

Many of you who came through Brushy Mountain might remember the close-circuit airing of a program by Ken Ham, the dinosaur guy; or perhaps you have read books by his publishing ministry, Answers in Genesis. Even more likely, you may remember him from recent news stories about his \$27 million Creation Museum in rural Petersburg, Kentucky.

Ham has ruffled many feathers in the scientific and academic communities with his exhibit of Adam and Eve along side dinosaurs, featured in the museum. The 50,000-square-foot facility, complete with a 40-foot-tall depiction of Noah's Ark and roaring robotic dinosaurs opened to the public this past Memorial Day, and is expected to draw an estimated 250,000 visitors in its first year. Why such large numbers? People believe in creationism.

After Republican presidential candidates were put on the spot this past June about

their views on the subject, a USA Today/Gallup poll showed two-thirds of 1,007 adults surveyed said creationism is definitely or probably true. To be clear, creationism is the idea that God created humans in their present form within the past 10,000 years (the dinosaurs you have to deal with on your own).

Another, more broad concept is revolutionizing the scientific community: Intelligent design. Mario Seiglie explains in the February 2006 article *The Intelligent Design Revolution*:

"In the 1980's, several scientists began meeting together to try to explain the incredible complexity they were witnessing inside the cell—and especially the vast amount of information in the form of a language imbedded in the DNA molecule. They began to challenge the theory of evolution within their own field of biology rather than from a religious point of view.

"One of those scientists, biochemist Charles Thaxton, coined the term 'intelligent design' to explain the need for intelligence behind the elaborate information found inside DNA. 'Just when it seemed that natural causes might suffice to account for all natural

# The Battle Over Origins

By Garry W. Johnson  
MOUNTAIN REVIEW Staff

phenomenon,' he notes, 'there were breakthrough discoveries in both mathematics and biology' ('A New Design Argument: *Cosmic Pursuit*, March 1, 1998).

"The intelligent design movement gained momentum when New Zealand molecular biologist Michael Denton, a medical doctor and agnostic, carefully examined the main arguments for Darwinian evolution and found them very deficient

"He wrote in his book *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* that the problems with the theory of evolution 'are too severe and intractable to offer any hope of resolution in terms of the orthodox Darwinian framework' and that the accepted traditional view 'is no longer tenable' (1985, p. 16).

"He then concluded at the end of the book, 'Ultimately the Darwinian theory of evolution is no more nor less than the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century' (p. 358).

"In England, a University of California at Berkeley law professor on sabbatical, Philip Johnson, read *The Blind Watchmaker*, by prominent British zoologist and atheist Richard Dawkins, who advocated evolution as the real designer behind all living things.

"Professor Johnson's legal mind quickly noticed the flimsy and emotional arguments in the book, bereft of solid evidence. He wondered why a noted scientist would resort to such trickery if the theory was on such solid ground. Here was a challenge, he thought.

"Professor Johnson began a thorough investigation of the evolutionary literature and was astounded with what he found. As a famous fable says, truly the emperor wasn't wearing any clothes! He began publishing his findings about Darwinian evolution in popular books such as *Darwin on Trial* (1991) & *Defeating*

*Darwinism by Opening Minds* (1997).

"Meanwhile, at a biology lab in a Pennsylvania university, biochemist Michael Behe was also puzzled by the astounding complexity he found inside the cell. On reading Dr. Denton's book, he was angered about the suppression of such evidence by the scientific community. He wrote a bestseller, *Darwin's Black Box* (1996), exposing major scientific weaknesses in the theory of evolution.

"Another biologist, Jonathan Wells, also was incensed with the faulty information being perpetuated by Darwinian evolutionists in schools and universities. He wrote the book *Icons of Evolution* (2000), which exposed how some of the major 'scientific' examples used to teach Darwinian evolution are in fact fraudulent or misrepresented.

"Since then the intelligent design movement has gained notable influence on the public. A 2005 poll

attempted to mandate the inclusion of

intelligent design in ninth-grade biology classes in 2005. The ACLU backed parents who sued and won a landmark decision in which a federal judge ruled intelligent design was religion, not science. That decision sent shockwaves through the educational community and quieted other efforts to bring intelligent design into school curriculums.

In the July 21, 2007, issue of *World* magazine, columnist Mark Bergin interviewed public highschool teacher, Doug Cowan, about his approach to teaching Darwinian theory within current school guidelines.

"I don't teach alternative theories, because that's not part of the curriculum," he explained. "There aren't a whole lot of alternative theories other than design theory, but that's not in our curriculum. So unless a kid asks specifically about it, I don't deal with it."

"Instead, Cowan deals more thoroughly with Darwinism than most existing biology textbooks, adding reading materials from outside the standard evolutionary syllabus: *Darwin on Trial*, *Icons of Evolution*, *Darwin's Black Box*, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*. Cowan says these extra texts engage his students, challenging their ability to analyze and discern truth from competing sides of a controversial issue.

"This fall, the 34-year teaching veteran will restructure his even handed presentation around a new textbook from the Seattle-based Discovery Institute. *Explore Evolution: The Arguments for and Against Neo-Darwinism* (Hill House Publishers, 2007) does not address alternative theories of origins but succinctly lays out the scientific strengths and weaknesses of the most critical elements of Darwinism. 'It's made my work a lot easier,' Cowan said.

"*Explore Evolution* encapsulates a 'teach the controversy' paradigm that the Discovery Institute has advocated

for the better part of the past decade... "State school boards in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, New Mexico, and Minnesota along with local boards in Wisconsin and Louisiana have adopted science standards that encourage critical analysis of Darwinian Theory. To date, not a single lawsuit has challenged such standards.

