours constantly intersects with the physical world, and even challenges us to test its claims. If the historical facts of Jesus’ resurrection are not true, then our faith is vain! Therefore we are obligated to honestly face the issues that arise when scripture comes in contact with other sources of information—what we believe is not only comforting but true.

How might your faith in the Bible cross paths with human reasoning and secular information?

- You’re reading the Bible, and realize that the way you are imagining the story probably isn’t realistic in terms of the actual culture of the times. You wonder about the geographical, historical, or cultural background, and want to get some information beyond what the Bible says. How can you make proper use of uninspired sources?
- You’re reading the Bible and notice that something it says doesn’t agree with what you have learned about history. How do you decide whether you are just misinterpreting the Bible, or the history books are wrong (or maybe a little of each)?
- You’re talking with a friend about your faith, and he says he doesn’t believe the Bible because of a contradiction between what it says and (a) what he learned in science or history, or (b) his own experience of how the world works, or (c) what he thinks God “should” be like. You can’t force him to believe; but can you show him the Bible is worth listening to?
- You’re in school studying biology or astronomy or history, and realize that what they’re teaching doesn’t agree with what you learned in Sunday School. Can you fit all the facts together so they make sense?

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In the NEWS...

[A Dangerous Epiphany](#)

This tothesource article discusses the persecution of Christians, far more than any other world religion. According to the article, 100 million Christians now suffer persecution and imprisonment with 176,000 dying for their faith in 2009. Go to: http://www.tothesource.org/1_6_2010/1_6_2010.htm.

[The Pro-Choice Paradox](#)

This Breakpoint article examines the position of those who support abortion rights yet oppose the death penalty, showing how the arguments against capital punishment are even more compelling against abortion. Go to: www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/archive/14089-the-pro-choice-paradox.

[Manhattan Declaration](#)

There have been many stories in the press about the Manhattan Declaration—a position statement by Orthodox, Catholic and evangelical Christians affirming certain biblical truths. To learn more about the declaration and/or express your support, go to <http://www.manhattandeclaration.org>.

[Tetrapod Evolution](#)

This article/blog on the ARN site discusses the recently discovered tetrapod tracks in Poland that “lob a grenade into the tetrapod evolution picture.” Go to http://www.arn.org/blogs/index.php/literature/2010/01/09/lobbing_a_grenade_into_the_tetrapod_evolution.

[Haiti and Theodicy](#)

Events like devastation in Haiti raise the question of why a loving God would allow such things (theodicy). This Christianity Today article examines this issue, reminding us that God is sovereign and has reasons for everything that happens. Go to: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/januaryweb-only/14-11.o.html>.

have ever existed came into being suddenly in a (geologically) brief period of time (5-10 million years). All the known phyla appeared first, while the diversity of species came later, opposite of Darwin's tree of life. Many of the Cambrian phyla have subsequently gone extinct and no (or few) new phyla have appeared. This "top-down" pattern of appearance gives rise to an inverted "tree of life" picture, opposite of what is currently shown in textbooks.

3) HOMOLOGY

Homology is defined in many textbooks as morphological similarity due to common ancestry. (Analogy is simply a similarity of appearance or function, while homology is analogy specifically arising from descent with modification from a common ancestor). The pentadactyl ("5 fingered") structure of vertebrate limbs (humans, whales, bats, etc.) is the most commonly cited example of homology in textbooks. However, homology is often also used as evidence for common ancestry. Such argumentation, however, is circular reasoning because it assumes the very thing that it is said to prove. Even more problems arise in arguing that homology results from genetic patterns inherited from a common ancestor. It is the exception rather than the rule that homologous structures arise from related genes.

4) VERTEBRATE EMBRYOS

In 1868, Ernest Haeckel produced a series of drawings showing that all vertebrate embryos at an early stage of development are very similar and hence the stages of development of the embryo reflect the evolutionary history of that organism. Darwin hailed this finding as one of the most powerful evidences for evolution. The drawings of vertebrate embryo development still appear in biology textbooks even though it has been known for over 130 years that Haeckel faked his original drawings. Immediately after an embryo begins to divide, it quickly looks distinct from all the other species' embryos. About midway through development, the embryos of different species will begin to resemble each other for a brief time before once again diverging. (This is known as the developmental hourglass.) Even the similarities at this intermediate state are not a reflection of evolutionary pathways since seemingly analogous structures form from very different starting structures and develop into very different structures.

5) ARCHAEOPTERYX

The Archaeopteryx, first discovered in 1861, is probably the most famous fossil in history. Containing wings and feathers like a bird and teeth, wing claws, and a tail like a reptile, it has been hailed as the missing link between these two groups. However, it is now agreed by paleontologists that Archaeopteryx is not ancestral to any

group of modern birds, but instead went extinct. The ancestor of the Archaeopteryx is also an unresolved mystery with the proposed ancestor appearing millions of years after Archaeopteryx rather than before it. Yet another missing link seems to be needed to explain this widely hailed "missing link."

6) PEPPERED MOTHS

Perhaps the most widely touted "demonstration" of evolution by natural selection is the peppered moths of England. As the story goes, a change in tree bark color from environmental pollution resulted in a shift in moth coloring to match the tree bark and avoid being eaten by birds. The moth's coloring shifted back again as the environmental pollution was removed and the trees returned to their original color. This illustration continues to be used even though it has been known since the 1980's that moth's don't normally rest on trees but prefer to hide among the tree branches. All of the pictures of the peppered moths on tree trunks were staged! It is also known that in many areas, the moths returned to their original color before the tree trunks returned to their original color contrary to what was expected.

