

NEWS AND COMMENTS

PUBLICITY FOR CREATION

Reactions to a legislative bill in Iowa indicate that academic freedom is not being practiced. The bill required the inclusion of scientific evidence for creation “whenever the origin of human kind or the origin of the earth is taught in the educational program of the public schools of this state.”

On April 5, 1979, at a public hearing before the Iowa State Senate, students from Iowa State University contended that academic freedom is being suppressed in their science classes. Several testified that attempts to either question the theory of evolution or discuss evidence for creation were countered with hostility and/or ridicule. While some of the faculty members dismissed creation as religious and unscientific, three other science professors at the hearing maintained that all of the scientific evidence should be presented — whether or not it supports evolution. They recommended the use of a two-model approach to the study of origins.

Although the bill did not come to a vote (further action is expected in 1980), additional indications of discrimination against creation were seen in subsequent actions on the Iowa State campus. Upon his return, one of the students who testified at the senate hearing was dismissed from his biology class. Publicity from his dismissal (and subsequent reinstatement by the school administration) caused other students to cite more examples of suppression of ideas, i.e., the cancellation of a popular seminar on creation. Another professor suggested that, for future biology classes, prospective students be screened and admitted only on the basis of their acceptance of evolution.

Students at Iowa State University have not been the only creationists to receive publicity for their activities. A news item in *Science* (June 1, 1979) focused attention on the Smithsonian lawsuit (see *Origins* 5:99-100). In the June 15 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*, a front-page article stated that creationists were, to the dismay of Darwinians, somewhat successful in winning equal time in the classrooms for the teaching of creation.

The following month, *Scientific American* discussed recent legal cases sponsored by creationists. Entitled “Creationism Evolves,” the article described the new creationist approach. First, the legislative bills do not require that the teaching of evolution be abolished and replaced by the teaching of creation as described in Genesis. Second, the two-model approach to origins is not led by theologians and church leaders, as might

be expected; instead, it is being promoted and supported by creationists who hold advanced degrees in science.

The September issue of *BioScience* contained a similar article describing legislative efforts to gain equal treatment for alternative theories of origins. Though creationists have been defeated in the courts, they are influencing both professors and textbook publishers, and the article seems to suggest that it is only a matter of time before they would also win a court decision in their favor.

In the middle of this century, evolution dominated in the classroom, and the issue between creation and evolution was relatively calm. This is no longer the case. It appears that a persistent controversy may be developing between scientists who hold differing views on origins, i.e., evolution or creation.

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