



Think & Believe

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Your Bias is Showing!

By Dave Nutting

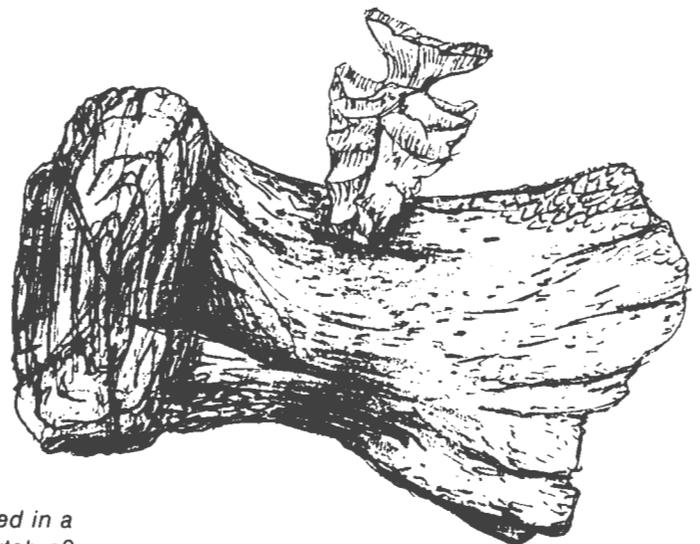
Are evolutionists biased? How about creationists? In order to illustrate bias in dealing with scientific facts or data, let me share an incident in my own life, when I still firmly believed in evolution.

Everyone is aware that according to evolutionary theory, man and dinosaur never lived at the same time. They were supposed to have been separated in history by at least 65 million years. During my first year of college, a man brought a real oddity to the local rock shop—an arrowhead embedded in a petrified dinosaur vertebra. Even though I was only a few blocks away from the fossil, I never bothered to go in to the rock shop to look at the "reputed oddity." I was 100% convinced that it was nothing but a hoax. After all, everybody "knew" that men and dinosaurs never lived together! Why should I waste my time on a hoax? Therefore, I never allowed myself to look at the evidence!

Was that scientific objectivity? Of course it wasn't, yet I felt perfectly obligated to come to that position because the find of an arrowhead embedded in a dinosaur vertebra didn't fit my pre-conceived ideas, or just plain old bias. I later learned that an amateur paleontologist pronounced it as a genuine arrowhead, but declared the petrified vertebra to be that of a crocodile instead of a dinosaur. What was the main basis for his diagnosis? You guessed it — a preconceived idea that men and dinosaurs never existed at the same time — therefore it had to be from a crocodile. The explanation seems to work, yet it still remains an oddity since the fossil was found in Jurassic strata, where dinosaur fossils are abundant. Except for the arrowhead, this specimen would certainly have been identified as a dinosaur age vertebra.

Much of science is dealt with in exactly the same way, as evidenced by the refusal of evolutionists to consider what the creationists are saying. The unfortunate thing is that most people do not recognize that they have a bias. I had a bias when I was an evolutionist even though I didn't believe that I had one at the time. Now that I am a creationist, I don't have a bias, do I? Of course I do! I'm biased toward viewing science from a creationist position. The only difference is that now I recognize that bias and realize I can't let it override scientific investigation. It takes a conscious effort to ask how my bias is affecting my decisions as a scientist.

Unfortunately, my previous bias as an evolutionist kept me from seeing a very important fossil. The rock shop has since sold the specimen. How much I would like to find the person who has it! The details are not important now. What is important is not to allow bias to dictate what we will or will not consider. That can be disastrous not only for evolutionists, but also for creationists.



An arrowhead embedded in a petrified dinosaur vertebra? Did man and dinosaur live at the same time?

NOTES & QUOTES

■ Evolution is an unproved hypothesis about the origin and development of life on earth, yet it is taught and accepted as proven fact, even though many evolutionists realize it *has not been* and *cannot be* scientifically "proven." Evolution is a faith held by evolutionists despite good scientific data that refutes it. Witness the following quotes:

- "Almost any question in evolution. . . is approached more by logic or circumstantial evidence than by direct observation, and so often is never quite resolved."

Douglas J. Futuyma, *Evolutionary Biology*, 1979

- "Evolution is not only a fact; it is the central unifying principle of all biology."

Douglas J. Futuyma, *Evolutionary Biology*, 1979

- "Belief in evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation — both are concepts which believers know to be true, but neither up to the present, has been capable of proof."

L. Harrison Matthews, *Foreword to Origin of Species*, 1971 edition publ. by J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London

- "Most enlightened persons now accept as a fact that everything in the cosmos — from heavenly bodies to human beings — has developed and continues to develop through evolutionary processes."

