

WitnessKit 2
God And Creation Class 20
Equidistance,
Is Darwinism a Faith System?
How Can We Tell Reason From
Rationalization?

Suggested DVD Clips:

Unlocking the Mystery of Life,

“Introduction” **11 minutes**,

Scene 3 through 6 –

“Irreducible Complexity &

Machines in the Cells”—**17 minutes**

Theories and Hypotheses

Often non-scientists assume the word “theory” in science means the same thing as “hypothesis,” because ordinary English can use the two words interchangeably. “Theory” in science is much stronger than “hypothesis.” A hypothesis is an idea about how something may work. A theory is an explanation that puts scientific laws together in a way that is accepted as “**true**,” meaning **not-yet-falsified**. To call something a scientific theory is to call it an established and accepted explanation of scientific fact.

The Theory of Evolution

- The theory of evolution does not offer comfort to religious people by being called a *theory*. People may feel comfortable without good reason, just because the word has a more comfortable general meaning than its scientific meaning.
- In the scientific meaning, according to the materialists, the theory of evolution is ***an unguided descent of all living things from common ancestors***, which is assumed to be the correct and established explanation of how living things came to exist. The law of natural selection, or “survival of the fittest” is the law of nature the theory of evolution is supposed to explain.

Treating Evolution as a Fact

- The theory of evolution differs greatly from other scientific theories in several ways. First of all, it is a **historical theory** rather than an experimentally established theory. So perhaps the general definition of “theory” is actually more appropriate for the word.
- Second, the philosophical assumption of naturalism effectively **rules out falsification of its central idea**—that of unguided change. So the description of “not-yet-falsified” applies very differently than for a typical scientific theory.

Because scientists are

- Accustomed to thinking of theories as a category of “factual explanation,”
- They view the public as **unscientific** to reject the core principle of unguided change.
- Viewing the theory of evolution as a “factual explanation” biases every conclusion, and **glosses over anomalies** that do not seem to fit.

The unguided part of that statement

- Is established by the long tradition of defining science as a search for explanations which we see operative in the present. This is taken to **exclude** the supernatural.
- However, we DO see **intelligence** operative in the present, and we do have mathematical tools to help us identify the imprint of intelligence.
- So the **unguided** part of the theory is philosophically unnecessary—more of a tradition than a necessity.
- If the unguided part is removed, the rest of the theory becomes easier to challenge. As long as unguided descent is the only game in town, it wins by default. If more possibilities are open, **the anomalies become more visible.**

Paradigms and Anomalies

Anomalies are surprises in the data that do not fit the theory or the paradigm. Bias tends toward ignoring anomalies.

Sometimes they are ignored as due to the messy nature of data.

Sometimes they can be explained by rethinking the theory or paradigm, and modifying it.

