



The North Texas Skeptic

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Einstein and Darwin

By John Blanton

Tom Barrett publishes the email newsletter *Conservative Truth*, which goes to over 50,000 readers each week. Recently he has written *Einstein Versus Darwin: Intelligent Design Or Evolution?*:¹

Would you be surprised to know that millions of scientists around the world do not blindly accept Darwin's THEORY of evolution? Would it shock you to know that many of these professors and researchers are not religious, but they embrace the theory of Intelligent Design, which holds that our intricate universe could not have come about by chance? Would it blow you away to find that Albert Einstein was one of them?

It is well documented that these famous scientists strongly disagreed on this important question. It is also well known that they, along with all credible scientists throughout history, strongly believed that all theories should be heard, all should be tested, and none should be ridiculed. This is the only way that science itself can be credible.

Yet many politically active scientists today are desperately maneuvering to censor any mention of the theory of Intelligent Design in our schools, textbooks and media. Their accomplices in this blatant censorship are liberal politicians, atheists, most of the media and the national teacher's union (the Nation Education Association or NEA).

I must say I found the Reverend Barrett's revelations startling. *Startling* that so much can be said that is true with being very revealing.

Regarding the millions of scientists who "do not blindly accept Darwin's theory of evolution." Well I hope so. The scientists I know of who support evolution do not seem to do it blindly. In fact, many earnest scientists do not support "Darwin's theory of evolution." They have one of their own. Come to think of it, I always considered it to be *my* theory of evolution, too. But, I'm willing to share.

EVENTS CALENDAR

July Program

Saturday, July 9, at 2 p.m.
Center for Community
Cooperation,
2900 Live Oak Street, Dallas

Program topic will be announced
later...

Check the NTS Hotline or our
Web site for more information.

July Board of Directors/Social Meeting

Time and place to be announced
later...

Send e-mail to
mselby@ntskeptics.org, or
phone NTS Hotline
214-335-9248 for time and
location.

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Regarding Einstein's support for Intelligent Design, that just goes to show this giant of 20th century science was also psychic, having accurately predicted the rise of a particular form of pseudo science years in advance. Seriously, even though Einstein effectively quite the church (he was a Jew), he did not like to imagine a godless universe. Maybe I am psychic, as well, but I just received a mind meld from Einstein, and he tells me these creationists are a bunch of idiots.

Darwin's theory is just that - a theory. It has never been proven, and cannot be proven. But the censors mentioned above want Darwin's THEORY taught as FACT, and they want no other theories even mentioned.

I didn't put the all-caps in the above paragraph. The good reverend did. He also failed to mention that evolution has never been DISPROVEN. Now he's got *me* doing it. Generally, scientists do not attempt to prove theories. Theories typically comprise one or more testable hypotheses, and researchers pick on these hypotheses and attempt to disprove them. Failure to refute a theory's hypotheses is a good indication the theory has merit. Real scientists have been taking shots at various aspects of evolutionary theory for over 100 years, and the principal points of the theory still stand.

...Darwin postulated that all life somehow crawled out of primordial ooze and miraculously became differentiated as mammals, reptiles, fish, fowl and so on. It seems that such a far-fetched theory would require much more faith than simply believing that God did what He said He did in Genesis: He created everything according to His plan.

At least Reverend Barrett finally gets around to grounding Intelligent Design on a solid, scientific basis.

The impetus of all this seems to have been the recent decision by the school board in Dover, Pennsylvania, to inject Intelligent Design into the curriculum. Teachers will now tell their students that evolution is not a fact, and they will direct them to the creationist book "Of Pandas And People." Said book, ironically, is published right here in NTS territory and is available for order from Amazon.com through our Web site. Of course, all this creationism in the Dover schools is opposed by Dover liberals. Of course. I haven't done a political analysis here, but it seems that everybody who opposes creationism is automatically a liberal. So, you conservatives out there had better watch out. Don't step out of bounds and get labeled a liberal.

Also, note this. Very important: Many proponents of Intelligent Design are not religious. I guess that would include Phillip Johnson, Michael Behe, William Dembski, Jonathan Wells, Bruce Chapman, Stephen C. Meyer, Wesley J. Smith, Walter Bradley, Jon Buell, and Ray Bohlin, only some of whom have degrees in theology.

