

A CLASH OF WORLDVIEWS

CULTURE WAR? WHAT CULTURE WAR?

Oftentimes in the mainstream media, the term “culture war” is shown with quotes, implying that the battle over values is just an invention of right-wing zealots. Although many seem oblivious to it, a culture clash *is* taking place. America is becoming more polarized each year over the future direction of our country. Political debates grow increasingly vitriolic as we are becoming more divided on issues such as education, abortion, drug use, religion in public life, homosexuality, the homeless, euthanasia, premarital sex, and pornography. At one time teachers, parents, pastors, and public officials were more or less agreed on how children should be raised. Most everyone agreed on what was right and what was wrong. No more. There is wide disagreement on all of these issues, sometimes to the point where the disputes erupt in name calling, smear campaigns, property damage, and threats. What changed? When did the differences begin to emerge so sharply?

What’s a Worldview?

The deepening polarization may be attributed to shifting worldviews. Worldview may be defined as outlook on life, or philosophical basis. It’s how we see things.

There are two basic worldviews, each with its own underlying assumptions. One system of thought has evolution as its basis, the other, creation. One of the reasons for the increasing polarization is the increased emphasis on teaching evolution in school with the exclusion of any opposing viewpoint. Also contributing is the generally one-sided approach taken by the popular media, which marginalizes other viewpoints.

The seeds for these differences were actually planted many years ago, but just now are coming to fruition. I don’t have the space to trace these lines of thought back to their beginnings, but will start with an important landmark in American history.

A Turning Point: The Scopes Monkey Trial

In Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925 John Scopes was accused of teaching evolution in school contrary to state law. The resulting trial was one of the most publicized legal battles of the 20th century—a real media circus, the first to be broadcast on the radio. Scopes was defended by the famous criminal lawyer Clarence Darrow, an agnostic. The prosecution was led by William Jennings Bryan, a three-time Democratic Presidential candidate and a Christian.

The trial was a setup, staged and financed by the then-fledgling American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU recruited Scopes, a substitute biology teacher, and had him claim he taught evolution.

The trial was really an attack on Christianity and the Bible. Whether or not Scopes actually taught evolution was scarcely even discussed. Rather, it was a

string of testimonies from scientists on the “scientific” basis for evolution, and from liberal theologians about how evolution and the Bible don’t contradict each other.

Bryan was well versed on the subject of creation vs. evolution, including the scientific evidence for and against. Darrow on the other hand gave the impression that he had little understanding of what the term meant. He was condescending, rude and arrogant toward Bryan, the witnesses, the jurors, opposing lawyers and even the judge. He was cited for contempt of court for repeatedly interrupting the judge. Testimony by evolutionists was actually prevented by Darrow because he didn’t want the “experts” cross-examined by Bryan.

At the end, Bryan allowed himself to be cross-examined on the witness stand by Darrow, and asked him questions on the Bible, such as, “Where did Cain get his wife?” Darrow ridiculed him and Christianity as ignorant foolishness and superstition before the court and the media. He did everything possible to deride belief in the Bible and to humiliate Bryan. After Bryan’s testimony, Darrow abruptly ended the trial by asking the court to instruct the jury to find Scopes guilty! This was to avoid having to take the stand to be cross-examined as Bryan was.

Scopes was found guilty by the jury and fined \$100, which was paid by the ACLU. Although the defense lost the case, it won a huge propaganda victory. They succeeded in convincing the media and, to a large degree, the public, that evolution is based upon scientific evidence, but Christians are ignorant, clinging to blind faith in a book they can’t defend.

Bryan was embarrassed and ridiculed in court and in the press. He died a crushed and broken man five days after the end of the trial.

This was an important turning point because after that time evolution began to creep into school curricula, at first being taught as theory, then as fact.

The movie “Inherit the Wind” was based on the Scopes trial, but was a gross distortion of the facts, blatantly slanted to make Christians look ignorant and intolerant.

