

***Which is True:
Creation, Evolution,
or Both?***

How to Respond?

“Man is the result of a **purposeless** and natural process that did not have him in mind. He was **not planned.**”

– Paleontologist Dr. George Gaylord Simpson

“The more we know of evolution, the more unavoidable is the conclusion that living things, including human beings, are produced by a natural, totally amoral process, with **no indication of a benevolent, controlling creator.**”

– Evolutionary Biologist Dr. David Barash

“Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was **not designed**, but rather evolved.”

– Dr. Francis Crick, co-discover of DNA

“Evolution is the **greatest engine of atheism** ever invented.”

– Biologist Dr. Will Provine

Reflection and Discussion

- **Handout #1**
 - **Fill-in individually**
 - **Then discuss**

Outline

- **Genesis Creation Story**
 - What it says and how it says it
- **Evolutionary Creation**
 - Theistic evolution
 - Four types of causes
- **Evolutionary Naturalism**
 - Atheistic evolution
 - Materialism and the limits of science

Genesis Creation Story

“Scripture presents the work of the Creator **symbolically** as a succession of six days of divine ‘work,’ concluded by the ‘rest’ of the seventh day.”

– *Catechism of the Catholic Church (#337)*

- What does “symbolically” mean?
- *Video: Why it’s important to know language being used to properly understand what is being conveyed*

Genesis Creation Story

- In the CCC “symbolically” means:
 - Plot need not be literally true
 - But deeper religious truths are true
- Genesis creation story like a parable
 - Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, etc.
- Primarily concerned with meaning and purpose of God’s creative work
 - Not scientific details of how it was accomplished

Genesis Creation Story

- “The first page of the Bible is *not* a cosmological treatise about the development of the world in six days. **The Bible does not teach us how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven.**”
 - Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, General Editor, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- “The Bible isn’t meant to be a manual of natural science.” – Pope Benedict XVI
- *Video: Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D.*

Genesis Creation Story

- **What are some religious truths taught by Genesis creation story?**
 1. **God created all things from nothing**
 2. **God made the universe in an orderly and sequential manner over a period of time**
 3. **Everything God made is good**

Genesis Creation Story

4. Life was created in increasing complexity over a period of time
 - First plants, then sea animals, then land animals
 - Finally, human beings were created
5. Human beings are supreme culmination of God's creation
 - Created in God's own image and likeness



Genesis Creation Story

- **However, many religious truths in Genesis are supported by science**
 - **Big Bang supports God created universe out of nothing**
 - **Genesis Day 1: “Let there be light!”**
 - **God made universe in an orderly and sequential manner over a period of time**
 - **Life was created in ever increasing complexity over a period of time**

Need Both

- **“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”**
 - Albert Einstein
- ***Video: Understanding Genesis***
 - *Need both religion and science to understand the full truth*
 - *The “why” as well as the “how”*

Evolutionary Creation

- God *ordained* and *sustained* the gradual evolution of life on earth
- God established the framework that enabled evolution to occur
 - Including finely-tuned laws of nature
 - Nature predestined for evolution of life
 - Providentially enabled major transitions
- Also called *Theistic* Evolution
 - “Let the **earth bring forth** all kinds of living creatures” (Genesis 1:24)

Evolutionary Creation

- “My predecessors Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II noted that there is **no opposition between faith’s understanding of creation and the evidence of the empirical sciences.**”
 - Pope Benedict XVI
- “The possibility that the Creator also makes use of the instrument of evolution is **admissible** for the Catholic faith.”
 - Cardinal Christoph Schönborn
- *Video: Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D.*
 - *Can Catholics accept evolution?*

Four Types of Causes



- Did Michelangelo or his chisel carve the Pieta?
 - Both
 - Michelangelo was **primary cause & intelligent cause**
 - His chisel was **secondary cause & natural cause**
- *Video: Professor Stephen Barr on divine causality*



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Four Types of Causes

- Which types of causes are God's actions in the evolution of life?
 - God is **primary intelligent** cause
 - God works thru **secondary natural** causes
 - Actions guided by laws of nature He created
 - Evolution is God's tool ("chisel")
 - "God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes." (CCC#308)
- Evolution is God's method of creation

Four Types of Causes

“Indeed, the theory of natural evolution, understood in a sense that **does not exclude divine causality**, is not in principle opposed to the truth about the creation of the visible world, as presented in the Book of Genesis.”

