

AN EXAMINATION OF PROPAGANDA

What's wrong with this picture?



CLASSROOM IN PROPOSED BRYAN UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

An example of crude propaganda from the time of the Scopes' Monkey Trial, it depicts "Fundamentalist Christians" as wanting to teach a flat earth, and further prevent the teaching of science in public school. To see how propaganda works, let's unpack that claim and see how much is truth and how much a lie.

First, the Scopes' trial was solely about teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution; the depiction of teaching a flat earth was a polemical device using a false accusation to elicit scorn, not an argument of fact. But, speaking of facts, it was a devout Christian, Columbus, who proved the earth to be spherical.

A second charge is that Christian beliefs oppose science, but on that, the facts are also clear; science was alive and well in the Christian world long before Darwin broke onto the scene. It was the belief that the cosmos was the work of a Great Being who established order in His creation, and that mankind, being 'made in the image of God', was capable of understanding the creation that was the basis for rising above superstition into the age of scientific reason. The establishment of the Scientific Method, and most of the laws of general chemistry and physics were the work of Christians, prior to Darwinism. Biological and medical science also were making great strides before Darwin, and mostly at the hands of Christians. The list of Christians who made great contributions to the advancement of science before Darwin is far too long for this commentary, but they include: Agassiz, Bacon, Boyle, Copernicus, Cuvier, Dalton, Galileo, Gauss, Kepler, Kelvin, Lavoisier, Lister, Maxwell, Mendel, Newton, Pasteur, Volta. Without these, and other Christians who contributed to our understanding of God's creation, we (and far, far fewer of us) would be living in a dark age.

Contrary to its claims of being the basis of modern biological science, Darwinian Evolutionary dogma could be removed with no loss of anything worthwhile. It makes no difference to science practice if the similarities in organism stem from a common ancestor, or a common Creator. Darwinism seeks to associate itself with the scientific tradition in order to gain respectability, but it is not, in the truest sense, "Science" at all. Prominent philosopher Karl Popper once labeled Darwinian Evolutionary Theory as "A metaphysical research project" because it could not be directly observed or verified by lab experiment. After some 're-education' however, Popper became a believer, but the facts remain the same. Darwin's Theory of evolution by natural selection of random mutations ('survival of the fittest') is an inference based upon similarities between organisms. It may be a logical inference, for those who deny a Creator, but it is not a scientifically proven fact. It is quite as logical to hold that a Creator (also known as an Intelligent Designer) evolved the design. That view is more substantiated by the lack of vast numbers of fossilized intermediates between the recognized species. The few supposed 'missing links' are wholly insufficient to account for the wide diversity of animal and plant life, and even their authenticity is questionable.

That brings us to the third polemical accusation in the cartoon. Who was it that bound and gagged the teacher? In fact, it was the Tennessee Legislature that passed the law banning the teaching of Evolution. Who did the legislature represent? The people, especially the parents of Tennessee. So it was the parents of Tennessee who objected to the teaching of evolutionary theory to their children. Who should control the content of publicly funded education if not the taxpaying parents?

About the time of Darwin's Theory coming on the scene, there also came the "Progressive Movement" which demands that education be controlled by 'experts' trained in the 'science of education'. It is that Progressive movement for power over other people that was the force behind the Scopes' Trial. And behind the almost total banning from public education today of any mention of any power higher than the so called "Progressives" themselves. It is this "Progressive" capture of and misuse of Darwinian Theory that became the destroyer of "Science" as a righteous philosophy of seeking truth, and converted it into a vehicle for coercion. Yes, true science is still done, but it has now to share the label, and the mistrust, with all manner of falsehood.