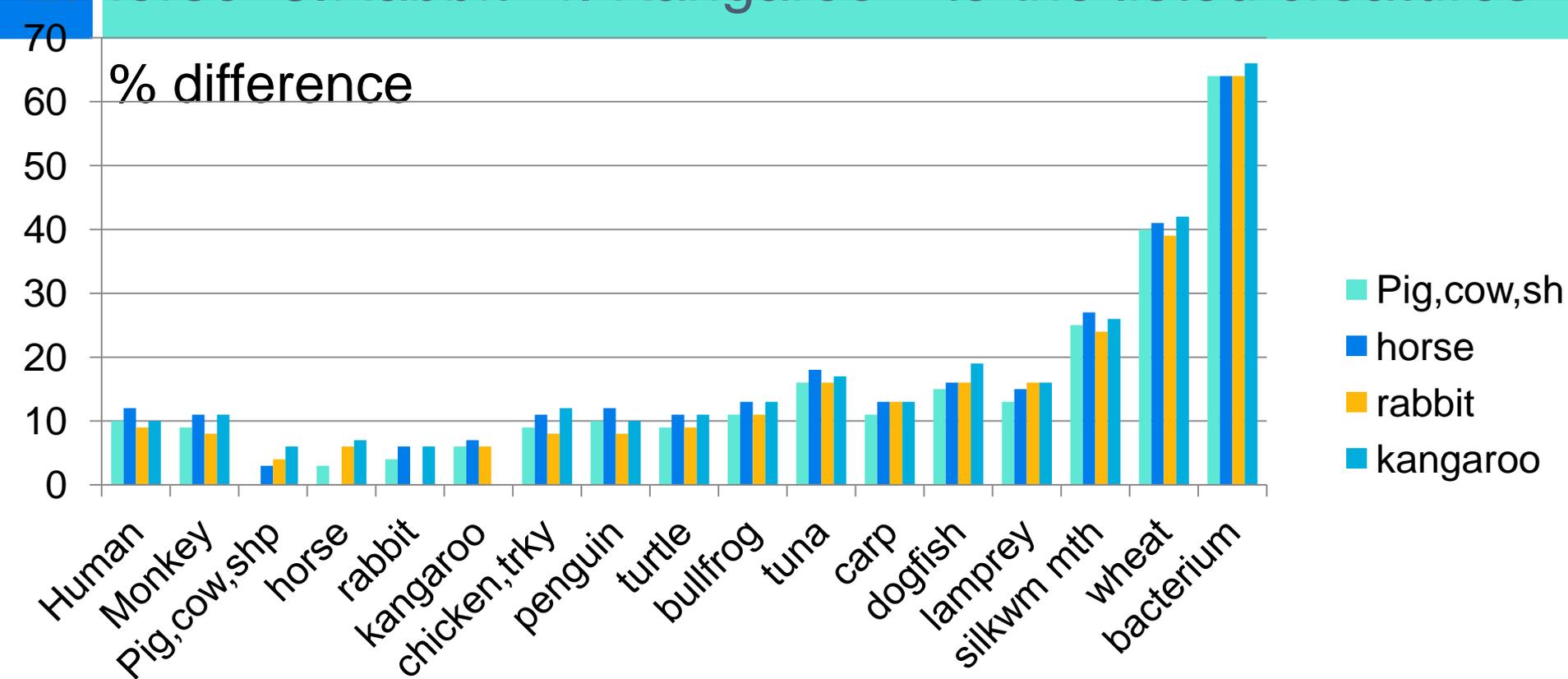
Sometimes enough anomalies appear to challenge the theory or paradigm.

We want to look at an anomaly called equidistance, from *Of Pandas and People*.

The Odd Molecular Clock of Cytochrome C—from *Of Pandas and People*

- Cytochrome C is a protein found in cells. It works as a catalyst in the oxidation-reduction reactions of cellular respiration. That means it affects the speed of reaction without being changed in itself.
- Because it is a protein, it contains information in the sequence of amino acids that constitute it. The sequence is set by DNA in the cell.
- Different species of animals and plants have different sequences of amino acids. Those sequences can be compared.

Cytochrome C Equidistance: Comparing Each of These Color Coded Mammals --1. Pig,cow,sheep 2.Horse 3.Rabbit 4. Kangaroo—to the listed creatures



