



STATEMENT DC742

## WITNESSING TIPS

### In Debate with Evolutionists

by Rachel D. Ramer

There is more to discussing evolution than debating the age of the earth or the wing breadth of the archaeopteryx. There is value, for example, in examining *how* evolutionists make their defense. Looking beyond the argument to the arguer's techniques can expose fallacious reasoning which keep many from considering the God of Creation.

If Christians plan to argue from the Genesis account of creation, they must first support biblical authenticity. Although the Bible *can* be supported, that may be the long way around. When Scripture is introduced, evolutionists launch into one of their "best" fallacies: false distinction — the banning of "religion" from scientific debate.

A shortcut is to point out how evolutionists engage in logical fallacies such as the "straw man," "bias ad hominem," "false distinction," and "non sequitur" fallacies. The first three are used in attempts to invalidate the creationists' stance; the fourth endeavors to validate macroevolution (the change from one species into another) as legitimate science.

***The Argument You So Eloquently Refuted Was Not Mine!*** A strawman fallacy involves the misrepresentation of an opponent's argument to refute him or her easily. Stephen Jay Gould, in his article, "Evolution as Fact and Theory" in the May 1981 issue of *Discover Magazine*, attempted to refute creationism by saying, "We have abundant, direct, observational evidence of evolution in action, from both the field and the laboratory." His point: evolution is an irrefutable fact, and creationists ignore this certainty.

Yet, the evidence he cited supported *microevolution*, involving changes that take place *within* separate species. Creationists have no contention with the concept of microevolution.

In fact, A. E. Wilder-Smith, in his book *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution* (T.W.F.T. Publishers), makes a case for both negative and positive mutations (microevolution) working *against* macroevolution. Negative mutations weaken the creature, a tendency that does not support survival of the fittest; positive mutations make it a stronger creature, helping to preserve its own class. In the latter case, the variations are the means that allow the species to survive distinct from other species.

The fact that many evolutionists use microevolution to refute creationism shows the seriousness of this fallacy. Pointing this out can dispel the misconception that Christians do not accept scientific fact.

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**Religious Bias Disqualifies.** A bias ad hominem fallacy has to do with disqualifying someone's argument simply because the arguer has a special bias in the issue. For example, someone with a religious experience or belief is disqualified from having a valid opinion about his or her own religion. It is fitting to check the soundness of a biased person's argument, but it is wrong to reject the argument *solely* because of the arguer's bias.

In the 1982 trial of McLean vs. Arkansas, which centered around teaching both theories of origins in public schools, questions were raised concerning the religious beliefs of the creation experts. Objections by the defense (creationists) were consistently overruled. Yet, what the proponents believe is beside the point.

Of course, there are those who combat evolution who are not religious, but even that is beside the point. Religious belief is not necessarily based on fact, but neither is it necessarily founded in falsehood. A "religious" view might actually be true. If we don't allow it to be heard, how can we claim to uphold free inquiry?

**...Because Creationism Is Religion.** The "false distinction" fallacy relegates creationism to a different category, thereby falsely nullifying it. To evolutionists, religion often disregards science (illustrated in the church-motivated condemnation of Galileo). Science is described as what is observable, repeatable, and falsifiable. With that definition, creationism is not science. Yet, neither is macroevolution.

The false distinction is between evolution and creationism as "science versus religion" instead of *evidence for evolution* versus *evidence for creationism*. If the argument never gets to that level, again free inquiry is stifled.

**To Believe in the Miracle of Evolution.** Suppose evolutionists abandoned the above three problem areas and debated creationists on equal terms. Would their position then prove reliable? Not really, because the fallacy known as *non sequitur* — Latin for "it does not follow" — becomes an immediate issue. Microevolution leading to macroevolution, discussed earlier, is one example.

The celebrated "missing links" as concrete evidence is another. The role of fossils as transitional forms is speculative *at best* in comparison with documented, trackable microevolution. Yet, evolutionists often use these "proofs" interchangeably as though the reliability of the one naturally follows the credibility of the other.

Also problematic is concluding from molecular biology that there is a common ancestry for all organisms. It does not follow that because all life shares a common biochemical basis, that relationship was brought about through evolution. In engineering this type of creative diversity from the same basic building blocks is good design, the result of a designer.

Finally, it does not follow that because religion was wrong about Galileo, it is in error about creationism. The same evolutionists who insist that their own past mistakes should not be held against their position (e.g., promoting false "missing links" such as the Piltdown man) are often unwilling to allow their intellectual opponents to have human failings as well.

Because the above fallacies are common, many people cannot "hear" the scientific evidence for creation, they cannot accept the Genesis account, they cannot listen unbiased to what they consider a biased view. If we can expose these flaws, we may earn the privilege of leading them beyond God as Creator to God as Savior.

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