

PUBLIC SCHOOL CREATION SCIENCE

WHEN SHOULD PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS INTRODUCE CREATION?

by Richard L. Overman

Many public school teachers are caught in a “no-mans land” when it comes to the teaching of origins. On the one hand, they want to teach creation. On the other hand they are told, ordered, coerced, or otherwise led to believe that they cannot teach creation and must teach evolution. Not only must they teach it, they must teach it as truth. What are these teachers to do? When should they “step out on faith”, “do the right thing”, or any other cliché one can use?

These are not easy questions to answer and teachers need to answer them for themselves. In this paper, I hope to give public school teachers information and a thought process to help them answer these questions. Every public school teacher should address and answer these questions. To not do so is to be less than honest with their students.

The remainder of this paper deals with various aspects and philosophies involved in answering the questions at hand. They are not in any particular order, nor is there intended to be a particular hierarchy. Teachers should evaluate each area as it applies to their lives.

WHEN THEY HAVE CONSIDERED THEIR STUDENTS.

Public school teachers, more so than parents, are training up their students in the way they should go. They are instilling in the children a worldview that will shape the way the children think, believe, and act for the rest of their lives. They are creating within the children their paradigm from which everything will be prejudiced. By effectively integrating creation truth into their classroom, teachers can give their students a complete education from which they can develop a worldview free from religious bias. Including the science of creation balances the atheistic worldview of evolution with a worldview that acknowledges the possibility of a creator.

There is also the matter of being truthful with their students. It is an undisputed fact that there are thousands of scientists who accept either the evolution or creation explanation of origins. Scientific arguments are made on both sides of the issue. Public school teachers need to decide how they want to deal with this issue. They can ignore it and teach the “party line” that evolution is a fact. To do so, however, is to hide important facts from their students. This also takes the teacher out of the education business and into the business of indoctrination. The more honest approach is to make the students aware of the facts. Teach the students that there are two ideas being investigated. Explore both issues and in the process teach the students critical thinking skills by evaluating the evidence for both.

WHEN THEY HAVE COUNTED THE COST.

The public school teachers should be fully aware of the costs when considering introducing creation into their classroom. The consequences, risks, and costs are many, varied and individual. I will attempt to touch on a few of the more obvious ones, but teachers will have to determine these for themselves. In considering the consequences, risks, and costs, teachers must take a long term view. The education establishment has, for some reason, taken the approach that evolution is sacred territory. Teachers have been harassed for even suggesting that evolution is not a fact. The point is that before public school teachers enter this fray there is much to understand and they must be prepared for the long haul.

Consequences:

The distinction between consequences and risks is slight. For the purposes of this prose, consequences are defined as the reactions of the teachers' family, friends, and colleagues to their efforts. Risks are related to the potential affect on the teachers' careers and the reaction of the evolutionary/humanistic community to their efforts.

A decision to introduce creation might be expected to have a negative impact on friendships. One can expect to be ridiculed and alienated from some fellow teachers. Love, long-suffering, and patience will be needed to effectively deal with these teachers. Non-teaching family and friends may fear for teachers and attempt to dissuade their efforts. This is where the teachers' own values, motives, and intentions will be very important. Teachers should understand and accept that they are doing the right thing for the right reasons while being prepared for the consequences.

Risks

As stated earlier, risks are related to the potential affects on the teachers' careers and the reaction of the evolutionary/humanistic community to their efforts. While consequences may hurt and be difficult, risks can be damaging, expensive, and troublesome. Consequences will fester, but risks will probably be more immediate. Such is the hostility of the educational establishment toward the science of creation that teachers may be threatened with loss of tenure, employment, legal action, or any combination of these. Again, the assurance of knowing that the teacher is doing the right thing for the right reasons is important in dealing with these risks. The most important thing teachers can do to mitigate the risk is to have a thorough understanding of their legal situation. There are many resources available to help explain current law. However, I have found them to be often contradictory. One source is not enough. Teachers may want to seek out a competent lawyer who shares their creation-based worldview, and has constitutional law experience. The lawyer should be able to explain and summarize the current legal situation fully and completely. I would probably get copies of the legal decisions, read them, and ask whatever questions are necessary to understand them. The additional benefit of having a quality legal resource is that the lawyer will be familiar with the situation and be able to assist teachers in responding to challenges. The Rutherford Institute reports that often a simple letter from an attorney explaining the law and clearing up misconceptions is all that is needed. Many principals, parents, and students are under numerous misconceptions and will tell teachers that they cannot do things they are legally able to do. In addition, if the decision to introduce creation results in legal action, the teacher will not have to scramble around looking for a lawyer, possibly ending up with one that cannot adequately represent them. The operative word here is **PROACTIVE**. Teachers should anticipate problems and take proactive steps to prepare for them rather than being in a situation of having to react to legal or employment challenges.