7) DARWIN'S FINCHES

The change in the beak size of Galapagos finches during severe drought is often taught in textbooks as evidence for the origin of new species by means of natural selection. However, as soon as the drought is over, the average beak size returns to its original value, yielding no net evolution. Natural selection promotes stasis (no change) rather than evolution (directed change).

8) MUTANT FRUIT FLIES

Many textbooks suggest that fruit flies with an extra pair of wings are evidence that DNA mutations can supply raw materials for evolution of morphology (a creature's body shape). Scientists zap fruit flies with radiation to study the effects of mutation in the DNA. In one case, they were able to generate a fruit fly that had two wing segments, each with a pair of wings. As interesting as this finding is, it is not an evidence for morphological evolution through mutation. A total of three independent mutations were required to get the extra set of wings. Each individual mutation is deleterious to the mutant, so can only survive under laboratory conditions. This means that fruit flies with a single mutation would die before they could get the second or third mutation. In addition, the extra pair of wings do not have muscles and so are non-functional. The wings hurt rather than benefit the fruit flies and these disabled mutants would not survive in the wild.

9) FOSSIL HORSES AND DIRECTED EVOLUTION

In 1882, Yale University paleontologist Othniel Marsh published a drawing purportedly showing how modern one-toed horses evolved from a small four-toed ancestor. This drawing and the variations that followed showed horse evolution as a straight-line progression from the primitive ancestor through a series of intermediates to the modern horse. Subsequent research has shown the existence of many side branches so that the horse evolution appears more like a branching tree than a simple linear progression. More interesting than the horse icon itself is the move by neo-Darwinists to update the horse evolution drawings to include the side branches (in contrast to the other icons that have gone unchanged). This change reflects a shift in thinking away from “orthogenesis” (straight-line directed evolution) that dominated early Darwinism. The new view of neo-Darwinism argues that evolution is an undirected process that explores many pathways and only the few fittest continuing on. This undirected view of evolution is philosophical rather than scientific since side branches neither proves natural process evolution nor that evolution is undirected.

10) HUMAN ORIGINS – THE ULTIMATE ICON

Drawings of an ape evolving into a modern human through a series of intermediate ape-like creatures is probably the most prominent icon of evolution and can found parodied in magazine articles and cartoons as much as it appears in biology text books. That the human body was similar to apes and chimpanzees was not controversial, but the grander claim that all aspects of humans (mind and spirit) are purely material and similarly that religion and morality were the products of natural process evolution was and remains very controversial. Darwin and others made such bold claims even before there was any fossil or biological evidence to support their claims. The discovery of Neanderthal remains and other hominid skeletons seemed to support their arguments. However, the sparseness of the fossil remains, the poor quality of the bones, and the lack of skeletal completeness make the process of characterizing much less assigning ancestor/descendent relationships to these creatures almost impossible. Those trying to reconstruct the original creature from its fossil remains often subtly introduce their own preconceptions and beliefs without necessarily realizing that they are doing it. Numerous instances can be given where the reconstruction of a humanoid fossil or its place in the supposed ancestry of humans has more to do with one’s presuppositions than the evidence itself. One anthropologist compared these attempts to trying to reconstruct War and Peace from 13 randomly selected pages. That reconstructed ancestor/descendent relationships fit the currently accepted patterns in large part because the reconstruction was done with the presumption

that they would fit.

It was long assumed that as more fossils of humanoid creatures were found that the clearer and more accurate the picture of human evolution would be. Instead, each new fossil is adding to the confusion. Once hailed as a pivotal player in human evolution, the Neanderthals have been pushed off the playing field. The Neanderthals are so physiologically different from humans, that not only did they not contribute to the human gene pool; it is unknown what hominid they are supposedly descended from. Homo habilis and Homo erectus have also suffered the indignity of being reclassified as australopithecines rather than part of the Homo bipedal line. Using genetics (mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome studies), rather than bones, it is now known that all humans originated from a single male and a single female about 50 to 70 thousand years ago. This is dramatically shorter than the hundreds of thousands or millions of years assumed by Darwinian evolution.

John Millam has a Ph.D. in theoretical chemistry from Rice University. He is a trained RTB apologist and has written many articles on science and the Bible. Full permission is given to reproduce or distribute this document, or to rearrange/reformat it for other media, as long as credit is given and no words are added or deleted from the text.

- You're watching television, and see a story about a popular novel that makes false claims about church history, or a newly-discovered document that says Jesus wasn't really what we think he was. How can you answer your friends at work if it comes up in conversation tomorrow?
- You're discussing current issues like global warming or politics with coworkers, and realize you don't have an opinion based on scriptural principles, or on a real knowledge of the facts. How can you use your mind in a godly way?
- You're reading a classic book with your kids, and some of what the characters say and do doesn't seem quite right. Can you and your children recognize a theological error hidden in a fun story? Is your own mind full of wrong ideas that you've never thought to challenge?

These interactions between faith and reason should happen all the time, if you are serious about loving God with your mind as well as your heart. If we avoid bringing scripture's "truth" face to face with the world's "truth", we will give the impression that the Bible doesn't stand up to examination, and that God's "truth" doesn't reside in the same "real world" as the rest of our lives. My goal is to open up discussion in areas like these, to help us integrate our lives, so that faith, reason, and action are not kept in separate compartments.

Next month, I will survey some fields of study in which these intersections occur, so we can think about how to deal with different kinds of problems that arise.

David Peterson is involved with the Rochester, N.Y. chapter of Reasons To Believe. He teaches college-level math and is an elder and teacher in his church.



Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.