Reverend Barrett finally points to a *Wall Street Journal* editorial and concludes:

The *Journal* Editor got it right. Darwinism stems from dialectical materialism, the philosophy of Marxism. Communism/socialism is a religion that demands blind faith and obedience. Darwinism is an offshoot of that false religion. It, too, demands blind faith, and its disciples persecute anyone who believes differently.

So now we know. Thank you, Reverend, for reminding us.

One of Reverend Barrett's key points, and one that creationists drive at continually, is that opposition to creationism is a form of censorship. People who work to keep creationism out of our schools are trying to hide the truth.

The *truth* be known, one of the worst things that can happen to Intelligent Design is public exposure. That's why we are printing this, and that is why the complete text of Reverend Barrett's editorial is available on our Web site. Below we also reproduce the Web links he provided. Have fun.

Tom Barrett has been an ordained minister for 30 years. He has written for local and national publications for most of his life, and has authored several non-fiction books. He has been interviewed on many TV and radio programs, and speaks at seminars nationwide. Tom is the editor and publisher of Conservative Truth, an email newsletter read by over fifty thousand weekly which focuses on moral and political issues from a Biblical viewpoint.

Links:

○ What's the Big Secret?

<http://www.pfm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=BreakPoint1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16042>

○ *Wall Street Journal* Editorial Exposes Witch Hunt in Scientific Community

<http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php?id/1242>

○ Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness Center

<http://www.ideacenter.org>

○ Ten Questions to Ask Your Biology Teacher about Evolution

<http://www.iconsofevolution.com/tools/questions.php3>

○ A Finely-Tuned Universe: What Are the Odds?

http://www.beliefnet.com/story/127/story_12717_1.html

○ The World As I See It- An Essay by Albert Einstein

<http://leiwen.tripod.com/worldisi.htm>

○ *Newsweek*: Intelligent Design, "A NEW Idea"? Or is it?

<http://www.alcaidecafe.com/archives/000136.html>

○ Science, Philosophy and Religion, a Symposium

<http://condor.stcloudstate.edu/~lesikar/einstein/Einstein2b.html>



References

1 <http://www.americandaily.com/article/7913>

Also at <http://www.ntsk skeptics.org/issues/creationism/barrett/editorial.htm>

Web news

by John Blanton

The World Wide Web is a wonderful source of information and news. Some of it is true, and some of it is not.

I FLUNKED SCIENTOLOGY STRESS TEST – AND IT'LL COST BIG FOR THEIR 'CURE'

<http://www.ntsk skeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#flunk>

<http://www.nypost.com/news/regionalnews/45269.htm>

By MARIANNE GARVEY

We often give Scientology a lot of bad ink in this skeptical rag, but when they actually provide a valuable service, we are obliged to be fair and balanced. Garvey tells how her life benefited:

I hate people and I'm below average in every single area of my life. That's what the Church of Scientology told me after I ventured to take a 200-question personality test and life evaluation by one of their church employees on West 46th Street.

Within one minute of stepping through the door I was told to buy a book on Scientology by founder L. Ron Hubbard. I was then taken to a screening room and a movie started with the claim Scientology is a "bona fide religion," determined by 65 courts around the world. The narrator ends the 35-minute film with the threat

that if you walk out of the church and never think about Scientology again, it's the equivalent of "shooting yourself in the head," and describes Scientology's detractors as "raving lunatics."

I learned there are "levels" of Scientology and I'm at No. 1. Tom Cruise is rumored to have reached Level 4 and is "moving out of fixed conditions into the ability to do new things."

One new thing he is doing is Katie Holmes - who may join Cruise and other celebs in the brain-bending belief that humans are infested with the souls of dead space aliens who were brought to Earth 75 million years ago. The goal of Scientologists is to rid themselves of these negative souls and achieve a state of "clear." At the highest level, believers say you can control thought, energy and even time.

Of course Garvey is going to have to shell out big bucks on Scientology books and classes and maybe alien-cleansing sessions to get to the Cruise level. But first there was a personality test.

Do I peruse phone books for pleasure? Do my muscles twitch? Do I bite my fingernails? Am I a slow eater? Am I embarrassed by hugs?

Bad news. A church "auditor" told her the test revealed she hated everyone. Even herself. Fortunately, he told her, she does know how to deal with people and how to get her own way. That would probably make her good Scientology material.