So what does this have to do with a person’s worldview?

Evolutionism, by its very nature, requires a worldview in opposition to Biblical Christianity. If evolution is true, then the Christian faith is worthless! This is because then:

- Adam and Eve were only mythological;
- They didn’t disobey God and introduce sin into the world;
- “Sin” is then just undesirable traits left over from the lower stages of evolution, which humankind will eventually outgrow;
- If therefore there’s really no such thing as sin, we don’t need a Savior to pay for them;

- Jesus then becomes merely a good man, highly evolved ahead of his time, rather than the Savior and cornerstone of our faith.

Therefore Genesis isn't really literally true. This casts doubt on the accuracy of the whole Bible, such as the passages where Jesus indicated that He believed in Adam and Eve and the creation.

Worldviews in Contention

The creation – evolution debate highlights the two basic worldviews or belief systems: one in which God is at the center of the picture, and one that places man at the center.

The liberal / humanist view is that man's nature is essentially good, and that if given enough time we will eventually outgrow the problems that society faces. This view states that we need to throw off past restraints (especially religious and moral restraints) so that we are free to explore and develop toward a higher state of being.

The conservative / Christian view on the other hand, is that man is a fallen creature—essentially flawed, selfish, and in need of a Savior. Without God prominently in the picture, culture and society inevitably degenerate to a state of disorder and decay (de-evolution).

These two views are the basis of today's culture clash. Generally on the liberal / humanist / evolutionist side are the news and entertainment media, public schools and universities, government institutions, and other liberal groups. On the conservative / Christian / creationist side are the evangelical and fundamentalist churches, and conservative, pro-family groups. The clash is becoming more vocal as liberal groups demand ever more freedom from traditional moral values. Evolution is the rallying point of liberal / humanist groups. If, as they claim, we're just accidents in space, then we can set the rules and don't have to be accountable to any God.

The Culture War

These two trends of thought may be plainly seen in our society today, resulting in a war between the two cultures when they clash. The liberal viewpoint has successfully challenged the accepted standards of behavior in virtually every aspect of life today.

One of the ways the humanist viewpoint has made itself manifest in today's culture is the concept of "**moral relativism**" or **relative morality**. This is the notion that there are no absolute standards of behavior, because what's wrong for you may be perfectly normal for someone else. Moral relativism says that it's okay to do anything you want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

The fact that there is a battle at all is only because traditional values groups are fighting to hold on to a vanishing concept of morality in public life.

Code Words

Christians are routinely accused of seeing things in black and white because we subscribe to rules given to us by the Lawgiver, which clearly define standards of right and wrong. In contradistinction to those laws, some trendy terms have been adopted by liberals and subsequently become associated with modern pop culture. Here are some of the most prominent:

Tolerance = don't judge anyone's moral behavior, no matter what it is, because there are no absolute standards of behavior. Christians are viewed as intolerant because we believe that God has given us certain laws, which if not followed will lead to moral chaos and decay of society.

Diversity = the fact that there's biological diversity in God's creation is extended to mean that every type of belief and morality is equally valid; we need to have every type of aberrant behavior or special interest group equally represented to avoid any hint of discrimination.

Multiculturalism = all cultures and religions are equally valid; no one of these is better than any other; therefore there is no such thing as absolute truth, but all beliefs are subjective.

These terms are so widely used in the popular culture that, along with evolution, they've become accepted as absolute truth, not to be questioned. If anyone dares to challenge their validity they're labeled as intolerant bigots.

Evolution: Existence of Life through Death and Struggle

Evolutionism says that through constant struggle, the fittest survive. The best are selected out to reproduce, and through this process beneficial traits accumulate to propel us to higher stages on the evolutionary ladder. Though not often stated, the goal of the evolutionary process is envisioned as a humanistic utopia, in which war, disease and poverty are vanquished.

Creation: Death Is a Result of Man's Actions

The Bible teaches that because of our fallen nature we are separated from God.

