

PE1530/PP

Mark Joseph Email of 28 December 2014

As an American instructor in mathematics, I was deeply disappointed to read in *The Herald of Scotland* that your country's education directors refuse to ban the teaching of creationism to schoolchildren (See the article at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/schools-creationism-ban-rejected-by-scottish-government.114739893>).

Though only a layman as regards evolutionary biology, I have studied and do understand the conclusive and irrefutable evidence for both the fact of, and the explanatory power of biological evolution. Furthermore, I have extensive first-hand experience with the intellectual depredations that creationism, always based in biblical or koranic literalism, has in closing a developing mind. Creationism is not in any way scientific, and persists only as a tool for religious fundamentalists to maintain control over the thinking of young people.

I'm perplexed that Scotland won't take even a minimal stand to ensure that its children are not indoctrinated with such bogus "science". I've found that the truth of evolution, based as it is on mountains of diverse but congruent evidence, is not only far more interesting than religious mythology, but also deeply enlightening, showing us how our own species, and other species as well, came to be. It is the true story of our origins.

I hope that Scotland, like England and Wales, will have the resolve to explicitly establish some guidelines about what Tim Simons, head of the Curriculum Unit, called "well-established science." Without an explicit statement that creationism is *not* well-established science, schools are at the mercy of whatever their teachers want to impart about the origins and diversity of organisms, a situation which American creationists are only too willing to take advantage of. As one commentator put it, "There are no creationist accomplishments in biology, medicine, pharmacology, agriculture, or any other productive field, nor will there ever be any. The track record of creation science is indistinguishable from that of astrology." Please reimagine the same situation arising because some group was trying to get phlogiston theory, astrology, alchemy, geocentrism, or Holocaust denial taught in the schools. Creationism's scientific status is the same as any of these. I am of the opinion that measures should be taken to prevent outside forces from damaging the academic integrity of the schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially, Mark Joseph