

# EDITORIAL

## DOUBLETHINK OF SCICOM

After reading George Orwell's book *1984* for the second time, I began to contemplate *doublethink* and the inroads it has made into our society and the scientific community (SCICOM). Orwell defined doublethink as follows:

*Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them.*

To me, one of the most interesting and alarming applications of doublethink in SCICOM is in the creation-evolution arena. In this area doublethink is interesting because of the many ways in which it is applied, and alarming because of the potential consequences arising from failure of the unsuspecting to understand that doublethink has been used. As the word implies, doublethink infers an alteration of truth of reality in order to accomplish a given purpose. The use of doublethink is not limited to either side of the creation-evolution conflict. As a matter of fact, at times it seems to be used freely by both sides!

A classic example of SCICOM's exercise of doublethink is the use of spontaneous generation as the beginning of all life, while at the same time presenting data which prove beyond a doubt that spontaneous generation is impossible.

Another example of the exercise of doublethink is the acceptance of a literal creation week while at the same time stating that the first few chapters of Genesis are allegorical.

Rather than dwell upon examples of doublethink, I would like to examine some of its consequences.

The continued use of doublethink raises the basic question, "Is there such a thing as truth or reality?" It tends to promote a philosophy of "mobile truth." Both of these results are apparent in our modern society.

The greatest use of "mobile truth" by SCICOM is in the interpretation of data. The same data set can be analyzed by individuals influenced by different paradigms, and different "truths" will emerge from the analyses. Which "truth" is correct? When paradigms are changed, the interpretation changes, while the original data set essentially remains intact! However, one must realize that the data set is, in part, dependent upon the paradigm of the original investigator.

If we scrutinize the differences in paradigms which give discordant interpretations of the same data set, we will find that the differences arise from the basic assumptions postulated in these paradigms. Intuitively, then, there must exist a set of inviolate assumptions which, when used, will yield concordant interpretations of data irrespective of paradigm or investigator. Such concordant interpretations could then be labeled TRUTH.

Doublethink cannot exist in the presence of TRUTH because of its incongruent nature. Therefore, if doublethink is used in or required by any paradigm, that paradigm *will* fail to yield TRUTH.

Consequently, the challenge to SCICOM, as well as other thought systems, is to avoid the use of doublethink and discover that set of inviolate assumptions which will lead to ultimate TRUTH. In so doing, no source should be arbitrarily set aside without careful investigation, because TRUTH has many vestiges, and its sources are many and varied.

Clyde L. Webster, Jr.