Costs

The costs of deciding to introduce creation can be significant in both time and money. Each is discussed separately. Monetary costs are included in this section. Time costs are in the next section.

Monetary costs will come in various areas. Teachers cannot, and probably should not, expect the public school system to purchase creation-based resources for them. If the school system does, so much the better. If not, teachers will have to obtain resources on their own. They must first obtain resources to adequately educate and prepare themselves on the subjects of creation and evolution. There are a number of books, videos, and field experiences available to aid in that education. In addition to resources for the teachers' edification, classroom resources are necessary. While these will be useful in aiding teachers, imagination is paramount to classroom preparation. Finally, teachers should be prepared for the expenses of meeting legal and employment challenges.

WHEN THEY ARE COMMITTED TO THEIR STUDENTS AND TASK.

Teachers who want to introduce creation into their public school classroom should be prepared for significant individual study. To date, prepackaged classroom lesson plans and material that effectively refute evolution and make the case for creation are not available. It will take significant out-of-school time for teachers to prepare for each class. It has been said that to get to the top of one's profession, at least 2 hours per day outside of work must be spent studying that profession.

During this individual study, teachers will come to know, understand, and be able to refute the evolution model. Since the textbooks provided by the school systems are steeped in evolution, teachers cannot simply ignore it. Neither can they simply learn where the information in the textbooks is in error. To effectively refute evolution, teachers need to come to a full understanding of the worldview upon which evolution is based. Evolution is more than uniformitarian geology, survival of the fittest, and chance over long periods of time. These are the building blocks used to build the evolution house. An atheistic, man is god, foundation is the underlying worldview upon which that house is built. Teachers who are introducing creation must know, understand, and be able to refute both the foundation and the blocks. A more complete discussion of the worldview foundation is included in the next section. This section is concentrated on the building blocks. A resource that I have found very useful in understanding the evolutionary building blocks is a book by Dr. Henry Morris and Dr. Gary Parker entitled "What is Creation Science?" In this book, "Morris and Parker" successfully provide a summary refutation of evolution and provide ample support for creation without appealing to Biblical sources. This is important to the public school teacher for two reasons. First, it shows that creation can be addressed apart from the Bible. Second, it provides a reference book that can sit on teachers' desks without meaningful challenge. Many other books provide more details and insight into the evolution building blocks. Some of the more popular ones are: "Evolution: the Fossil Record Says No" by Dr. Duane T. Gish, "Darwin's Enigma" by Luther D. Sunderland, "Evolution: a Theory in Crisis" by Michael Denton, and "In the Minds of Men" by Ian Taylor. In Biology, the book "Of Pandas and People" by Percival Davis & Dean H. Kenyon is particularly useful.

It must also be pointed out that the evolutionary worldview is not limited to science courses. The evolutionary worldview of self-indulgence, "looking out for number one", and the human godhead has permeated every course and discipline in the public schools. The challenge for school teachers is to search their textbooks and teachers' manuals and identify the existence and prominence of the evolutionary worldview. This requires commitment and dedicated effort "above and beyond the call of duty". Do not miss this point. The history teacher can compare the evolution and creation worldviews from a historical perspective. The humanities teacher can address creation and evolution worldviews in art and literature. Home economics can be taught at the worldview level. Virtually every course has a worldview foundation. Incidentally, one area where the legal opinions tend to agree, is that introducing creation into non-science classes, is constitutionally appropriate. Since most of the creationist research has been in the science fields, teachers in other fields will have to be more creative. They will also have to have an even better understanding of the opposing worldviews to detect the subtle applications of evolution and reformat the material from a creation perspective.

Conversely, and more obviously, teachers must know, understand, and be able to support the creation worldview. Now is a great time to be a creationist. The Institute for Creation Research, Creation Research Society, and a host of other creationist organizations have developed excellent theoretical and practical resources and materials to aid teachers in their study. For classroom preparation, teachers may want to develop point-by-point alternatives to the evolution presented in the textbook. With the materials available today, this will not be hard to do, but will be time consuming. Teachers who intend to introduce creation must be willing to commit that time. In making this commitment, teachers should understand and realize that they are not doing this for themselves, their students, or anyone else. They are being true to their values, morals, and conscience.

WHEN THEY HAVE THEIR WORLDVIEW CORRECT.

Virtually all of us in the current generations have been raised with an evolutionary worldview. This worldview permeates every fabric of our western society and culture. We all, and especially public school teachers choosing to introduce creation, must have our minds renewed. Our worldview must change. Without this philosophical foundational change, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the teacher to effectively teach creation. When teachers are asked a question outside of the facts they had studied in their preparation, their answer will be dictated from their worldview. If they do not have a creationist worldview, they will likely be inconsistent and their credibility will be weakened or lost.