Rene Dubos, *American Scientist*, March 1965

- ". . . the record of evolution, like any other historical record, must be construed within a complex of particular and general preconceptions, not the least of which is the hypothesis that evolution has occurred."

David B. Kitts, *Paleobiology*, Summer 1979

- "Since Darwin, every knowing person agrees man descended from the apes. Today there is no such thing as the theory of evolution. It is the fact of evolution."

Ernst Mayr, *OMNI*, Feb. 1983

- "No one can think of ways in which to test it. . . (Evolutionary ideas) have become part of an evolutionary dogma accepted by most of us as part of our training."

Paul Ehrlich and L.C. Birch, *Nature*, Vol. 214, 1967

■ Many evolutionary scientists now believe that advanced forms of life have evolved on other planets. Well-known astronomer, Robert Jastrow (*Science Digest*, Nov/Dec 1980) expresses his belief that these beings are:

" . . . as far beyond man as man is beyond the worm. . . They are creatures whom we will judge to be possessed of magical powers when we see them. By our standards, they will be immortal, omniscient and omnipotent."

Upon what are these predictions based — upon scientific observation? No, they are based entirely on the unsubstantiated belief that evolution may have been going on for billions of years longer on other planets than on earth. And they call that science!

■ In an article entitled, "A Physicist Looks at Evolution" (*Physics Bulletin*, May 1980), H.S. Lipson confides:

"In fact, evolution became in a sense a scientific religion; almost all scientists have accepted it and many are prepared to "bend" their observations to fit with it."

Even though the creationist model was looked at with disdain by Lipson and other physicists, he had to conclude that the theory of evolution does not stand up at all and that creation is the only acceptable explanation. Recognizing the tremendous bias against creationism, he admits:

". . . but we must not reject a theory that we do not like if the experimental evidence supports it."

BOOK REVIEW

Most children are fascinated with dinosaurs, yet nearly all dinosaur books are extremely evolutionary. *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards*, by Dr. Duane Gish (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA, 1977) is a refreshing alternative. It gives a unique creationist view of dinosaurs in an attractive, readable manner with lots of colorful illustrations. This book is a "must" for Christian families and libraries. It is suitable for children of all ages, and a valuable reference for parents and teachers. (Available from Alpha Omega Institute, Box 4343, Grand Junction, CO, 81502 for \$7.95 plus \$1.00 for shipping and handling. Booklists of other books dealing with creationism are also available.)

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SPOTLIGHT

ON

SCIENCE

How Old Is This Earth?

One of the most obvious examples of allowing bias to enter into scientific interpretation of data is that dealing with the question of the age of the earth. Is the earth young or is it old?

Although there are several hundred methods for dating the earth, only the few radioactive dating methods are usually reported in textbooks. Why aren't the vast majority of the methods reported? Some of these methods give ages of the earth in terms of a few thousand years — others give ages in the range of up to millions of years old. None of the other methods give ages as old as the radioactive methods — ages in terms of billions of years. Since the radioactive methods are the only ones considered, it is fair to ask: are they really as accurate as they are supposed to be? This indeed is the correct question one should naturally ask if he is a true scientist, since so much other data seem to contradict these ages.

This question of time is really not as important to a creationist as it is to an evolutionist. If evolution is true then the earth has to be billions of years old — evolution could not have happened in only several thousand years. Therefore, the only methods that an evolutionist can consider are those that give ancient ages.

To the creationist on the other hand, scientifically it does not matter if the earth is old or young. A creationist is free to view all data objectively and to analyze each method scientifically and come up with the dating methods which best fit all of the scientific evidence. Upon investigation we find that the basic assumptions involved in radiometric dating methods are questionable. In addition, some of the methods give erroneous results on things of known ages. For instance, a lava flow known to be less than 200 years old was dated at several million years using the potassium-argon radiometric dating method. If it is so far off on things of known age, what kind of confidence can we have in using this method for dating strata of unknown age?

Scientifically there are problems with all dating methods since they involve assumptions about the rates of various processes in the past. However, there is a variety of methods which appear to be based on reasonable assumptions that put an upper limit on the age of the earth at around 20,000 years. These methods include the decay of the earth's magnetic field, the persistence of short-period comets, the decrease in oil field pressures, the shrinking of the sun, etc. These and other methods should be given a fair and objective hearing by the scientific community without attempts to conjure up secondary assumptions meant to get around the obvious conclusions.

In the final analysis, there is no *scientific* way to "prove" how old the earth is. After considering all relevant data, a good scientist makes a decision based on the relative merits of the various methods and which assumptions he is willing to accept. Although personal bias may enter into this decision, he should recognize that he is exercising bias and not making an entirely "scientific" judgment.

The Woodpecker: Created or Evolved?

In the last issue we discussed the idea of design as positive evidence of creation. We found that two types of order exist in nature: 1. order that arises spontaneously as a result of the natural properties of matter and 2. order that is imposed upon matter by an outside influence.

