



Think & Believe

A Publication of Alpha Omega Institute

March/April 1987; Vol. 4, No. 2

A Crucial Question: What Is The Evidence?

By Dave & Mary Jo Nutting

One of the most important, but most difficult, things to accomplish in schools is to teach students to think. It's easy for teachers to fall into the trap of allowing their students to just memorize all kinds of information and repeat it on a test. However, real learning entails much more than just memorizing. Real learning comes by comparing, contrasting, classifying, applying, analyzing and evaluating data. It starts with asking the right questions.

Whenever we speak in public schools, we encourage the students to ask questions. We stress the importance of looking at things in more than one way and getting the whole picture before they make a decision. For example, when given a sketch of a fossil reconstruction such as the one shown on this page, we all should ask, "What was the evidence used to develop such a picture?" Sometimes the evidence is extremely scanty. Bias often enters into the picture, and the resulting drawings are based more on preconceived ideas than on actual evidence.

Students are taught that abundant fossil evidence shows gradual transformations from fish to amphibians, amphibians to reptiles, reptiles to mammals and so on. Textbooks often illustrate what these intermediate forms looked like. However, we must remember to ask the question "What is the evidence?" In actuality, there are no clear fossil transitions between any of the above groups. The pictures in the textbook are the artist's conception of what these transitions might have looked like if they had existed.

The problem is that these artistic reconstructions are very convincing to children (and many adults too). Most do not stop to ask the question "What is the evidence?" They tend to accept it

as fact because they saw it in a book, magazine or museum.

In addition to the question "What is the evidence?", several other questions need to be asked. For example, students should ask "Is there another explanation for the same data? What assumptions are involved in arriving at this conclusion? Are these assumptions reasonable? Is the logic sound? Are the conclusions reasonable? Do they seem to fit with the 'big' picture?"

Students must realize that science is an activity carried on by ordinary, fallible human beings. They also need to realize that scientific models change as more information is discovered, and that what science considers "true" one day, is frequently shown false later. In contrast, the Word of God never changes. It has stood the test of time and the questions of scores of skeptics. While it can never be "proven" true by scientific means, there is sufficient evidence for any honest searcher who thinks, and is willing to believe.



*Just what is the evidence?
(See Spotlight on Science.)*

NOTES & QUOTES

■ There's nothing like a letter from a good friend to brighten your day, and we enjoy getting letters just like you do. They give us a lift when the road seems all uphill. Here are some excerpts from some letters that have encouraged us to "keep on trucking":

- Thank you for the many things you shared with us in your visit here. My faith was so re-kindled and once again I looked at the importance of accepting God's word without question! We need that reminder occasionally! (Oregon)
- Here are some more newspaper articles to add to your collection. Each time I run across such an article, I realize the importance of your ministry. I thank God for your work. And, pray for your needs — with praise for the open doors He has provided. (Colorado)
- I personally enjoyed your presentation and discussion very much as did almost everyone I talked to. Many of the people continued the discussion after you left until after 2:00 A.M.! (Colorado) [Ed.: This was from a student at Colorado State University after we spoke for an hour and a half and answered questions 'til nearly midnight.]
- Your newsletter arrived today and is most welcome in its recent news [beginning full time ministry] . . . It is a niche that needs filling as few evangelical pastors have a good knowledge of the massive weaknesses within the evolution philosophy. (New York)
- . . . has drifted away from the things he has learned as a child . . . [but] . . . his doubts about creation had been reversed because of your scientific approach to the issue of creation vs. evolution . . . So keep on keeping on! We're thankful that God is using your talent in this particular ministry. It's a unique ministry that very few people are equipped for. (Colorado)
- Could you please send me a list of books or materials I could use in teaching a Sunday School class on creation . . . ? Enclosed is ten dollars for your ministry. I heard your presentation in Miles City, Montana in the summer of '84. God bless your work! (Connecticut)
- You have really blessed my life. Thanks for teaching information, for making me think, and equipping me with ammunition to bomb the enemy's foundation! (Youth with a Mission now heading for Mexico)
- Please accept our thanks for the tremendous seminar on Creationism . . . It was truly a fantastic presentation and I know that our young people, as well as our adults, were greatly challenged. We do hope and pray that the Lord

will give you further opportunity to share this important information, and we hope that sometime in the future you can make a presentation again at our church. (Colorado)