– Saint Pope John Paul II

Common View of Evolution

“Where does that [Darwinian evolution] leave God? The kindest thing to say is that it leaves him with nothing to do, and no achievements that might attract our praise, our worship or our fear. **Evolution is God’s redundancy notice, his pink slip.** A complex creative intelligence with nothing to do is not just redundant. **God is not dead. He was never alive in the first place.**”

– Richard Dawkins, Author of *The God Delusion*

Atheistic Evolution

- Life originated and developed through *unplanned* and *unguided* processes
 - Random genetic mutations and blind natural selection alone are fully adequate to explain life's complexity
 - *Undirected* natural processes sufficient to mimic intelligent design
- Natural causes taken as primary cause
 - Not as secondary causes

Atheistic Evolution

- Seen as challenge to God's existence
 - “Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.” – R. Dawkins
- Catholic Church has concerns with this view of Darwin's theory
 - “Evolution in the sense of common ancestry might be true, but evolution in the neo-Darwinian sense – an **unguided, unplanned** process of random variation and natural selection – is not.”
 - Cardinal Christoph Schönborn

Atheistic Evolution

- **Without any divine plan or guidance:**
 - “Hydrogen is a gas, which given enough time, turns into people.” - Edward R. Harrison
- **Extremely unlikely chain of events in **hydrogen-to-humans** process surely had a primary and intelligent cause**
- **What’s going on? Why so strongly promoted?**

Atheistic Evolution

- “We must reexamine the genuine science at work in Darwin’s theory and its developments, and begin to separate it from ideological and worldview-oriented elements that are foreign to science. Darwin must be disentangled from Darwinism; **modern evolutionary theory must be freed from its ideological shackles.**”
 - Cardinal Christoph Schönborn
- What “ideological shackles”?
 - Philosophy of atheistic naturalism common in evolutionary science (“evolutionism”)

Evolutionary Naturalism

- **Naturalism (materialism): Belief that material world of nature is all that exists**
 - **Spiritual world (heaven, hell, angels, our soul) does not exist or is unknowable**
 - **Only what can be observed and discovered by science exists**
 - **“The cosmos is all that is, or was, or ever will be.” - Astronomer Carl Sagan, *Cosmos***
- **Misguided confusion of evolutionary theory with scientific naturalism**

Evolutionary Naturalism

- **Since we are confined by “space-time continuum”, it is impossible to rule out any reality outside that continuum**
 - **Humans limited by our five senses**
 - **How describe a beautiful red sunset to a person who’s been blind since birth?**
 - **We’re blinded by human limitations to know if natural world is whole of reality**
- ***Video on materialism and the limits of science***



Limits of Science

- **Cannot understand a painting only by examining brushstrokes**
 - Evolutionary naturalism examines the “brushstrokes” but misses the “artist”
- **Evolutionary naturalism seeks to understand *how* life evolved**
 - But evolutionary naturalism cannot address *who* enabled that evolution to occur or *why* we are here

Limits of Science



- Origin of human beings, which have an integral unity of matter and spirit, is not fully explainable by science
- Science cannot say anything about origin of our spiritual and eternal soul
 - “Every spiritual soul is created immediately by God” (CCC #366)
- At the proper time, God imparted soul into first human and everyone since
 - Even if our **bodies** did evolve over time

St. Pope John Paul II

“From the viewpoint of the doctrine of the faith, there are no difficulties in explaining the origin of man **in regard to the body**, by means of the theory of evolution. . . It is possible that the human body could have been gradually prepared in the forms of antecedent living beings. However, the human soul, on which man’s humanity definitively depends, cannot emerge from matter, since the soul is of a spiritual nature.”

Evolutionary Naturalism

- From YOUCAT, *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Question #42):
 - “Natural science cannot dogmatically rule out the possibility that there are purposeful designs in creation.”
 - “A Christian can accept the theory of evolution...provided he does not fall into the heresy of evolutionism, which views man as the random product of biological processes.”



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Summary

- **Genesis Creation Story**
 - What it says and how it says it
- **Evolutionary Creation**
 - Theistic evolution
 - Four types of causes
- **Evolutionary Naturalism**
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Reflection and Discussion

- **Handout #2**
 - **Fill-in individually**
 - **Then discuss**

Evolution Not Main Challenge

- Evolution of life over time is *not* the main challenge to Christian faith
 - Evolution as God's method of creation
 - God is source and sustainer of everything
- Rather, main challenge to faith is how evolution is taught
 - **Atheistic** evolution (naturalism)
 - Natural causes are primary & fully adequate

Evolution Not Main Challenge

- However, scientists and teachers don't call it "**atheistic** evolution"
 - They just say "evolution" as if there is only one type of evolution
 - vs. **theistic** evolution (evolutionary creation)
- What will you be alert for when learning about evolution?
 - Be alert for and critical of materialistic and naturalistic ideology

Pope Benedict XVI

“It is the affair of the natural sciences to explain how the tree of life in particular continues to grow... This is not a matter for faith. But we must have the **audacity** to say that the great projects of the living creation are **not the products of chance and error**... The great projects of the living creation **point to a creating Reason and show us a creating Intelligence**, and they do so more luminously and radiantly today than ever before... **Human beings are not a mistake but something willed**; they are the fruit of love.” - Pope Benedict XVI, *In the Beginning*

Questions?

Comments?

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