The woodpecker is a marvelous example of this second type of order. It is astonishingly well-suited for its task of pecking holes in trees and has a variety of interrelated specialized features designed for this task. For example, the woodpecker has a strong, specialized beak for pecking holes, but is that enough? What prevents it from getting a headache as it rams its beak against the tree hundreds of times a minute? It just so happens that the woodpecker has a special layer of cartilage between the beak and the skull that acts like a shock absorber. Some might call that coincidence, but read on.

In addition to the strong beak and the cartilage "shock absorber," the woodpecker has vise-like claws for gripping the tree and a strong, "tripod" tail to give a firm stance on the tree. All of these parts are vital to the "hole-pecking" task.

Now, assume that the woodpecker gets the hole pecked — how does it get its dinner? It "just happens" to have a long, elastic, sticky tongue for capturing insects, but that long tongue could be a real problem for the bird. The tongue is so long that it would choke the woodpecker if it didn't have a special storage system. Fortunately for the bird, it has just such a system. The tongue passes out the back of the mouth, wraps around the top of the skull under the skin, and attaches near the nostril. When the tongue is not in use it fits neatly in this storage chamber — when it is needed, it stretches out and gets the bug.

Now the question is: How could this remarkable bird have evolved by random mutations and natural selection? Try to imagine the intermediate steps. Evolution supposedly proceeds by mutation and natural selection — those forms that have a selective advantage are "saved" and passed on to the next generation — but what is the selective advantage in a partially developed storage chamber? Or what good is the storage chamber without the specialized tongue? Both must be fully developed and operative to be any good at all. Now combine that with all the other specialized parts and you see the difficulty in trying to explain this type of relationship by evolutionary processes. The entire system must be complete and operative at precisely the same time. Either the entire system arose all at once by a "lucky" genetic accident, or it was designed by an intelligent designer. Common sense and known genetic principles rule against the appearance of specialized systems by "genetic accidents." Design by an intelligent creator is the most reasonable explanation.

Opportunities To Help

We need regular personal support

- Donations at presentations generally cover ordinary travel expenses, but do not begin to cover living expenses such as food, housing, etc. Can we rely on you to help with our personal support for this full time ministry?

An opportunity arises

- A computer has been offered to us at an extremely reduced price. This has full word-processing capabilities with several programs and a letter quality printer with both sheet and envelope feeders. The total package is only \$1700. This equipment would be a tremendous aid for us in writing and research and would save countless hours of valuable time. If you would like to help in this purchase, please indicate so on your donation.

Prayer hotline

- Your prayers are greatly appreciated. Pray specifically for health and safety as we travel, and for God's wisdom as we study and speak. Also pray for ability to endure a hectic schedule and unsettled conditions as we meet this fall's activities.

Recent Events

Since May 27, our speaking tour has included over 25 groups in 8 states, including 3 all day seminars and the taping of a half hour television program. It is exciting to see how God is working presently and with numerous opportunities for future presentations.

In southern Minnesota, a "cold contact" to a church demonstrated God's perfect timing. They had just begun a Sunday School class entitled, "Dinosaurs, Cave Men and the Bible." We arrived just in time to assist the pastor with planning the program, with books

and audio-visual aids, as well as speaking in 2 classes and 2 evening services. We are looking forward to working more with this pastor as he uses creation science to minister to university students in his area.

On the cloudier side, car repairs seemed to plague the northern part of our trip. Not only did our Volkswagen van suffer a major engine attack (requiring a total rebuild or replacement), but the vehicle we bought to tow the van needed a whole new transmission after only 1600 miles. When it rains, it pours! Hopefully we will be able to get the van fixed and sell the other car in San Diego. We are thankful in all this car trouble for good health and safety and that we were still able to keep our speaking schedule.

Upcoming Events

- July 23 - August 25 San Diego area, additional work at the Institute for Creation Research; several presentations pending
- September 1-3 Family Camp, Camp Id-Ra-Ha-Je, Somerset, CO. Contact Dale Smith, (303) 929-5221
- September 14-16 Weekend Seminar, Montrose, CO Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church. Contact Peter Rich, (303) 249-1053
- September 21-22 Weekend Seminar, Vernal, UT Contact Herb Stonemen, (801) 789-7343
- September 23 New Horizons Church, Grand Junction, CO. Contact church staff, (303) 243-2484
- September 29 Weekend Seminar, New Horizons Church, Grand Junction, CO Contact church staff, (303) 243-2484

We are currently scheduling seminars, presentations and school meetings for the fall and next year. Contact us if you would like to schedule something and we will send you the necessary information.

Alpha Omega Institute

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Would you like additional information about any one of the condensed articles or on another subject that we haven't even touched upon as yet? Write to us and we will gladly send you some.

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