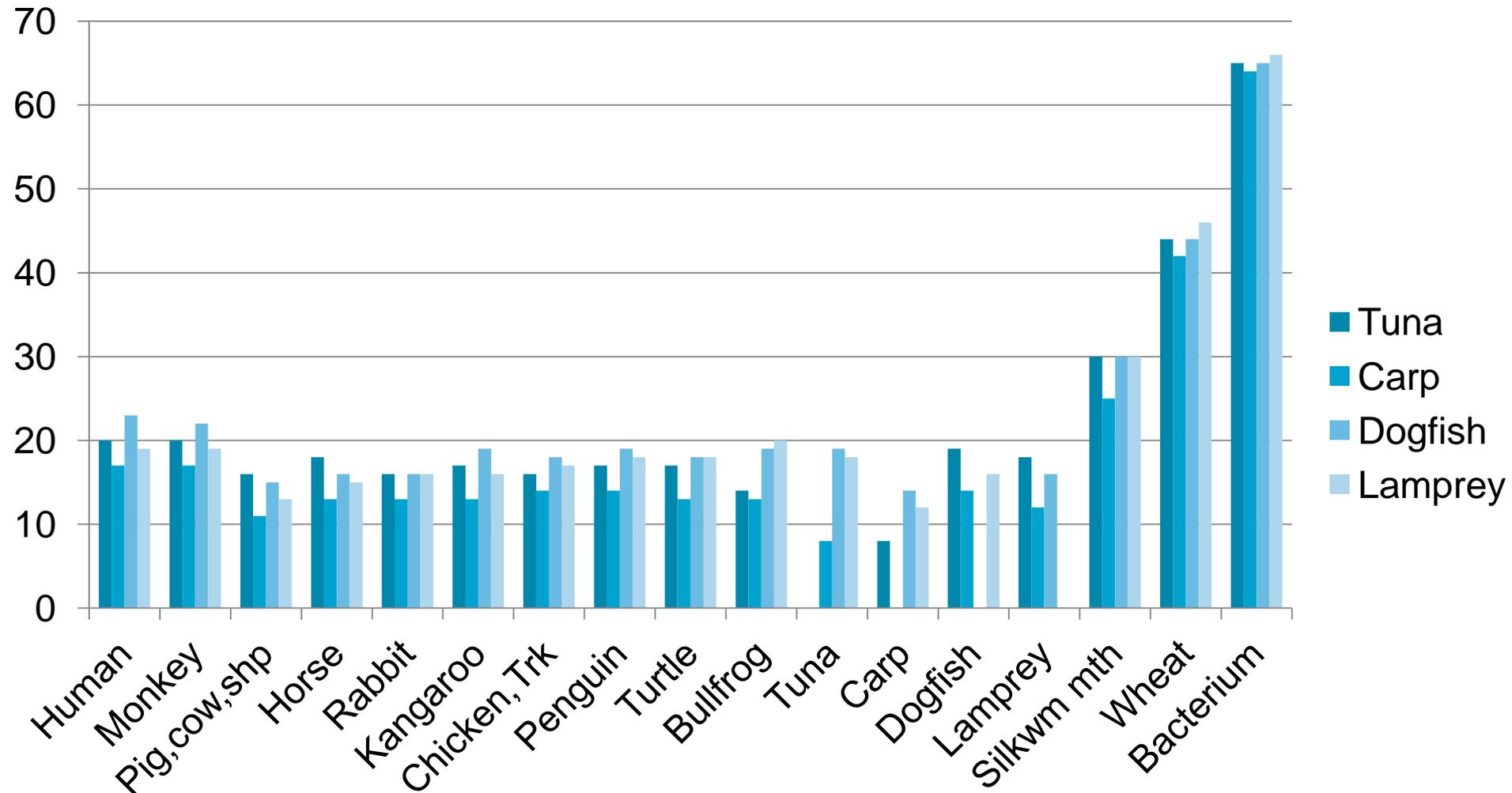
- Note that farm mammals, rabbits, and kangaroo are as different from birds, turtles, frogs, and carp as from humans. They are slightly farther from tuna, dogfish, and lamprey, then farther still from moth, wheat, and bacteria.

Note a few details in Cytochrome C chemistry.

