

**“The Case for a Creator”  
Session 3: Doubts About Darwinism  
September 20, 2009**

**INTRODUCTION**

A May 2007 Gallup Poll showed that more than 40% of the population in the United States does not acknowledge the idea accepted by mainstream science that life on planet Earth has evolved from less complex life forms. Conversely, the same poll showed that more than 50% of the same population accepts a role of evolution in the origin of species as described by modern science, with almost three-quarters of those believing that God was involved in the process.

*About 46% of Americans in polls agree with this stunning statement: "God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so." From the Los Angeles Times*

**1997: Gallup Poll comparing scientists with the general population:**

<b>Belief system</b>	<b>Creationist view</b>	<b>Theistic evolution</b>	<b>Naturalistic Evolution</b>
<b>Group of adults</b>	<b>God created man pretty much in his present form at one time within the last 10,000 years.</b>	<b>Man has developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process, including man's creation.</b>	<b>Man has developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life. God had no part in this process.</b>
<b>Everyone</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Scientists</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>55%</b>

The "scientist" group would presumably include biologists and geologists. But it would also include persons with professional degrees in fields unrelated to evolution, such as computer science, chemical engineering, physics, psychology, business administration, etc.

**Q: How do these statistics strike you?**

## **Various views about what the geological and biological evidence show:**

**Classical Darwinism** – that natural selection acting on genetic changes (copying errors and sexual recombination) is sufficient to produce the diversity of creatures on earth. No guiding force or creative principle is required.

**Neo-Darwinism (or Modern Darwinism)**- The absence of finely-graded transitional fossils ultimately led Steven Gould to dismiss textbook Darwinism as "effectively dead," and to propose with Niles Eldredge in 1972 the theory of Punctuated Equilibrium which postulates speciation from rapid change in remote sheltered environments, followed by long periods of stasis (little change). It also incorporates gene theory and use of DNA.

**Theistic Evolution** - The theological view that God creates through evolution. It covers a wide range of beliefs about the extent of any intervention by God, with some approaching Deism (God started it and left it alone). Others see intervention at critical intervals in history in a way consistent with scientific explanations of how different species formed.

**Intelligent Design** – They see evidence for design in biology and their conclusion from examining probability is that chance mutations and natural selection alone cannot account for the structures we see. An intelligent source must be behind it. It is sometimes left open whether the mechanism of evolution caused highly divergent speciation (small organisms evolved into humans over a long time) or that multiple strands of species arose of which humans are one (each separate strand started by an intelligent creator). (Covered in Session 2)

**Creationism** – God is responsible for creation. Proponents fall into “young earth” and “old earth” varieties (covered in Session 1) and both support the concept of Intelligent Design. They promote exclusively the idea that multiple strands of species arose of which humans are one (each separate strand started by God), and look for evidence which supports that idea.

These five views represent various ways of looking at the world, with the first two relying on natural processes completely, and the final three making room for an intelligent creator.

**Q: How does this spread of opinion compare to the polarized “God” vs “Evolution” positions we usually encounter? Where do you fall right now?**

## **DVD segment (6 minutes) – Origins of Life**

Q: Creationists are often accused of tearing down a “straw man” when they critique Darwinism. The Miller Experiment is over 50 years old, but nothing better has been put forth since to explain a natural origin of life. What do you think of this first video segment?

## **DVD segment (6 minutes) – The Tree of life**

Keep in mind:

The “Cambrian Explosion”, while brief compared to the supposed age of the earth, was a 10-15 million year period. The body plans for virtually every major animal phyla appeared in the fossil record during this period.

Modern Darwinism has postulated “Punctuated Equilibrium” to explain the Cambrian explosion. This is that evolution and mass speciation can happen quickly in some circumstances (like sudden environmental change), and remain static for a long time in other circumstances. This would allow for very few gradual changes, and larger jumps. The way this mechanism works exactly is unclear.

Speciation – where changes occur over time to the point where similar types can no longer breed with one another. – is an accepted fact. Look at types of cats – ranging from house cat to lions. These share a common ancestor about 10 million years ago. The big debate is whether the fossil record and DNA supports the theory of a “tree of life” originating from one source or multiple species from multiple sources.

One source is the most plausible naturalistic explanation.  
Multiple sources would most likely require intervention by a creator.

All we do know right now is that life did not gradually evolve from very simple to semi-complex (Cambrian era) over billions of years. Diversification happened rapidly at that one point, then speciation continued from there.

**For Reflection: Growing up, how did what you learned about evolution affect your spiritual outlook or influence your beliefs about God?**

Coming up... September 27 - Who was Adam?

The audio and notes for this and previous sessions of this series are available at [www.sequimcommunitychurch.org](http://www.sequimcommunitychurch.org) in the Sunday Seminar section