

AUDIENCE RESPONSE: TEACH CREATION AND EVOLUTION

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Creationists have held that creation and evolution should both be taught in the public schools. Indeed, they believe that teachers have a moral responsibility to teach both sides of the subject of origins. At a recent presentation of creation at a major university campus the audience was invited to respond to several questions. The overwhelming response was that both creation and evolution should be taught in the public schools. This was the opinion of the students considered separately, the faculty considered separately, and those who were from the community. These responses support the contention that creation and evolution should both be taught in the public school.

1. Introduction

On September 22, 1976, Dr. Duane Gish presented a lecture entitled "Evolution Challenged by Science" on the University of Missouri-Columbia campus. A panel of scientists was invited to critique and react to the presentation. Those who participated were: Dr. Robert T. Marshall, Professor of Food Science and Nutrition; Dr. Thomas J. Freeman, Professor of Geology; Dr. David B. Shear, Associate Professor of Biochemistry; Dr. Olen Brown, Assistant Director of the Dalton Research Center. The program was sponsored jointly by the Missouri Student Association (Columbia Campus) and the Missouri Association for Creation.

There were about 450-500 persons at the program. Members of the audience were each invited to complete and return the comment card reproduced here.

Of the total attendance, 320 people completed and returned the comment cards. Dr. James B. Karnes, Assistant Professor of Industrial Education ran a statistical analysis (SAS program) of the results. Since over 60 per cent of the audience completed and returned the cards, these results are quite significant.

2. Responses

Responses of the entire audience are given in the first two columns of Table 1. On some items there were those who either did not respond or who responded ambiguously. Such were not included in the tabulation. For this reason the responses in each category do not sum to 320.

Responses show that over 90 per cent (267/305) want creation taught in the public schools. Over ¾ want both creation and evolution taught in the public schools. Over 93 per cent want more programs of this kind and over half were willing to leave names and addresses in order to receive additional information. In short, respondents overwhelmingly want more information on theories of origins. They do not want evolution to be the only theory of origins that is taught in the public schools.

There are those who will suspect that the audience responded this way because it was "packed" with church people from outside the university. That such is not the case is apparent from Table 1. (In fact, the presentation was on Wednesday evening and most churches in the area held services that evening.)

Columns three and four indicate the responses of the students in the audience. They too are overwhelming in their desire to have more information (more programs) on creation brought to the campus. They too want both evolution and creation taught in the public schools.

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Comment Card

Please Circle the Letter of Your Answer

1. I am
 - a) a student at _____
 - b) a faculty member at _____
 - c) a member of the community
2. How would you rate the program?
 - a) Excellent b) Good c) Fair d) Poor
3. What is your feeling about the creation-evolution question with regard to the public school curriculum?
 - a) Both models should be taught
 - b) Evolution only should be taught
 - c) Creation only should be taught
4. How did the program affect your thinking about creation and evolution?
 - a) Did not affect it
 - b) Stimulated me to further inquiry
 - c) More favorable to evolution
 - d) More favorable to creation
5. I would like to see other programs dealing with this subject brought to the campus.
 - a) Yes b) No
6. I would like further information on this subject.

Name _____

Address _____

One particularly valuable fact brought out in Table 1 is that the faculty strongly supported having more programs, obtaining more information, and teaching both creation and evolution in the public schools. In fact, the faculty response was the strongest in this last category. Eighteen out of twenty want both models taught. In addition, nearly, half were definitely stimulated to further study the subject.

In the light of the above, why is it then that evolution is taught as fact in the public schools? One conclusion is that dedicated evolutionists are in some way controlling the curriculum.

Unfortunately, this attitude contradicts the popular concept that evolutionists are open minded thinkers and creationists are closed minded bigots. There are, however, many evidences that many evolutionists are very closed minded.

Some evidence is given in Table 2. Here, the responses of the entire audience are compared with those who want only evolution taught, those who felt the program favored evolution, and those who want no more programs dealing with the creation-evolution controversy. Each of these groups are strong in their desire to have no more information on the subject. In fact,

