

# Darwin's Leap of Faith

By Dr. John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon

Darwin's theory of evolution is arguably the single most profound theory emphasized by science in the twentieth century. In terms of its impact and implications, nothing else even comes close.

But despite its weight in the world of ideas, and despite its dominance, paradoxes abound for the evolutionary establishment.

Most people consider evolution to be an indisputable fact. But then how do we account for statements by reputable scientists such as the following? Molecular biologist and medical doctor Michael Denton concludes, "Ultimately the Darwinian theory of evolution is no more nor less than the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century."<sup>1</sup> Other scientists actually now refer to evolution as "a fairy tale." For example, Dr. Lewis Bounoure, Director of the Zoological Museum and Director of Research at the National Center of Scientific Research in France declares, "Evolution is a fairy tale for grownups."<sup>2</sup>

If evolution were an undeniable fact, how do we account for the thousands of scientists worldwide, creationists and non-creationists alike, who say the theory of evolution is false scientifically; indeed, that it has more conclusive evidence against it than any evidence ever offered for it? Many of these scientists have their Ph.D.s in the "hard" sciences (biology, paleontology, genetics, biochemistry, etc.) from leading American universities such as Harvard, Princeton, and U. C. Berkeley.

If evolution were a fact, proven beyond doubt, or even a convincing theory, we could not *possibly* expect to see thousands of reputable scientists rejecting it outright. At best, we would discover only a few fringe "scientists" who would deny it—just like a few fringe "scientists" might be found in the Flat Earth Society (if such a society exists).

The fact that a lesser number of scientists reject evolution is not the issue here, as some evolutionists maintain. The issue is that thousands of credible scientists would not deny the theory of evolution if it were a proven fact. Something else, then, must account for belief in evolution, something other than the scientific data.

Perhaps things are not as they seem to most of the world.

Evolutionists say the scientific evidence for evolution is overwhelming. But critics of the theory allege that this evidence is seriously misunderstood. And if the scientific evidence is really undeniable, why have evolutionists lost hundreds of *scientific* debates to creationists? Again, perhaps there is more than meets the eye in the creation-evolution controversy.

On the one hand, evolutionists everywhere say that the theory of evolution represents the epitome of good science and that a theory of creation cannot possibly be scientific. As the American Anthropological Association declared in an official statement, "evolution is...a cornerstone of twentieth century science in general."<sup>3</sup> The American Society of Parasitologists declared, "Creationism is not a science and cannot become a science."<sup>4</sup>

Even Pope John Paul II issued a formal statement in 1996, widely reported in the press, affirming that some evolution is compatible with Catholic beliefs. He is the fourth pope to affirm this.

On the other hand, many scientists with multiple doctorates in science, including Dr. Dmitri Kouznetsov and the late Dr. A. E. Wilder-Smith, have rejected evolution as *bad* science and say creation can be and is a legitimate scientific theory. And leading theologians other than the pope say evolution is bad science and worse theology.

Is it conceivable that most scientists are uninformed on the true nature of science? And perhaps even the pope is wrong—and the religious implications of evolution are more complex than assumed.

We find additional paradoxes as science moves rapidly into the twenty-first century. Scientific materialism, naturalism, and atheism remain a dominant and powerful Western worldview, both philosophically and practically. Yet the authors of texts like *Cosmos*, *Bios*, *Theos*, written by 60 leading scientists including 24 Nobel Prize winners, repeatedly inform us that only *God* can explain the complexity and order of life as we know it. How can this be if materialism and naturalism are as sacrosanct as proponents allege? As Arthur L. Schawlow, winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics, observes, when confronted with the marvels of life and the universe, “The only possible answers are religious...I find a need for God in the universe and in my own life.”<sup>5</sup>

An even more surprising statement came from perhaps the most famous existentialist atheist of the twentieth century, Jean-Paul Sartre, who publicly stated his “faith” in God just prior to his death. Although a committed atheist since the age of 11, he declared:

As for me, I don't see myself as so much dust that has appeared in the world but as a being that was expected, prefigured, called forth. In short, as a being that could, it seems, come *only* from a creator; and this idea of a creating hand that created me refers me back to God. Naturally this is not a clear, exact idea that I set in motion every time I think of myself. It contradicts many of my other ideas; but it is there, floating vaguely. And when I think of myself I often think rather in this way, for want of *being able* to think otherwise.<sup>6</sup>

How do we explain all of this? If matter alone can explain the origin of life and all its glory, why do some Nobel Prize winners invoke the belief in God to explain it? Again, if evolution is a fact, why do thousands of scientists reject it? Thousands of qualified scientists simply do not reject facts of science.

Perhaps things aren't quite as they seem to committed naturalists? And perhaps most scientists and most Americans are wrong to believe in evolution so uncritically.

“So what?” some might say. So everything. Whether or not evolution is true makes all the difference in the world. Whether or not we believe it has profound implications. The theory of evolution has significantly impacted almost everyone's life. As the great novelist Aldous Huxley correctly declared, “Evolution has resulted in the world as we know it today.”<sup>7</sup> That is no small declaration. For those who think about it, such a statement is indeed profound. No one can over estimate the importance of evolution if it is true or its consequences if it is false.

The issue of evolution is crucial today because, whether right or wrong, it tells us who we are. And no one can ignore his or her own portrait.

We hope open-minded evolutionists will consider the ethical implications of continuing to advocate an undemonstrated explanation of origins as a proven scientific fact. Evolution is simply a belief that people may accept or reject—no more, no less. But beliefs should be accepted on the basis of the evidence, without allowing philosophical premises (e.g., naturalism) to skew the interpretation of the evidence.

Given the major philosophical, theological, biblical, and moral implications of evolution,

Christian interest in this subject is more than justified. If evolution isn't even a good scientific theory as critics charge, then these Christians should feel intellectually satisfied in letting the Scripture speak for itself about creation and related issues. There is no need to revise the historic orthodox theology of biblical anthropology (the nature of man/the Fall), hamartiology (sin), bibliology (inerrancy), or soteriology (salvation). In essence, there is no need to misinterpret the Bible in light of the "truth" of evolution.

To put it another way, there is no need for any Christian to feel intimidated by science just for accepting what the Bible plainly declares. In the end, the weight of the evidence tells us the Bible will always prove true.<sup>8</sup> No Christian should think there would be legitimate evidence, scientific or otherwise, to deny what God has clearly spoken.

Evolutionists are, unfortunately, often rather condescending to Christians for allegedly taking an irrational "leap of faith" in believing in God, miracles, and the supernatural. Not only are their charges false (as we indicated in *Ready with an Answer*), evolutionists themselves take an incredible "leap of faith" that far exceeds in credulity anything Christians have ever believed.

#### **Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 358.
- <sup>2</sup> J. Rostand, "LaMonde et la Vie," October 1963, p. 31 from V. Long, "Evolution: A Fairy Tale for Adults," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Vol. 78 (1978), no. 7, pp. 27-32).
- <sup>3</sup> The National Center for Science Education, Inc., *Voices for Evolution*, rev. edition Molleen Matsumura (ed.) (Berkeley, CA: The National Center for Science Education, Inc., 1995), p. 20. This is a compilation of official statements by leading scientific, religious, educational, and civil liberties organizations containing their views on science, evolution, and creation.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.
- <sup>5</sup> Arthur L. Schawlow, "One Must Ask Why and Not Just How?" in Henry Margenau and Roy Abraham Varghese, *Cosmos, Bios, Theos: Scientists Reflect on Science, God and the Origins of the Universe, Life, and Homo Sapiens* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1994), p. 105.
- <sup>6</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, "A Conversation About Death and God," *Harper's* magazine, February 1984, p. 39.
- <sup>7</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means: An Inquiry into the Nature of Ideals and into the Methods Employed for Their Realization* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), p. 303.
- <sup>8</sup> For detailed documentation, see our *Ready with an Answer* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997).