Our tendency to want to question what God has said started in the Garden of Eden, and has carried over to modern culture. Instead of trusting God, we'd rather have our own way, and find out what evil is all about by experiencing it:

Genesis 2:17 "but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:1b

He [the serpent] said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Genesis 3:4 - 5

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

2 Thessalonians 2:10b -11

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe **the lie** ... [New International Version]

What is "The Lie?"

"The lie" says, among other things, that we don't want God to interfere in our lives, and we don't need Him to explain our existence. This is manifest in statements such as this one by Harvard geneticist and Marxist Richard Lewontin:

"We [scientists] have ... a prior commitment to materialism [and] we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations... Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."¹

Science Redefined

With the acceptance of Darwinism by the mainstream scientific community, the quest for an explanation of our world has been redefined in terms of materialism and naturalism. These are an attempt to explain origins without any supernatural intervention at all. Specifically:

- materialism—the view that the material world is all that there is; there is no existence beyond the present life.
- naturalism—the view that all things have a purely natural cause, especially the origin of the universe and nature.

These, of course are in direct opposition to Biblical teaching. If everything is viewed in materialistic or naturalistic terms, then who sets the rules?

"If there is no God, then everything is permissible."

—Fyodor Dostoyevski

"[I suppose the reason] we all jumped at the *Origin [of Species]* was because the idea of God interfered with our sexual mores."

—Sir Julian Huxley²

This is in stark contrast to Biblical Christianity:

Romans 1:22 - 25

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.

“Science” vs. Religion

In the popular media the clash between worldviews, as embodied in the creation – evolution debate, has been characterized by portraying science as hard, objective facts, while religion, Biblical Christianity in particular, is just subjective, unprovable feelings. Religion teaches morality but otherwise has no relation to the real world.

Evolution is a Religion

We see that evolution is a worldview—a philosophy, a belief system. As mentioned earlier, secular humanism, which has been defined as a religion, has evolution as its foundation.

Some people defend evolution to the end, not because of its scientific merits, but because it's their philosophical base: if they were to admit it's wrong it would destroy their whole belief system. Changing one's philosophical base involves a huge paradigm shift, which, without God's help is well nigh impossible.

HOW HAS EVOLUTIONISM AFFECTED SOCIETY?

Social Darwinism: Politics

Marxism, Nazism, Fascism, and liberalism are all founded upon materialism, naturalism, and secular humanism, with a root of evolutionism. Evolutionism lends justification to all of these.

As political philosophers accepted the ideas of Darwin they incorporated these ideas into their writings. This gave rise to “**social Darwinism**,” which is the concepts of evolution applied to race, social systems and structures. These ideas (the struggle for existence, and survival of the fittest through natural selection) became justification for military conquest and preservation of favored races. Political thought became dominated by social Darwinism, especially in Europe, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact there is evidence that Darwin taught that human evolution proceeded through warfare and struggle between isolated clans. He said that it was wrong to help the poor since doing so would hinder the evolutionary process.

Social Darwinism reached a peak in **Adolph Hitler's Mein Kampf (My Struggle)**, which was strewn with evolutionary thought. Its theme of the supremacy of the Aryan race led to the Jewish holocaust. Hitler also persecuted other races and ethnic groups he considered inferior, such as blacks, gypsies, and Christians.

The effect of evolutionism on Hitler's thinking is not often alluded to, but it lay at the root of his philosophies:

"He who would live must fight, he who does not wish to fight in this world where permanent struggle is the law of life, has not the right to exist."³

In Italy, **Mussolini** was completely dominated by evolution, and repeatedly used evolutionary catchwords in his public addresses on fascism. He believed that violence was basic to social transformation.