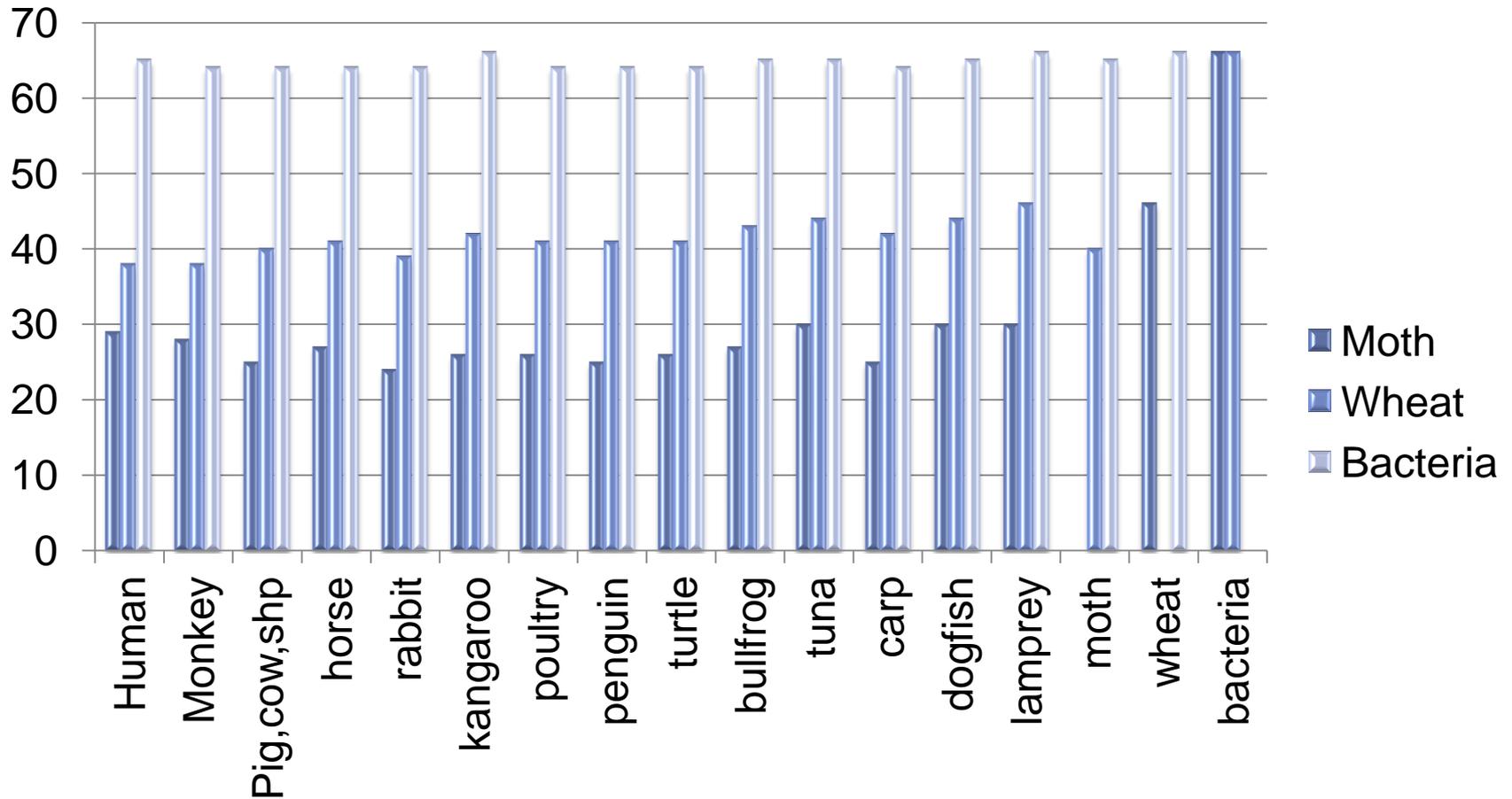
- Humans' cytochrome C exhibit about 10% difference from these mammals—pigs, cow, sheep; horses; rabbits; kangaroos.
- Chickens, turkeys, penguins also exhibit about 10% difference from these mammals.
- So do turtles, bullfrogs, and carp.
- Tuna, dogfish, and lampreys show about 15% difference.
- Moths show about 25% difference.

This seems to disprove the molecular clock idea. Distance between body plans and distance between chemistries do not match very well.

Cytochrome C Equidistance: **Dogfish, tuna, and lamprey are about as far from each other as from all the other animals,** except for moths. **Close body plan, distant chemistry**



Cytochrome C Equidistance: Moths, Wheat, and Bacteria



Equidistance

- The bacteria's cytochrome c is equidistant from all the other categories.
- Wheat is equidistant from all the categories except bacteria.
- Moths are equidistant from all the other animals, but are farther from wheat and bacteria.

If animals evolved from common ancestors, with branching at different times in history

- One would expect animals nearer each other on the tree of descent to have cytochrome c nearer one another.
- One would expect animals farther from each other to have more chemical differences.
- Instead the data are unexpectedly uniform in regard to chemical differences.
- The fish data are the most telling. The dogfish, tuna, and carp are as far from each other – when they should be very close to each other—as from the mammals and all the other animals except moths.