- I can't tell you how much your material means to me: books, newsletter. We're going to use it in our home school curriculum! I've already used information in my job and ministry. (Minnesota)
- The confrontations with those that teach evolution or at least espouse it are ever before us. Sometimes it feels as though we are drowning in that propaganda — it surrounds us on every side. Thank the Lord for you two. We pray that your voices and protests can be heard. (New Mexico)
- Upon re-reading an article entitled "Time — The Hero of the Plot" I thought it would be good to reprint it for my high school class. There are 23 students in there. Would that be acceptable? . . . Thanks again for your continued work. It sure has been a help to me. (Colorado)
- I wanted to write and thank you so much for sending us your Think and Believe newsletter. We really enjoy getting it and feel it is really valuable in our ministry. Being in Europe, one finds a much greater emphasis on secular humanism, evolutionary science, and other "isms" than even in the United States. Your letter is very good in providing background material in dealing with these issues. (Missionary in Europe)
- Thank you for the "Think and Believe" you've sent me so far. Not only I enjoy it but I find it very informative and useful to share with the people I live with and, by the way, it makes me look cultured and well informed. The article on Carbon 14 dating offered me a chance to talk about your institute and aims and there are quite a few people praying for you . . . I wonder if I can use your article on trees in a children's magazine . . . I think it will be well accepted. (Athens, Greece)

■ See why we're encouraged? Thanks so much to all of you who have taken the time to write. We really appreciate it. Keep those cards and letters coming!

"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (II Thess. 3:1-3)

SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE

Similarities: Common Ancestor or Common Design?

Similarity is one of the most common "evidences" given for evolution. Textbooks frequently picture the similarity of a dog's leg, bat's wing, monkey's arm and man's arm. These similarities are concluded to exist because of evolution from a common ancestor sometime in the distant past.

Is this a valid conclusion? Do similarities result from common ancestry? "Sometimes." Children with the same parents may exhibit similarities. However, similarities are not always the result of common ancestry. For example, the work of a famous artist may be recognized by his unique style. The paintings are similar, not because they have "evolved" from each other, but because they have been done by the same artist. For another example, sailboats exhibit more similarities to other sailboats than they do to speedboats. Here similarities are due, not to evolution, but to design for a common purpose. When we consider similarities in nature, though, we often cannot tell whether they are indicative of common ancestry or common design.

The same argument based on similarities is frequently used today on a molecular level, comparing various types of proteins, DNA, etc. However, the same basic difficulty arises. It is impossible to tell for sure if the similarity is the result of common ancestry or common design.

An interesting dilemma arises for the evolutionist when confronted with certain types of similarities, though. For example, the human eye and the squid eye are quite similar in basic structure. Not even the currently accepted evolutionary scenario traces this similarity to a common ancestor. Instead it is called an example of "convergent evolution," which really means similar structures have arisen independently as a result of environmental pressure. Since when is our environment similar to that of a squid?

One explanation of similarities that would be consistent with the creation model is the idea of variation on a theme. The same basic structures could be used in a variety of ingenious ways, by making variations in their exact form and function. This method is often used in human technology and works quite well. It seems reasonable to believe that the Creator would also use such a technique.

Similarities, then, can be explained by both creation and evolution. They do not, thus, support either model directly. However, the creation model seems to better explain some observations that "stretch" the evolution model.

Pakicetus — A Whale of a Fossil?

Yes, believe it or not, evolutionists teach children that whales once walked on four legs on land. The story of evolution says that fish crawled out of the sea to become amphibians (frogs, etc.) and eventually over millions of years evolved into reptiles (lizards, etc.). The reptiles then began to slowly change into the mammals (dogs, cats, pigs, and horses). One of these mammals then got a weird idea and decided to crawl back into the ocean and, over millions of years more, evolved into the water mammals (whales, sea lions, porpoises).

