



# Think & Believe

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## Stop that Panda!

(by Mike Shaver, with Dave and Mary Jo Nutting)

*Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins* is an attempt to accommodate the usual criticisms against anything but evolutionary texts. This supplementary biology text avoids the use of the "religious" words, and simply compares the adequacy of "intelligent design" versus random processes in explaining origins and the world around us. Many public schools are seriously considering this textbook and evolutionists are getting worried.

*Scientific American* (July 1995) showed its bias and carried an article entitled, "Darwin Denied: Opponents of evolution make gains in schools." This is **not** meant as good news by the editors of *Scientific American*! After all, not long ago *Sci Am* fired one feature author for doubting evolution. (See T&B, Vol. 8, No.2)

Apparently, some evolutionists are getting quite worked up about *Pandas*. Eugenie Scott of the National Center for Science Education in Berkeley is quoted in the article as saying, "Sooner or later we are going to have to go to court over *Pandas*." Another critic calls it "fundamentalism in disguise." Of course, evolution is atheism in disguise, but these Humanist Pharisees neglect to mention that. The anti-creationist activity of the ACLU is also mentioned briefly, particularly its effort to censor this and other creationist books from the classroom. Isn't it ironic how parents who want "naughty" books removed are scorned by the

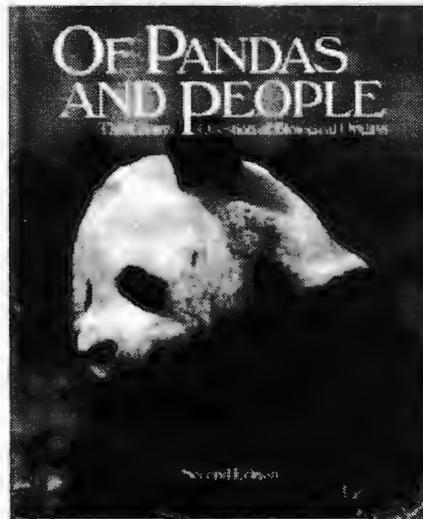
"educational elite," but censorship by these "elites" seems to be perfectly acceptable. (Perhaps if creationists would include pornographic pictures in their books, the ACLU would defend their "freedom of expression!")

One critic "predicts that the religious right will make a 'strenuous effort' ... to gain state approval for a nakedly creationist book or for *Pandas*." The article does not mention the Humanist Left and their nakedly evolutionist texts complete with naked apes and "evolving" humans.

The article ends by noting that "almost all seminary-trained rabbis and ministers from most Christian denominations accommodate evolution. Only biblical literalists are genuinely conflicted by Darwinism." No documentation is offered, but if this allegation is true, it constitutes a pretty sad commentary on our seminaries and their graduates.

*Pandas* is unacceptable to the Humanists even though it does not include religious terms. Why? It's because it allows students to see that there are flaws in the evolutionary perspective and gives them a chance to evaluate evidence for intelligent design.

The Humanists have been very successful in getting any mention of God out of the schools. They pretend to want only "science" taught, but they really want to continue to monopolize the schools with **their** religion. The question is not whether science or religion will be taught, but which religion will be taught. Our schools have not become "religion free." They have simply changed religions.



# Notes & Quotes

□ William Zinke wrote this letter to us to share with students when he himself was a student. Maybe his insights can help someone you know.

I am a college student at a local community college. As anyone knows who has been to college, the belief of a Universal Creator, as in the sense of the Old and New Testaments, is a heretical thought to evolutionists. But can our finite minds fully comprehend God Who exists beyond time and space? How can finite people claim that there is no infinite? How can they claim there is no Creator God of the Bible? How can a college freshman break through that kind of "blind" evolutionary belief?

My Introduction to Biology teacher, after ridiculing Genesis as an outdated "myth" written by Moses, stated: "In all probabilities we sprang from a primordial soup over billions of years of evolution." The story went that with the right ingredients and right place, a "protocell" would come together, springing life from non-life. This was altogether fitting and proper for my teacher, but not for me. I prayed that night. While I was half asleep, the Lord reminded me of a demonstration Dr. James Kennedy performed on his "Case for Creation" video. The idea was exciting, but it also brought shudders of fear, for I am not the most outgoing person. I prayed if this was right to do, because I did not want to belittle my teacher. Usually, I would ask the teacher questions after class, thus he knew where I was coming from. I did not want to come off with an all-knowing and disrespectful attitude in front of the class. God cannot use that.