Scientology apparently would help her with decision-making, withdrawal, and irresponsibility. Did I mention she was depressed and nervous?

How about a shrink?

"Scientology doesn't support psychiatry or psychiatric medications," Alex told me.

He said the only way I could solve my many issues was through the Scientology book "Dianetics" and classes. He said it would help me get rid of the "toxic" people and situations in my life. With regular auditing, I could rid myself of "engrams," or destructive memories lurking in my mind that cause me to "react without thinking."

You can even raise your IQ, Scientologists claim. After joining in 1986, Cruise said it helped him overcome the dyslexia he had since he was 7 years old. He also claimed he has helped hundreds of people get off drugs using a vitamin mixture described in a Scientology handbook. I picked up the sheets and read about myself:

"You are cold hearted and extremely withdrawn."

"I'm actually pretty outgoing and very loud," I told Alex. Annoyed, he said I wasn't supposed to read that. I walked out thinking, now I hated Alex, too.

Garvey asked a "sweet, unassuming and articulate" friend to go over and take the Scientology test.

...She was diagnosed as being overly aggressive and having no communication skills. She was also told to buy "Dianetics."

Scientology also has a "stress test" that uses an "e-meter" that clocks the "intensity of your thoughts." If you haven't seen one, Garvey likens the "e-meter" to "two soup cans attached to a black, electronic box." I have never heard of the "e-meter" being described in greater detail than that.

A volunteer asked Garvey to think of people who have caused her stress. She thought of ex-boyfriends, roommates, Mom, strangers. All pushed the needle into the red zone.

"Who are you thinking of?" the volunteer asked. "Whoever it is is causing a problem."

"Everybody," I told her. "I hate everybody."

Creationism at the Smithsonian

OK, by now the secret is out. The highly-esteemed Smithsonian Institution has scheduled the showing of the creationist video *The Privileged Planet*.

As we previously reported, the video is based on a book of the same name by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Wesley Richards. The authors want us to know that our planet holds a special place in the universe. Special circumstances allow the existence of Earth and especially ourselves. Said special circumstances attributed to... Well, you fill in the blank.

I got a chance to review the video, thanks to Wilston Nkangoh, who heads up the Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Club on the University of Texas at Dallas campus. See last November's issue of *The North Texas Skeptic* for a short write-up at:

<http://www.ntsk skeptics.org/2004/2004november/november2004.htm>

The Smithsonian didn't just casually leap into bed with creationism. It was coaxed by the offer of a \$16,000 contribu-

tion that accompanied the offer to exhibit the flick. There's a name for that sort of business arrangement.

Since that first blush of romance the relationship between Discovery Institute and the Smithsonian has chilled noticeably. Once the creationism hit the fan, the Smithsonian began to look less like a bride and more like a two-penny standup. It quickly sought to back out of this love fest, but the sponsoring Discovery Institute was having none of that, even after the Smithsonian offered to return the \$16,000 "dowry."

In fact, the DI is now reveling in its newly-purchased respectability, and they are making the most of it. Their Web site proudly advertises the June 23 sleepover with the Smithsonian:

June 23, 2005

The Privileged Planet

Smithsonian Institution National Premiere

Discovery Institute is pleased to join the Director of the National Museum of Natural History in announcing the national premiere and private evening reception for at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2005.

The documentary will be shown in the Baird Auditorium of the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., and will be followed by an evening reception in the museum's Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals.

Attendance is by mailed invitation only.

<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=133&program=CSC&isEvent=true>

As you can guess, we didn't get an invite to the nuptials. Maybe somebody took photos. We will follow up. In the meantime you can follow the drama as we have been for the past few weeks. Some of the stories are archived on our Skeptical News pages. See the box below for some links to the story.

If you doubt Vaudeville lives, watch evolution debate

JOHN HANNA

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-18.htm#debate>
<http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/news/local/11922484.htm>

Just when you were beginning to think this whole issue going to be about creationism, here is another creationism story.

TOPEKA, Kan. – By the 1950s, when its popularity as entertainment had waned, some people bemoaned Vaudeville's fate. Yet even after owners shuttered theaters, the art form survived.

And Kansans can be excused for thinking they have their own special, political brand of the still-beloved Vaudeville.

Just as performers revised and perfected longtime acts and weren't shy about cribbing from others, this modern show relies on an old, familiar script and its actors have appropriated material from outside sources.