Absurd, you say! Do scientists really believe and teach that? Certainly! In fact Charles Darwin said himself that he saw no problem with bears evolving into whales:

I can see no difficulty in a race of bears being rendered, by natural selection, more and more aquatic in their habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale. (*Origin of Species*, 1st ed., p. 184)

Even at Sea World, the family entertainment center, we are told the ancestors of Shamu, the great killer whale, once walked the land. Many high school and college textbooks teach the same idea (using the similarity argument). So yes, it is believed and taught by evolutionists.

A fossil discovery that was claimed to be half land animal and half whale has added fuel to the evolutionary fire. This was heralded as a "crucial missing link." An artist's reconstruction was exhibited on the front cover of *Science Magazine* (April 22, 1983) and labelled as such. It is very similar to the sketch on our front page. From that picture you'd expect that most of the skeleton of the creature was found? However, according to the technical information, only a few teeth with a small patch of a jaw and one small portion of the skull were found. That is all! Hardly enough to get that drawing unless one already "knows" what the creature "should have" looked like.

Unfortunately, many youngsters will be impressed by the picture and may believe forever that such a creature was really found. The "missing link" has been substantiated by the artistic reconstruction, not by the actual evidence.

Think and Believe is published bi-monthly by Alpha Omega Institute, P.O. Box 4343, Grand Junction, CO 81502. Editors: Dave & Mary Jo Nutting. Single copies of this publication are sent free upon request. Please write for permission to reprint material in this publication. Alpha Omega Institute is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your donations are tax deductible.



Upcoming Events



We are scheduling an extensive speaking trip in April and May. Even though many of the days are already scheduled, we do have some openings. Call us right away if you and your church or group would like for us to speak at an evening function or luncheon or ?

- Mar. 24 Olathe, CO, Olathe Baptist Church
- April 3-5 Rangely, CO, 1st Assembly of God
- April 4 Field Trip
Dinosaur National Monument
- April 12 Grand Junction, CO, Clifton Christian Church
- April 26 Denver, CO, Northwest Baptist Church
- April 27,28 Joplin, MO, Clark College — Neil Gardner
- April 29,30 Paola, KS — 294-5553
- May 1-5 Kansas City, KS — Contact us for schedule
- May 6-10 Southwest Iowa — 712-542-2519
- May 12-13 DesMoines, IA — Contact us for schedule
- May 13-15 Waterloo, IA — Contact Larry Reed, 234-5800
- May 17 Mankato, MN, Grace Baptist Church — 388-9355
- May 21 Mankato, MN, Mankato State Univ. — 388-9355
- May 24- June 8 Minneapolis, MN area — Schedule still tentative, contact us or call 507-345-4967

Alpha Omega Institute

P.O. Box 4343
Grand Junction, CO 81502
(303) 245-5906

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.



Recent Events



If evolution really worked, our feet would be evolving into wheels (or wings) by now! In January we travelled to California for 3 weeks of speaking and research. It was good to spend some time at ICR (Institute for Creation Research) in San Diego touching bases with some of the leaders in the creation science movement and catching up on some of the latest developments. We were also invited to speak to several groups while in California and were encouraged by the response.

Since our return, we have spoken in several Colorado locations. A highlight was in Steamboat Springs where we spoke to approximately 75 high school students on a ski retreat and another group of students at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting in Craig. Another good opportunity was to a public school zoology class that wished to balance the evolutionary approach with a creationist view. It looks like we will have some other opportunities in the public schools between the time of writing this and when you receive it. So backdate your prayers!

In addition, we taught for several days at the YWAM Discipleship Training School near Cimarron, Colorado and have been teaching a Creation/Evolution class here in Grand Junction for Colorado Christian College.

**Don't Forget
Family Camp
August 23 - 29**

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grand Jct., CO
Permit No. 393

**FORWARDING AND
ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**