The other possibility that would fit the theory

Darwinism, if true, would expect to trace where the branching and time of branching took place on the family tree by chemical nearness.

Equidistance implies the same time of appearance if a molecular clock ticked at all.

It fits a creation story rather well, if the animals had the same cytochrome C at the start, but with different body plans.

Of course, the molecular clock idea may simply be wrong.

We can learn to communicate



With others in the creation evolution controversy by learning to ask a few good questions.

1. **Is Darwinism actually a scientific system, or a faith system?**
2. How can we tell reason from rationalization? (We will only cover this first question in the second book today.)

Science Versus Religion



For science to **be** science, it must be open to falsification. That means it has to be possible to prove it wrong.

For science to be open to falsification, it must be tested

by risky predictions

with an open possibility of failure.

Science Versus Religion

If philosophical naturalism is the **only allowed** basis for science,

can

unguided evolutionary descent
from common ancestors

be tested

so as to have an open possibility of failure?

We know that similarities exist

Among living things.

Two options are open to explain those similarities.

One of those options is **unguided** biological descent from common ancestors. The other option is a connection by way of purposeful design—which means that the similarities reflect an intellectual or purposeful set of plans or **archetypes** which work in living systems.

(The same original cytochrome c would serve as the archetype for its particular chemical system.)

What is the middle ground?

A middle ground between unguided descent and intelligent design would connect the two ideas—perhaps a form of **guided** descent from common ancestors. However, philosophical naturalism as the **ONLY** base for science rules out that middle ground.

(This is a slightly different way to frame the ideas compared to our earlier chart, where Darwinism and critiques of Darwinism are within an atheist framework, Intelligent Design is agnostic, and then various other options include the idea of GOD—as a Hidden Guiding Hand of Theistic Evolution, or as in Old Earth Creationism and Young Earth Creationism.)

Instead of designing experiments



Which might demonstrate that unguided common descent is false, the evolutionary community makes massive attempts to stifle criticism of evolution.

Not only are risky experiments forbidden, but it is **OFTEN** forbidden even to voice the weaknesses of the current explanation.

If unguided common descent is not open to falsification,

Under the accepted definition of science, **is unguided common descent science?**

Or is unguided common descent **a faith assumption?**

If science is constrained to philosophic naturalism

And philosophic naturalism makes common descent closed to falsification...

Does that make unguided common descent a **religious** origins story—a faith story—rather than science?

It seems that we have circular reasoning with a vengeance, **when philosophic naturalism is the only allowed basis for science, yet it renders the “scientific” origins story closed to falsification, which throws that story outside the realm of science.**

We must realize that unguided common descent

has attributes of religion rather than of science.

1. **Testable, risky predictions that would demonstrate it false are forbidden. (Merely voicing weaknesses of it is often forbidden!)**
2. **Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.**
3. **Neo-Darwinism uses verbal “fluidity of definition” to reconcile with other worldviews—rather than precise, scientific definitions.**

Religious
Attributes of
Neo-
Darwinism

Testable, risky predictions that would demonstrate it false are forbidden.

Karl Popper's aphorism: **“The wrong view of science betrays itself in the craving to be right.”** Phillip Johnson's descriptions: **“Evolutionary science became the search for confirming evidence, and the explaining away of negative evidence.”**

- What Darwinists **“never find is evidence that contradicts the common ancestry thesis, because to Darwinists such evidence CANNOT exist.”**

Testable, risky predictions that would demonstrate it false are forbidden.

- Thus, **unguided common descent** is a basic **statement of faith** of the Darwinist camp.
- Karl Popper's view was that evidence of confirmations should only count when it arises as the result of risky predictions, open to failure.
- A data point here and there of confirmation do not prove the theory correct, especially when no contradictory data points are allowed or published, or when the theory is so malleable as to explain every phenomenon.

We must realize that unguided common descent has attributes of religion rather than of science, because...

Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.

Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.