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-05-30.htm#schwartz>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-04.htm#ncse>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-04.htm#park>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-04.htm#free>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-04.htm#distance>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-04.htm#iowa>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-08.htm#park>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-08.htm#free>

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-08.htm#distance>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#bible>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#film>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#right>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#isu>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#tulsa>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-12.htm#backing>
<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2005-06-18.htm#darwin>

I will concede that picking on Kansas is a cheap shot. But look at it this way. Beyond picking your nose in public, there are a number of things you can do to make yourself look ridiculous. Continuing to promote creationism in the public schools is one of them.

It's playing in a cozy room in a government office building in downtown Topeka - the State Board of Education's ongoing debate on how evolution should be taught in Kansas public school classrooms, and the run probably won't be finished until board elections next year.

"Well, yeah, it's politics," said Steve Case, assistant director of the Center for Science Education at the University of Kansas and one of the many players. "It's all show."

Some may consider it comedy, but the state board's debate will have serious results. New standards adopted by the board sometime this summer, like the existing ones, will determine how fourth, seventh and 10th-graders will be tested on science.

Kansas went down this road previously, back in 1999. In August of that year the Kansas Board of Education voted six to four to eliminate evolution from the required curriculum. Voters, aghast at having their bare hind sides exposed to a taunting world, corrected the situation as quickly as possible. In the next school board election enough of the anti-evolutionists were turned out, and evolution, plus modern cosmology, were quickly reinstated.

Didn't take, though. The comedy has resumed.

Under attack is evolutionary theory that natural chemical processes could have created the first building blocks of life, that all life has a common origin and that man and apes share a common ancestor.

Intelligent design, often derided by critics as repackaged creationism, argues that some features of the natural world are best explained by an intelligent cause because of their well-ordered complexities.

Yet the debate has taken on the most obvious characteristic of a stage show. Participants on both sides seem to have assigned roles and seem to say the same things, repeatedly.

(Repetition was part of a typical Vaudeville performer's life; the lucky ones performed only two shows a day, while honing their act through repeated rehearsals.)



What's new

By Robert Park

[Robert Park publishes the What's New column at <http://www.aps.org/WN/>. Following are some clippings of interest.]

Homeopathy at 250: the power of medicine that does no harm.

My mail box has been crammed full of homeopathy stuff all week. Sunday was the 250th birthday of Samuel Hahnemann, the German physician who founded homeopathy in an age of purging and blood-letting. Hahnemann's "law of similars" would be a disaster, had he not come up with his "law of infinitesimals." His diaper rash cure, for example, is thus toxicodendron (poison ivy). Lucky for baby, the law of infinitesimals says to dilute it 200C, i.e. there isn't any. We excuse Hahnemann, who didn't have Avogadro's number (neither did Avogadro, it was determined 50 years later), but homeopaths know it, which goes beyond stupid. And homeopathy has its own DSHEA. In 1938 Senator Royal Copeland, a homeopath, exempted homeopathy from the Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act. After all, it would be like trying to show holy water had been blessed.

Voodoo medicine: Tai Sophia and Penn Med form a partnership.

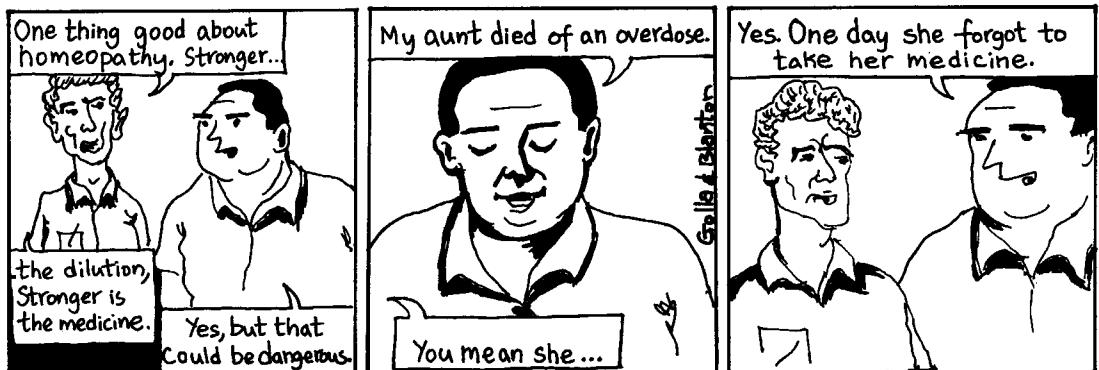
Tai who? What's going on with the great Ivy League med schools? A study at Columbia claimed to show that the prayers of complete strangers halfway around the world increased pregnancy rates of fertility patients, who were not even aware of being prayed for. The study was revealed to be fraudulent. Somebody had to tell them this? (WN 03 Dec 04) Harvard too has been embarrassed by ties to the wacky world of alternative medicine. Now, the oldest medical school in the nation, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, is pandering to the public's obsession with mystical healing. Medical and nursing students at Penn will be able to earn a master's degree in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) from Tai Sophia Institute. Tai Sophia began teaching acupuncture 30 years ago, but has since expanded into other "medical arts" that don't work. Two weeks ago, Tai Sophia sponsored a Deepak Chopra conference (WN 09 Oct). Wayne Jonas, author of Healing with Homeopathy, is on the Board of Trustees.