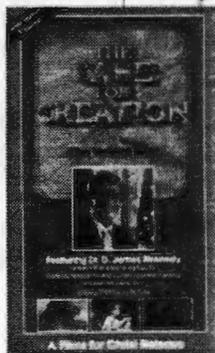
The next day I brought in an old clock, a strong bag, a can of WD-40, and a BIG hammer! Just after roll call I asked if I could do a little review of the last lesson. My teacher was a little surprised, but he allowed me to do a quick demonstration. I was visibly shaking from nervousness, but decided to make it fun. I asked for a volunteer, but nobody came forward -- except the teacher. After showing the clock to the class and explaining the many intricate pieces that are needed for it to work properly, I placed it in the bag and handed the teacher the hammer. After he smashed the clock to bits (and almost my finger along with it!) we sprayed the WD-40 inside the bag. I repeated what our teacher said about the "right ingredients" and the "right place" and proceeded to shake up the bag. I asked a question: "If I shake this bag, oh let's say about a billion years, will we eventually have a perfectly working clock that keeps time?" I then sat down. The class was silent. Most had a thoughtful look, but our teacher was smiling. He said, "Sure, because anything is possible!" I just smiled and listened as the real thinking members of the class got the analogy. Our teacher went on to explain how it "really" happened, but from my viewpoint he just dug himself deeper

and showed the illogical "dogma" of evolution for what it really is.

Now, this is not to say we should tear up evolutionists. They are people who feel they are in truth, just like us. It is to say, for us students, we should stand up, and at least ask questions after class. Get to know your teachers. Respect them. Pray for them. Always strive to be a listening and questioning student. They can tell if you are trying to ridicule, or really searching for truth. Evolution is not as solid as it is portrayed. Find out its weak points. And pray that you stay in the Holy Spirit, our Guide.

□ Great points, Will. Thanks for sharing with us!

□ Speaking of sharing creation in school, Dr. Duane Gish has recently authored a book, **Teaching Creation Science in Public Schools** (Institute for Creation Research, 1995, 70 pp.) It seems absurd that such a book should even be needed in a nation whose foundational document states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," but such is the state of affairs in America today. Dr. Gish explains clearly and concisely how and why the scientific evidence for creation can and should be taught. This short treatise should be valuable for students, parents, teachers, and school board members who would like to see our schools at least provide students with an option to have an alternative to the one-sided evolutionary indoctrination so often presented.



## Featured Books & Videos

- **Teaching Creation Science in Public Schools:**  
Get several and share them with the parents, teachers and school officials. .... \$4.95
- **Of Pandas and People:**  
Read for yourself the book that's causing all the stir. Does it really warrant a court case? You decide. **\$18.95**
- **The Case for Creation:** (VHS Home Use Price)  
This video featuring Dr. James Kennedy exposes the evolutionary establishment's hold on public education and includes little-known facts about the historic Scopes "Monkey Trial." (45 minutes) ..... **\$19.95**

### Special Offer

**Buy Pandas and Case for Creation,  
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Order from Alpha Omega Institute, Box 4343, Grand Junction, CO, 81502 or 970-245-5906 with VISA/MC. Please add 10% S/H (\$3.00 min; CO res add 3% tax.)

# Spotlight On Science

## Pandas and the Problem of Homology

Pandas are usually a favorite in zoos. They look like big, soft, cuddly, teddy bears, but are they really bears or aren't they? That seems like a silly question, but it has hounded biologists for over a hundred years. Actually there are two major types of panda, the Giant Panda, with the familiar black and white coloration, and the Red Panda, which, as the name implies, has a reddish-brown color. Both are native to southwest China, and both feed predominately on bamboo.

For over a century, scientists were divided as to how to classify them. Some thought they were bears, while others put them with the raccoons. All agreed, however, that they were closely related to each other, not only because they lived in the same region, but also because of the many features they have in common. These include similarities in jaw and tooth structure, certain internal organs, chromosome numbers, and behavior patterns. The clincher, though, seems to be the very specialized "thumb" of the panda. (See adjoining article.)

In 1964, Dwight Davis, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, published an extensive study of the two types of pandas and concluded that the Giant Panda is really a bear and the Red Panda a raccoon. His work has been considered authoritative on the topic and most researchers now agree. What then of all the similarities?

Evolutionists frequently use similarity of structure as "evidence" of common ancestry. Determining *which* similarities indicate common ancestry often proves to be a problem, though. Why should the Giant Panda be classed with the bears and not with the Red Panda? They seem to share more similarities with each other than with either the bears or the raccoons.

It seems the evolutionary interpretation of similarity is quite arbitrary. At times it is called "homology" (similarity of structure) and interpreted as evidence of common ancestry; other times it is called "analogy" (similarity of function) and interpreted as convergent evolution (arrival at similar functions by dissimilar evolutionary paths). If two creatures with as many similarities as the Giant Panda and the Red Panda are not related, though, what confidence does it give us in other examples where two organisms are claimed to be related because of certain similarities (especially when the similarities are rather superficial or known only from fossils).

Creationists recognize that sometimes similarity is caused by common ancestry; in other cases, though, it may represent a "mosaic" arrangement of traits, distributed among the creatures at the Creator's discretion. We see, then, a reflection of the Creator's imagination and creativity in distributing characteristics to each one as He wills just as He gave differing gifts to those in His church according to His will (1 Cor 12:11) This seems to be a good explanation of the fascinating pandas.

## The Panda's Thumb

Stephen Jay Gould's book, *The Panda's Thumb: More Reflections in Natural History*, is an interesting blend of "science" and philosophy. This Harvard professor's evolutionary presuppositions are obvious as he presents "evidence" of evolution and attempts to disprove design by an intelligent designer. The article entitled, "The Panda's Thumb," is a case in point.