Julian Huxley, 1959, on the 100 year anniversary of the publication of THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES:

“This is one of the first public occasions on which it has been frankly faced that all aspects of reality are subject to evolution, from atoms and stars, to fish and flowers, from fish and flowers to human societies and values—indeed, that all reality is a single process of Evolution...

Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.

...In the evolutionary pattern of thought, there is no longer either need or room for the supernatural.

The earth was not created, it evolved.

So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul as well as brain and body.

So did religion...

Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.

Finally, the evolutionary vision is enabling us to discern, however incompletely, the lineaments of the new religion that we can be sure will arise to serve the needs of the coming era." –Julian Huxley, 1959.

More from Julian Huxley...

- Huxley's "evolutionary humanism" offered humanity
- the "sacred duty" and
- "glorious opportunity" of seeking
- "to promote the maximum fulfillment of the evolutionary process on the earth,"
- —promoting the "fullest realization of mankind's inherent possibilities."

More from Julian Huxley...

- John Dewey expanded the vision, in a 1933 movement for religious humanism,
- expecting evolutionary theory to usher in **an age of social cooperation**
- **and scientific progress.**
- Of course, the events of 1930-1945 in Germany revealed what evolutionary theory can be used for in reality.

Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: “Is evolution a theory, a system, or a hypothesis?”
- It is much more—it is a general postulate to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must henceforth bow and which they must satisfy in order to be thinkable and true.
- Evolution is a light which illuminates all facts, a trajectory which all lines of thought must follow—this is what evolution is.”
- He went on to discuss the “Point Omega,” a sort of infinite collective consciousness that he expected the universe to reach.

Neo-Darwinists often make religious pronouncements based upon Neo-Darwinism.

Professor William Provine, of Cornell:

1. Modern science directly implies that the world is organized strictly in accordance with mechanistic principles. There are **no purposive principles** whatsoever in nature. There are **no gods** and no designing forces that are rationally detectable....

More religious statements from Dr. Provine

2. Modern science directly implies that there are **no inherent moral or ethical laws, no absolute guiding principles** for human society.
3. Human beings are marvelously complex **machines**. The individual human becomes an ethical person by means of two primary mechanisms: heredity and environmental influences. That is all there is.

More religious statements from Dr. Provine

4. We must conclude that **when we die, we die, and that is the end of us....**
5. “**Free will** as it is traditionally conceived—the freedom to make uncoerced and unpredictable choices among alternative possible courses of action—**simply does not exist.** ...There is no way that the evolutionary process as currently conceived can produce a being that is truly free to make choices.”

Evolutionary Theory and Religion

Evolutionary theory is so **malleable** that the religious statements coming from it from very famous people ***don't have to agree with each other***. They say vastly contradictory things, but claim science as their basis.

- It has been used to justify **hard atheism** and **biological mysticism**.
- It has been used to justify **religious persecution of the most intense kinds—by ethnicity** from the Nazis
- And by treating religious minorities as **enemies of the atheist state** in the Soviet Union.

Scary Features

- The theory is so malleable that any powerful elite can use it to claim some sort of moral high ground—atheism as enlightenment, or survival of the fittest as good for humanity as a whole. But because evolutionary theory has no overarching moral code, the same people in power have nothing to restrain them from abusing power.
- We DO have data from real life about this aspect of evolutionary theory. It functions very poorly for human rights.

We must realize that unguided common descent has attributes of religion rather than of science.

Neo-Darwinism uses verbal “fluidity of definition” to reconcile with other worldviews—rather than precise, scientific definitions.

Fluidity of Definition

“Evolution” means whatever keeping or spreading the Darwinist faith directs it to mean, according to the needs of the moment.

Example: California’s 1989 POLICY STATEMENT on the teaching of science and SCIENCE FRAMEWORK curriculum guide.

In the FRAMEWORK, “major areas of difficulty (in Darwinism) are ignored or minimized.

Fluidity of Definition

Teachers are exhorted to reassure students that **science is a reliable and self-correcting enterprise,**
that allegedly scientific objections to accepted doctrines have been considered and rejected by the scientific community,
and
that evolution is ‘scientifically accepted fact.’”