Constitution: Louisiana school district doesn't have a prayer.

In 1994, the Tangipahoa Parish school board voted to require teachers to read students an it's-only-a-theory disclaimer before they studied the theory of evolution in science class. In

Skeptic Ink

by Prasad Golla and John Blanton. © 2005. Free, non-commercial reuse permitted



1997, a Federal District Court found the disclaimer violated the "establishment clause" of the First Amendment. The School Board appealed the case, and lost again. So they appealed to the Supreme Court, and struck out for good. Meanwhile, the courts repeatedly told the Board to put a stop to prayers at school functions, including school board meetings. But by now the board had a taste for losing, and appealing that decision. Experts say this could also end up in the Supreme Court. Encouraged by the political climate, the Board has outside financial help from the Alliance Defense Fund, a powerful Christian legal group.

Privileged religion: Smithsonian will show a faith-based film.

Saturday's NY Times had a story about the premiere of a movie, "The Privileged Planet," to be held at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History. The museum would co-sponsor the showing in return for a \$16,000 contribution from the Discovery Institute. This is the organization that's pushing "Intelligent Design" as a Bible-friendly alternative to evolution. If it's the money, James Randi announced, he would offer \$20,000 not to show the film. It apparently was not the money. Yesterday, the museum director stated that on further review the film is not consistent with the Smithsonian mission. The museum will not sponsor the film and will return the money — but space for the event is still being provided. Is this the Supernatural History Museum? Yesterday, the WN team viewed the film. It went beyond the "intelligent design" of humans. It seems the busy Designer-In-The-Sky also designed a planet for us. Not just a place to live, but a room with a view, perfectly situated to let us discover the rest of the universe. It's the old anthropic argument that the laws of Nature are fine tuned to make life possible, but with a discovery requirement tossed in. So what does the Smithsonian do? It lets them in free. That means taxpayers are subsidizing the Discovery Institute. Which brings up the next question: this is an expensive production — where does the money come from?

"Follow the money": the advice of "Deep Throat" to Woodward.

"The Privileged Planet" was produced by Illustra Media. When we asked who paid for it they said we would have to write their lawyers. We were able to identify the Crowell Trust, established by the founder of Quaker Oats, which promotes "the doctrines of Evangelical Christianity." The film was based on a book by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards. It was published by Regnery, whose authors are at the extreme right of the spectrum. Richards is vice president of Discovery Institute, a non-profit educational foundation with deep-pocket contributors. Gonzalez is an assistant research professor at Iowa State. In the book, he acknowledges financial support from the Templeton Foundation.

Unlocking the Mystery: the other Discovery Institute film.

Back in January, the PBS television station in Albuquerque had scheduled a documentary on evolution, "Unlocking the Mystery of Life." The film, which came from the Discovery Institute had been offered as a free feed by the National Educational Television Association. The Crowell Trust also helped on this one. When the station realized it was funded by evangelical Christian groups it pulled the film, saying there was a scheduling conflict. We viewed this one too. Like "Privileged Planet," production values were high. It's easy to see how it could pass as serious science to non-scientists unfamiliar with the issues. Watson and Crick might be surprised to learn that the discovery of the structure of DNA proved there was an intelligent designer. The important point is that we can now expect them to attempt to get *Privileged Planet* on PBS stations. □

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