Table 1

| | | Entire Audience | | Students (217) | | Faculty (22) | | Others (76) | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|----------|--------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | | Frequency | Per Cent | Frequency | Per Cent | Frequency | Per Cent | Frequency | Per Cent |
| Program Rating | Excellent | 97 | 33.448 | 51 | 25.758 | 8 | 40.000 | 35 | 50.725 |
| | Good | 126 | 43.448 | 88 | 44.444 | 9 | 45.000 | 29 | 42.029 |
| | Fair | 49 | 16.897 | 44 | 22.222 | 2 | 10.000 | 3 | 4.348 |
| | Poor | 18 | 6.207 | 15 | 7.576 | 1 | 5.000 | 2 | 2.899 |
| School Curriculum | Both Models | 237 | 77.705 | 162 | 77.885 | 18 | 90.000 | 55 | 74.324 |
| | Evolution only | 30 | 9.836 | 28 | 13.462 | 1 | 5.000 | 1 | 1.351 |
| | Creation only | 38 | 12.459 | 18 | 8.654 | 1 | 5.000 | 18 | 24.324 |
| How Program Affected | Did not affect | 73 | 24.172 | 55 | 26.570 | 4 | 20.000 | 13 | 18.056 |
| | Stimulated me | 72 | 23.841 | 52 | 25.121 | 9 | 45.000 | 10 | 13.889 |
| | Favored Evolution | 25 | 8.278 | 23 | 11.111 | 1 | 5.000 | 1 | 1.389 |
| | Favored Creation | 132 | 43.709 | 77 | 37.198 | 6 | 30.000 | 48 | 66.667 |
| Want more programs | Yes | 275 | 93.220 | 183 | 91.500 | 18 | 90.000 | 71 | 98.611 |
| | No | 16 | 5.424 | 13 | 6.500 | 2 | 10.000 | 1 | 1.389 |
| | Indifferent response | 4 | 1.356 | 4 | 2.000 | 0 | 0.000 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Want more information | Yes | 160 | 50.157 | 101 | 46.759 | 14 | 63.636 | 41 | 53.947 |
| | No | 159 | 49.843 | 115 | 53.241 | 8 | 36.364 | 35 | 46.053 |

their entire pattern of responses differs significantly from the responses of the entire audience. Their attitude might be characterized as, "My mind is made up; please do not confuse me with the facts."

An important conclusion of this survey is that there are a number of faculty and students who genuinely want to hear both sides of the evolution-creation controversy. With the present attitudes in science education, they rarely have the opportunity. It is important—indeed, it is imperative—that this opportunity be granted. It is essential that the careful scientific presentation of evidence for creation be given.

Another remark is in order. Due to fear of ridicule by faculty or colleagues, some who have doubts about the theory of evolution hesitate expressing them.

This survey gives compelling evidence that the vast majority of people truly want to hear about both creation and evolution. It is hoped that this survey can be used at the University of Missouri-Columbia to obtain support for future programs. Here, as at other

places, the student press and most of the local press has ignored completely every program that has been conducted by the Missouri Association for Creation. It is evident that the press has ignored an item of interest to a significant number of readers.

3. Other Surveys

A survey like the one in this report should be conducted whenever possible at presentations of the creation-evolution controversy. Perhaps the combined results of a number of surveys would convince those in charge of science curricula that both evolution and creation should be taught in the science classroom.

A similar survey was conducted at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. A comment card almost identical to the one in this report was distributed to the audience. Out of about 350 in the audience, 168 completed and returned the cards. The responses were even more favorable toward creation than similar responses in Table 1.

Table 2

| | | Entire Audience | | Want Evolution Only | | Program Favored Evolution | | Want No More Programs | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| | | Frequency | Per Cent | Frequency | Per Cent | Frequency | Per Cent | Frequency | Per Cent |
| School Curriculum | Both models | 237 | 33.448 | xxx | xxx | 9 | 40.909 | 4 | 25.000 |
| | Evolution only | 30 | 9.836 | xxx | xxx | 13 | 59.091 | 11 | 68.750 |
| | Creation only | 38 | 12.459 | xxx | xxx | 0 | 0.000 | 1 | 6.250 |
| How program affected | Did not affect | 73 | 24.172 | 12 | 41.379 | xxx | xxx | 6 | 40.000 |
| | Stimulated me | 72 | 23.841 | 4 | 13.793 | xxx | xxx | 0 | 0.000 |
| | Favored Evolution | 25 | 8.278 | 13 | 44.828 | xxx | xxx | 8 | 53.333 |
| | Favored Creation | 132 | 43.709 | 0 | 0.000 | xxx | xxx | 1 | 6.667 |
| Want more programs | Yes | 275 | 93.220 | 15 | 57.692 | 13 | 56.522 | xxx | xxx |
| | No | 16 | 5.424 | 11 | 42.308 | 8 | 34.783 | xxx | xxx |
| | Indifferent response | 4 | 1.356 | 0 | 0.000 | 2 | 8.696 | xxx | xxx |
| Want more information | Yes | 160 | 50.157 | 6 | 20.000 | 7 | 28.000 | 3 | 18.750 |
| | No | 159 | 49.843 | 24 | 80.000 | 18 | 72.000 | 13 | 81.250 |