To aid in that transformation, I will attempt to introduce the competing worldviews. This will be a cursory introduction and will probably not be adequate to effect a paradigm shift in the reader. It is only intended to “whet the readers appetite”. For a more complete and excellent discussion of both worldviews, the reader is referred to “Science According to Moses” by Dr. G. Thomas Sharp.

First, the teacher should know, understand, and reject the evolutionary worldview. As I have alluded to already, the evolutionary worldview is a worldview that is based upon man as god. It is by necessity an atheistic worldview. Some have tried to meld the atheistic religion of evolution and the theistic worldview of creation by saying that evolution is simply the means by which “God” created everything. This attempt to compromise is philosophically bankrupt and rejected by both evolutionists and creationists.

The evolutionary worldview is a materialistic, mechanistic worldview that replaces God with natural laws or “mother nature”. Man is of ultimate importance and man’s relationships with one another replaces man’s relationship with God. Under the evolutionary worldview, whatever man wants or desires is what he should have. Rationalization is the operative word in this philosophy. The evolutionary worldview places a premium on pleasure and stimulation of the senses. It looks for things that are pretty, that smell, sound, feel, or taste good. It wants to be entertained. These are all symptoms and outgrowths of an evolutionary worldview, a paganistic or materialistic worldview. As Dr. Sharp correctly points out, “you and I are completely bombarded on all fronts by secular, materialistic, evolutionism. It influences our priorities, our relationships, our education, our government, even our churches.”¹

Contrastingly, school teachers cannot begin to introduce creation without first knowing, understanding, and accepting the creation worldview. The creation worldview is exactly opposite of the evolution worldview. The creation worldview focuses entirely on the benevolent Creator and His ability to control that creation. In this view, natural laws apply to man but not to the Creator. Since He created them, he can change or suspend them. “Mother nature” is not in control, the Creator is. Man’s primary relationship is not with nature nor even with each other. Man’s primary relationship is with the Creator God.

The difference between the evolutionary worldview and the creation worldview is the focus of trust. If the Creator controls creation, can we not trust Him to take care of us as we serve Him? Are we more trusting in ourselves, our money, our circumstances, our anything else? If so, we have adopted an evolutionary worldview. We may claim submission to the Master, but until our minds have been renewed to the point that we trust His love totally and completely in everything, and we trust his ability to control creation to care for us, we are living under an evolutionary worldview.

WHEN THEY HAVE THEIR PRINCIPAL’S SUPPORT.

Having just finished the above discussion of worldviews and saying all that I did about serving the Master no matter what, why would I now say that public school teachers should not attempt to introduce creation unless they have their principal’s support?

The public school teachers are under the authority of their principal. It is, therefore, important that teachers' principals be in concurrence with the introduction of creation into their classroom. One common misconception is that introducing creation requires school board approval. For the individual teacher, that would not be his/her concern. His/her direct authority is the principal. The school board is the superintendent's concern.

What then should the public school teacher do if the principal forbids them to do what they know is the right thing to do? If they do not have their principal's support, it seems that they have two choices: 1) They can focus their activity on the principal to gain support. This will need to be accompanied with much patience. The objections of the principal will need to be clearly understood and addressed. The principal may have legal objections based on one of many common misconceptions. The proactive teacher will be prepared to address them. Other objections may be scientific in nature or philosophical. In any case, teachers need to understand that the principal's concerns are rooted in an evolutionary worldview and need to be ultimately addressed at that level.

2) If teachers are faced with an intransigent principal, then they will have to evaluate this conflict between their values and their job. Obviously, they cannot stay in a situation where in order to do what they know is right, they must disobey the authority over them. Some options may be to transfer to another school in the same school system with a more reasonable principal. Transferring to another school system may be in order. Private or parochial schools are options. Finally, an entire career change may be required. The point is that teachers should not attempt to serve two masters. Teachers should never rebel against the principal's authority. It is unwise to do the right thing by doing the wrong thing and is doomed to failure. I realize that I am not one to give advice and that is not my intent. Nor do I intend to scare people away from introducing creation. I am merely trying to point out the realities of the situation. Introducing creation is a serious and important decision that should not be made lightly.

THE BOTTOM LINE

What then should public school teachers do? The choice is clear. The main body of this paper may have left the impression that public school teachers have a choice of whether or not to introduce creation into the classroom. In fact, if they are truly desirous of doing the right thing, they have no choice. A public school teacher who thinks they can do the best for their students, be true to themselves, and teach evolution, is mistaken. The public school system in the United States of America is on its last leg. Many are abandoning it--for good reason. I am convinced that if the public schools are to be saved, it must be from within. That is, it can only be accomplished by teachers and administrators who are willing to do the right thing, have a correct worldview, and be true to their students--not just employees.

ⁱ Science According to Moses, Dr. G. Thomas Sharp, Creation Truth Publications, page 115