"This is an approach that if I were a Darwinist I would be particularly frightened of," said John West, associate director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. "The policy that we've recommended turns out to be the precise common-ground approach we said it would be. It reduces the decibel level; you don't get sued; you get good education; and the Darwinists don't have a leg to stand on" (P.13).

Still, with all the support mounting for creationism and intelligent design, evolution remains the dominant explanation taught in American schools and supported by the mass media for the appearance and wondrous variety of more than a million living species on planet earth.

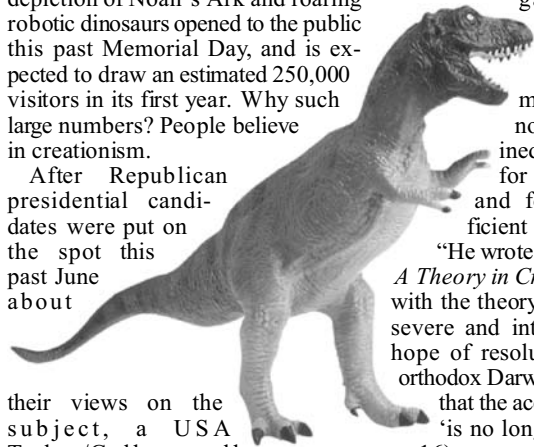
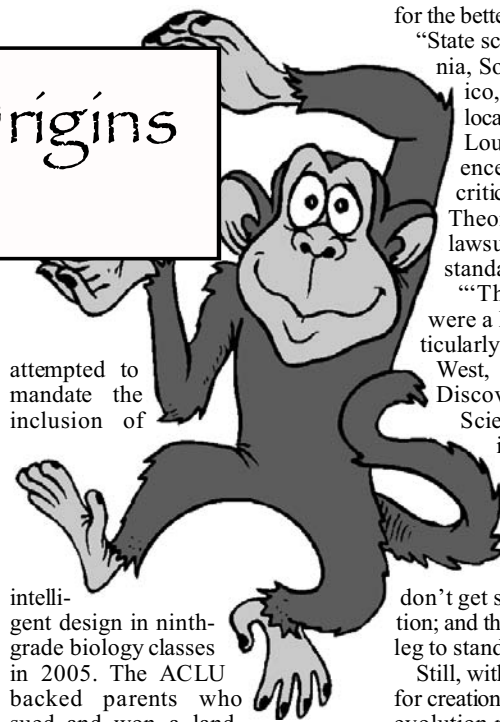
Why is Darwin's theory, soon to be 150 years old, still so prevalent in American culture? Because it is not just a scientific theory, it has become a philosophical viewpoint. Anthropologist Ashley Mantagu claims, "Next to the Bible, no work has been quite as influential, in virtually every aspect of human thought, as *The Origin of Species*" (*The Origin of Species*, 1958, Mentor edition, quote on the back cover).

As intelligent design has been criticized by the courts as "religion, not science," Darwin's theory itself has become, for many, a belief system which promotes materialistic naturalism—the idea that all that exists in the universe is matter and its law.

As biochemist and agnostic Michael Denton says, "It is ironic to recall that it was the increasingly secular outlook in the nineteenth century which initially eased the way for the acceptance of evolution, while today it is perhaps the Darwinian view of nature more than any other that is responsible for the agnostic and

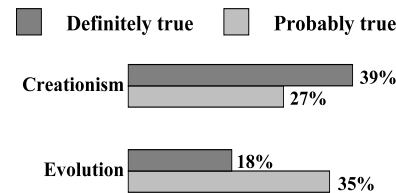
skeptical outlook of the twentieth century. What was once a deduction from materialism has today become its foundation" (*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, p. 358, emphasis added).

If you would like to take a closer look at the scientific findings about evolution, please request the fascinating booklets, *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?* and *Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* Both publications are provided free as an educational service in the public interest. Send your request to: The Good News, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. ☞



## USA Today/Gallup poll

People who say they believe:



Source: USA Today/Gallup Poll of 1,007 adults June 1-3, Margin of error: +/- 3 percentage points.

showed that a majority of Americans believe in it, and another poll of medical doctors found that 65 percent think intelligent design should be allowed or required to be taught in schools along with evolution. Now a growing number of U.S. school boards are beginning to insist that intelligent design be taught alongside evolution" (*The Good News*, p. 19).

This transition, however, has been met by staunch opposition from supporters of Darwinism. A now famous school board in Dover, Pennsylvania,

## Survey: Majority of medical doctors reject strict Darwinism

In a surprising result, a majority of 1,482 physicians polled by HDC Research and the Louis Finkelstein Institute for Religious and Social Studies rejected strict Darwinism.

Strict Darwinism was defined as: "Humans evolved naturally with no supernatural involvement—no divinity played any role." Only 38% of the physicians polled accepted that belief. Other types of evolutionary explanations that can take into consideration a Creator received more support by margin of 42% to 38%.

The same poll revealed 65% of doctors surveyed believed intelligent design should be allowed or required to be taught in schools alongside evolution. In fact,

although the intelligent design explanation is quite recent, a third of doctors polled favored it over evolution.

"Of course most doctors are skeptical of Darwinism," said Dr. Robert Cihak, M.D., former president of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons and a medical columnist for JewishWorldReview.com. "An eye surgeon knows the astonishing intricacies of human vision intimately, so the vague, just-so stories about eye evolution don't fool him. And the eye is just one of the countless organs and interdependent systems in the body that defy Darwinian explanation" (Discovery Institute, *Nearly Two-Thirds of Doctors Skeptical of Darwin's Theory of Evolution*, May 31, 2005).—Mario Seiglie