Fluid Definitions:

- The FRAMEWORK defines evolution as ***“change through time.”***
- Then it urges students to believe in evolution because so many scientists do. ***“It is an accepted scientific explanation and therefore no more controversial in scientific circles than the theories of gravitation and electron flow.”***
- Thus, a fluid definition becomes a vehicle for spreading the faith among naïve students.

Fluid Definitions:

Johnson's explanation:

- "Evolution in Darwinist usage implies a completely naturalistic metaphysical system, in which matter evolved to its present state of organized complexity without any participation by a Creator.
- But "evolution" also refers to much more modest concepts,
- such as microevolution—(within an already existing gene pool)—
- and biological relationship—(such as is seen in taxonomic trees)."

Fluid Definitions:

Johnson's explanation:

- "The trick is always to prove one of the modest meanings of the term, and treat it as proof of the complete metaphysical system."

How do we counter the “Evolution is Fact” and “Religion is Fantasy”

Approach to truth?

How do we reveal the limits of provable biological change? How do we communicate the religious and philosophical basis for the macroevolution story?

Our next book for study, THE WEDGE OF TRUTH, is about communication. It suggests that we ask good questions, questions that cause a person to think about underlying issues.

We can learn to communicate



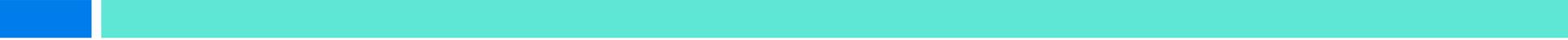
With others in the creation evolution controversy by learning to ask a few good questions.

1. **How can we tell reason from rationalization?** (We will only cover this first question today.)

Defining Reason and Rationalization

- “Reason is the human ability to determine what is real or not real by thinking.”
- “Rationalization is the use of reasoning to make sure that one comes out at the right place.”—Dr. Dallas Willard, philosopher.
- If unguided macroevolution “is an accepted scientific explanation and therefore no more controversial in scientific circles than the theories of gravitation and electron flow.”—that viewpoint defines the “right place” students are supposed to reach.

Motivations Bias Rationalization



A student wanting approval from the professor, a professor wanting tenure, a job seeker wanting a job—all these wishes serve to bias thinking.

Other biases can also enter the picture: the wish to be free of pesky rules and regulations, the wish to have eternity secure, the wish to please family, the wish to appear educated rather than ignorant, the wish to avoid persecution for one's faith.

One of the strongest factors

That can bias rationalization IS HEARING ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE STORY from an educated perspective.

A good person can succumb to rationalization if he thinks it is intellectually dishonest not to believe the macro-evolution story.

The desire to be intellectually honest is a GOOD motivation. Telling only one side of the story in science class can tap into that good motivation, with rationalization as the unintended result.

What is the answer to that factor?



Each person has a responsibility to seek the other side of the story, but in order for them to do that, they need to know that another side exists, and they need to know where to begin their search.

The churches can perform an essential service by opening up some good sources for students to read.

Apologetics study is not the **ONLY** thing students need. They need salvation. They need grounding in God's word. But they do need apologetics.

Even if they think it is boring!

- We don't allow students to do without their immunizations when they go to college, even though receiving them is not pleasant.
- We in the church need to think about apologetics as a form of immunization that can help students resist the rationalization of the evolution story.

The tendency to treat religion as

- Strictly experiential works against students when they arrive at university.
- Experiential beliefs are subjective. Science is considered objective. Objective truths carry more weight than subjective truths.
- Add to that the religious statements made by those who preach the Darwinian belief system, and students are faced with what appears to be objective truth about religion versus their own subjective and immature religious experiences.

Add to that the tendency in universities

- To be faced with all kinds of temptations
 - ▣ Which interfere with direct experiences of God's presence.
- So students retain a dim memory of faith experiences while going through an absence of them and being bombarded with authoritative statements that their beliefs should be based upon Darwinian unguided evolution.