Two of the founders of communism, **Karl Marx** and **Friedrich Engels**, were evolutionists. Communism is based upon the theme of class struggle. Marx was an admirer of Darwin, and wanted to dedicate a portion of his book, Das Kapital, to Darwin. But Darwin declined, not wanting to be part of a direct attack upon religion, feeling that that would harm his cause. The philosophies of Marx and Engels were incorporated into the official state religion of the USSR, which was originally called "dialectical materialism," but later changed to "scientific atheism."

Darwin's Origin of Species came along at an opportune time for Marx:

"Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural selection for the class struggle in history..."⁴

Business

Evolution, especially in the form of social Darwinism, has been used to justify industrial and business monopolies and exploitation of labor. In fact, according to industrialist John D. Rockefeller,

"This [use of ruthless business tactics] is not an evil tendency in business. It is merely the working-out of a law of nature and a law of God."⁵

Industrialists felt justified in amassing great fortunes by theories of economic struggle for existence, with evolution as a foundation.

Racism

In the early part of the twentieth century, it was commonly believed among scientists that different races were on different rungs of the evolutionary ladder. Blacks were thought to be at the bottom, Orientals in the middle, and Caucasians on the top. Slaughter of "inferior" races was justified on the basis of natural selection and survival of the fittest. This line of thought was and still is sometimes reflected in drawings of ape-men with African characteristics.

Outlook on Life

If we're not creations of God with a purpose and meaning in life, we're left with a sense of emptiness. After all, if we came from nowhere and are going nowhere, what's there to live for? This is one of the reasons for the rise in teen suicide, and often expresses itself in the drug culture. Some people try to find meaning in life through drugs, which offer a sort of substitute religion.

Moral Relativism

If evolution is true, there is no God to set any standards of behavior. Biblical concepts then become relics of the past, and there is no right or wrong, no such thing as immorality (“If it’s right for you then its okay”). It’s now considered “immoral” to restrict the “rights” of those wanting to practice premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, etc. Since humans are just animals that are a little higher on the evolutionary scale, and animals do these things, then what’s wrong with doing them?

The overall result has been a general lowering of standards of behavior and expectations, even in the Christian community. The entertainment industry is a prime example. People take for granted today TV programs, movies, video games, music that would have caused outrage in previous generations.

Isaiah 5:20-21 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,
who put darkness for light and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

The Devaluation of Human Life

- Abortion: since the fetus is not really human yet, but still going through the early stages of evolution, abortion is okay—you’re not really killing a human being.
- Euthanasia: this practice can be justified on the grounds of moral relativism (“what’s right for me is my choice”) as discussed above. God’s will is usually left out of the picture.

Evolutionism provides the same basis for discarding or ignoring moral values as Epicureanism did with the ancient Greeks. (Epicureans wanted freedom to indulge in every pleasure without consequence: “Eat, drink, & be merry, for tomorrow we die.”) Many evolutionists also seek unbridled freedom in every area. Evolution justifies freedom from morality, using science to avoid consequences such as pregnancy, STDs, etc. The only remaining obstacle is Christianity.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

“Evolution is not merely a biological theory of little significance. It is a world view—the world view diametrically opposing the Christian world view. Therefore Christians ignore it or compromise with it at great peril!”
—Dr. Henry Morris⁶

A New Heart

It is only through God's provision that we can change our outlook on life.

Matthew 19:26

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Ezekiel 36:36-37

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

How is this possible? It is only through the Christian "born again" experience that it can be accomplished:

Acts 3:19-20

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus.

¹ Richard Lewontin, "Billions and Billions of Demons," *The New York Review*, January 9, 1997, p. 31.

² Julian Huxley, British evolutionary biologist, 1887-1975. Author of various books on evolutionary biology and humanism.

³ From *Mein Kampf*, as quoted in Robert E. D. Clark, *Darwin, Before and After*: Paternoster Press, London, 1948.

⁴ Conway Zirkle, *Evolution, Marxian Biology, and the Social Scene*: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959, p. 85.

⁵ Rockefeller was the founder of Standard Oil Company.

⁶ Henry Morris, *The Long War Against God*: Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989; p. 23.