

# NEWS AND COMMENTS

## THE LONGER LOOK

Thirty years ago it would have been unrealistic to predict what we now see in the creation-evolution controversy. The issue was essentially dead. One had to really search for the rare disparaging remarks that characterized the muffled war. Little did one realize that in two decades a plethora of books, journals, pamphlets and debates would address themselves exclusively to the issue. Both TV evangelists and popular scientific writers would indulge freely in the melee.

A few interesting facts and trends have surfaced. Creationists who thought they were a small peculiar minority have been surprised to find how common they are. A 1982 Gallup poll indicates that 44% of adults in the US believe in creation, while only 9% believe in naturalistic evolution. Recent surveys in three states indicate that about ¼ of students in college classes believe in creation, and one scholar reports that “the creationist view of science is the majority view in the United States even among the educated portions of society” (Chronicle of Higher Education, Dec. 10, 1986). Another surprise has been the acrimony that has characterized what is sometimes considered to be an intellectual battle. More than academic questions are involved. This is no doubt due in part to the fact that one’s world view affects much more than the intellectual dimensions of reality. While in general the conflict has united differing factions against a common enemy, the current controversies among biologists over the mechanism of evolution seem surprising.

Some are deploring the disarray with a strong plea for moderation, while others shout victory for their side. A significant number of scientists and theologians are taking cognizance of the argumentation and are attempting some kind of synthesis that is usually a compromise of both sides.

In view of the many unexpected changes during the last few decades, it would seem almost foolhardy to say anything about the future. Possibly longer trends could give some clues. It is not expected that the scientific community, which has now grown powerful, will easily yield to non-naturalistic explanations of origins. Neither is it expected that the Bible, which has withstood assaults for many centuries, will disappear. The many attempts to compromise naturalistic evolutionary views with creation concepts have thus far not resulted in well-defined concepts that have

cogent support. Neither naturalistic science nor the Bible can really accept such views. It does not appear that we are headed towards an easy solution, and indications are that for now at least the conflict will endure.

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