This problem has been with us

A long time. However, the atheist voices such as Richard Dawkins' are louder than in previous generations. The universities' teaching staffs are more uniformly leftist than in previous generations. So we in the church need to realize that **the level of difficulty our students face has never been higher.**

Philip Wentworth's Harvard De-conversion is documented in

The 1932 ATLANTIC MONTHLY article called "What College Did to My Religion."

- His description of his de-conversion reveals very strong rationalization, because he fails to see the logical problems in that de-conversion.
- He concluded that religious people are simply gullible, and to back up the point, he described a fire in a church steeple at a theological seminary, caused by a lightning strike.

Those gullible religious people

Responded to the lightning strike during the rain-storm in three ways.

1. They called the fire department.
2. 175 students rushed into the streets to help the firemen fight the blaze.
3. The president of the seminary interrupted the fire fighting to call the students to pray for the safety of the building.

By the time the firemen had set up a tower and begun pouring water on the blaze, the rain had put the fire out.

Philip Wentworth's point was that



Educated non-gullible people don't pray for God to put out fires.

But the interesting thing about the story is that the RAIN put out the fire. Had it not done so, the hour-later fire tower and hosing might not have been adequate to extinguish the blaze.

Wentworth's rationalization is seen because he ignored the evidence of God's help in the story he reported. The story contradicted his skeptical belief system, but he failed to realize it.

Philip Wentworth ignored the

Anomaly of the rain.

Proverbs 30:5

Every word of God is tested. He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

Homework

In 3 Sets

Homework Class 20 Set 1

- Read Exodus 19: 3-6 and I Peter 2:1-10.
- What responsibility does God give to individuals who believe in Him?
- Read the Foreword in THE WEDGE OF TRUTH.
- What “is really at issue?”
- What is reason?
- According to the Foreword, what is the assumption of our system of education?
- What is rationalization?

Homework Class 20 Set 2

- At the university, we are exposed to ideas based on assumptions not stated. Intelligent discussion requires that we not only understand our own position and defend it, but that we also understand the positions of others with different assumptions. Attending college can be disorienting, because the Christian assumptions are not accepted as valid by the academic consensus. Religious colleges are not immune to this problem, either. Their teaching staff received their PhD credentials under a different worldview. It is different to teach from an enlightenment theist worldview than from a modernist worldview that gives lip service to religion.
- Read Hebrews 6:9 - 20.
- What is our anchor that holds us steady when we are tempted to waver in our faith?

Homework Class 20 Set 2

- Read the Introduction in THE WEDGE OF TRUTH.
- The Wedge is a group and a strategy. Is the group a Bible study group?
- What is the strategy of the Wedge?
- Give the **example questions** that the author lists.
- What is the purpose of the book for non-scientists who want to speak to their culture about Christianity?
- Does more effective communication guarantee success?

Homework Class 20 Set 3

- Read I Corinthians 3:18-21.
- What caution does this passage insist upon? How is that caution related to all the earlier verses in the same chapter?
- What does that caution have to do with the question –“How Can We Tell Reason from Rationalization?”
- Philip Johnson dissects Philip Wentworth’s story of the loss of his faith by comparison with his own story of going to Harvard.
- How did the college experience become **an interpretive filter** for Wentworth when describing the religion of his childhood?

Homework Class 20 Set 3

- What was the problem with Wentworth's anecdote about the seminary students' praying for the fire to be put out, as a reason to have abandoned his faith?
- What role do you think "embarrassment" might have played? Is this a peer dependence issue?
- What was inconsistent between Wentworth's choice of the ministry for a vocation and his choice of Harvard as a college?
- Wentworth rejected God as an arbitrary answer to a beginning, yet accepted the idea of natural laws governing the universe. What questions did he fail to ask about the existence of those laws?

Homework Class 20 Set 3

- What basis for morality did Wentworth find in his new naturalism?
- Did his conclusions in the area of morals bother him?
- What conclusions did Philip Johnson draw from Wentworth's story?
- If the Wedge is about asking the right questions, what is the first question Johnson addresses? Did Johnson give any answers to that question in this chapter?
- Does the **consensus of PhD's belief systems** equal **truth**?
- What are the two shortcomings of science if we depend on science for the answers?