Gould states, "ideal design is a lousy argument for evolution, for it mimics the postulated action of an omnipotent creator. Odd arrangements and funny solutions are the proof of evolution -- paths that a sensible God would never tread but that a natural process, constrained by history, follows perforce." (p. 20-21) Supposedly the thumb of the giant panda demonstrates his point.

The "thumb" of the Giant Panda is ideally suited for its favorite activity -- stripping the leaves and consuming the shoots of its favorite food, bamboo. Research reveals that the "thumb" is not a real thumb at all. It is actually an enlarged wrist bone. The panda actually has five "normal" fingers underlying the palmar pad. The "thumb" is formed by an elongation of the radial sesamoid bone in the wrist, and underlies a special pad on the forepaw. Special muscles attach to this bone and control its movement. The panda strips the leaves of bamboo stalks by passing them through a narrow furrow between the two pads.

Gould concludes, "The panda's true thumb is committed to another role, too specialized for a different function to become an opposable, manipulating digit. So the panda must use parts on hand and settle for an enlarged wrist bone and a somewhat clumsy, but quite workable, solution. The sesamoid thumb wins no prize in an engineer's derby ... But it does its job and excites our imagination all the more because it builds on such improbable foundations." (p. 24)

Gould reasons, "If God had designed a beautiful machine to reflect his wisdom and power, surely he would not have used a collection of parts generally fashioned for other purposes." (p.20) His argument seems a bit arrogant, though. He presumes he knows better than the Creator what will work well and that he obviously would have done better had he been creating. We are reminded that God's ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. (Is. 55:8) Rejecting Him because it seems to us He could have done a "better" job seems awfully arrogant. How much better to praise Him for His ingenuity and creativity displayed in what He has made! Incidentally, the panda is much more capable of using his "awkward thumb" for stripping bamboo, than we are even with a nicely sharpened knife.

(References for these two articles: Davis and Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People*, Houghton Pub Co, 1993; and Gould, *The Panda's Thumb*, W. W. Norton and Company, 1980.)

## EVENTS

- Mar 17,18: Grand Junction, CO:** Sunrise Church of God  
Contact church, 970-241-3210
- Mar 24-28: Estes Park, CO:** Natl. Sports Tourn. & Conf.  
Contact FEAST, 210-342-4674
- Ap 8-10: Juneau, AK:** Area Seminar, Location TBA  
Contact Kermit Wilson, 907-789-9314
- Ap 11-13: Hoonah, AK:** Location TBA  
Contact Pastor Vannatta, 907-945-3271
- Ap 14-17: Sitka, AK:** Area Seminar, Location TBA  
Contact Doug Stude, 907-747-8115
- Ap 20-28: Grand Canyon, AZ: ICR Grand Canyon Adven.**  
Contact ICR, 619-448-0900

## VBS & Kid's Camp Opportunities

- June 3-7: Yampa, CO:** Yampa Bible Church, VBS (J)  
Contact Pastor Rod Crey, 970-638-4411
- June 10-14: Craig, CO:** First Baptist Church, VBS (J)  
Contact Julia Foster, 970-824-3769
- July 9-21: Brookings, SD:** VBS/Church Conference (J)  
Contact Darlene Nelson, 605-693-4329
- July 22-26: Lake Shetek, MN:** Kids Camp (J)  
Contact Steve Harms, 507-836-6252

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## In This Issue:

- The Panda's Thumb
- Reaction to *Of Pandas and People*
- A College Student Writes

## THANKS!

Toward the end of 1995, we put out a special plea for help. Many of you responded and we were able to finish the year with a net gain of \$181. God cuts it close! I hope you know your gifts are important! Thank you for caring and sharing! We are always amazed by the way the Lord provides through His people. We are grateful for each one of you who participates in this ministry by sharing the message with others, volunteering, giving, or praying. We wouldn't get very far without you! Thanks for being part of the team! Do your gifts do any good? Keep reading!

## GOOD FRUIT

A friend of ours works in a Christian bookstore. Late one Saturday afternoon, a young man rushed into the store, hurried past the counter, and almost ran to the back of the store. He looked around a bit and finally stopped at the Bible display, looking a bit bewildered by all those Bibles. When our friend asked if he could help, the man blurted out, "I need to get a Bible!" Our friend showed him a paperback version, but the customer said, "Oh, no! I want a good one that will last the rest of my life." He went on to explain that he'd never owned a Bible but had just been to a seminar on evolution. Our friend said, "Oh, you mean the **creation** seminar with the Nuttings?" The man said, "Yeah! They told me all kinds of things I'd never heard before." He went on to explain how he had been fooled by evolutionary teaching and how he didn't want his kids to be fooled, so he needed to get a Bible so he could teach them the Truth! As he hurried out the door with a nice leather-covered Bible, he said, "And I want to find out about this Jesus guy too!"

Does creation teaching bear fruit for eternity? It certainly does. We don't know this young father's name, but God does. Pray for Him that he will soon come to know "this Jesus guy" as his own Lord and Savior.

(P.S. If you are not part of the team, why not join us today? We'd love to have you!)

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