

Contemporary Suppression of the Theistic World View

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ABSTRACT

The writer interviewed over 100 persons who were active in what is known as the creation-intelligent design movement. Most felt that the standard evolutionary paradigm of origins was inadequate and should be 'balanced' with alternative positions. The creationists interviewed differed considerably relative to their views of origins, and about half would be identified with the seven day literal 24-hour day non-gap universal Noachian deluge creationist position. Almost all felt that they had faced serious religious discrimination in their academic careers at least once or more often. The discrimination ranged from derogatory comments to denial of tenure or an earned degree. The writer also reviewed the literature and interviewed about a dozen academic deans and department chairs in the field of science. All, without exception, felt that openly holding a 'scientific creation' world view would seriously impede or terminate an academic career. Many openly stated that they would not hire or support the candidacy of an out-of-the-closet scientific creationist for a tenured position in academia.

INTRODUCTION

It is now well documented that discrimination against creationists is serious and widespread.¹⁻²⁰ In the words of Hull:

*'Most scientists are only dimly aware of the various "anti-science" systems of belief now widespread [including] . . . politically dangerous movements such as Creationism We protect ourselves by never letting these mutually exclusive beliefs surface at the same time. For example, the constellation of religious fundamentalism and Creationism is often combined with a high regard for high tech. Many creationists' tracts are tapped out on extremely expensive personal computers. Creationists are able to accept and reject the physics that makes these machines possible as the occasion demands. There is no God, and Mary is His mother.'*²¹

Braun summarised the problem as follows:

. . . hardy believers in creation . . . have been heaped with scorn and ridicule. Evolutionists dominated the

*field so securely that creationists were fired, denied tenure and denied advanced degrees with impunity in public schools and universities.'*²²

A 1979 Civil Rights Commission report concluded that, although religious discrimination is serious and widespread, little is presently being done to ameliorate this problem.²³ Aside from this report, most civil rights and governmental agencies have done little or nothing to remedy what has developed into a nationwide problem. The *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* (EEOC) has not until recently even published guidelines for dealing with religious discrimination. The current guidelines deal primarily with reasonable accommodation.²⁴ This agency, set up to deal with concerns of racial, religious, and other minorities, has done little to help creationists facing discrimination, even declining to hold public hearings on the problem. Creationists and conservative Christian educators are now a persecuted minority, often with little recourse but to endure the discrimination. Admittedly, though, some of their problems stem from conflicts over specific issues, such as concerns over their proselytising or the teaching of Creationism in the

public school classroom.

In addition, little if any effort has been expended by most other American institutions to enforce the section of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* which outlaws discrimination based on religion (page 29, Section 703). It is a law which currently exists largely on paper only.²⁵ As Roberts concludes:

*'America has a new bigotry. Traces of it have been around for a long time, glimpsed only fleetingly and in widely-scattered places. But in 1983, it assumed nationwide proportions. This is bigotry against evangelicals. Two things are particularly frightening about this bigotry. Few recognized it, and nobody . . . [has so far done] anything about it. It is difficult to say which is more disturbing. Any religious group that defies public opinion and practices nonconformity runs the risk of ridicule and rejection. This can quickly turn to persecution in time of crisis, particularly if such persecution is advantageous of those in power.'*²⁶

Novak, in a study of this problem,²⁷ called 'antievangelical bigotry' the least understood and 'most painful' hate in America today. He concluded that the 1980s

'revealed more bigotry against evangelicals, without anybody leaping to denounce it, than against any other group. . . . The attacks have been public, without introducing evidence, often by association.'

Scientific creationists are facing the most serious attack, especially in academia. Haney reports that:

*'It appears from various reports reaching this office, that a trend is developing in the halls of Academe . . . that Liberalism's great contribution to American education, namely "Academic Freedom", has become a victim of incest, having been raped by its own sires. . . . [A] former Louisiana State Senator . . . said instances [of] . . . pro-creationism professors and teachers . . . being dismissed have begun to proliferate in the past ten years . . . highly-qualified educators denied tenure or otherwise discriminated against simply because they hold views or engage in activities which oppose the tenets of . . . [evolutionism].'*²⁸

Extensive legal research by the author has revealed that, as of yet, not a single court case of employment discrimination has been decided in favour of a creationist.²⁹ Nor has the writer been able to find even a single case of non-'reasonable accommodation' religious discrimination in employment successfully litigated by a religious believer in an American court. Surveys indicate that thousands of cases of employment termination occur each year in which the plaintiff feels clear evidence of religious discrimination exists. As Bergman found, the judicial system has also done virtually nothing to remedy this problem:

'The only conclusion that can be reached . . . is that the American courts are not serious about enforcing the rights of religious minorities. Although many of the better cases are likely settled out of court, nonetheless the situation is such that employers are generally aware that they can exercise even blatant

*religious discrimination with little or no fear or reprisal. This conclusion was supported by a recent report by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.'*³⁰

THE EXTENT OF THE DISCRIMINATION

The writer, as part of an ongoing research project, has interviewed over 100 active self-labelled creationists who are, or were, employed in academia. He specifically asked if they had faced religious discrimination and, if so, to delineate their experience. Almost all believed that their creationist beliefs caused at least some career problems. These ranged from open derision to outright firings, and even attempts to rescind earned degrees. Some cases were tragic in their extent, blatancy and consequences.³¹ The discrimination experiences discovered were grouped in the following general categories:

(1) Derogatory and clearly inappropriate comments

Examples range from placing obscene or anti-creationist cartoons in the workers' mailboxes to open, blatant, inappropriate direct name-calling. Bolyanatz³² noted that evolutionists often assume that

'anyone holding the creationist viewpoint must be illogical, backward, subversive, uneducated, and stubborn.'

Gross name-calling, even by eminent scientists, is commonly found in the secular literature.^{33,34} A typical example is Isaac Asimov's statement that all

'creationists are stupid, lying people who are not to be trusted in any way.' And that all of their 'points are equally stupid, except where the creationists are outrightly lying.'³⁵

(2) Refusal of admittance to graduate programs

It was found that it was not uncommon for a creationist to be denied admission to a degree program even if he/she clearly exceeded published admission standards. In some cases the person denied was able to locate letters of recommendation which recommended *against* admission specifically because of the candidate's creationist world view.

(3) Refusal to award degree

Some creationists interviewed, although they clearly met all of the requirements, were openly denied a degree (usually a Ph.D. in the sciences) because of their creation orientation and/or publications.

(4) Denial of promotion

Many creationists claimed that they were not promoted even though they clearly exceeded the written standards for promotion (high student ratings, more than an adequate number of publications, etc.). In several cases this was openly because of their creationist publications.^{36,37}

(5) Denial of tenure

Many cases of tenure denial clearly based mainly on the creationist activities of the candidate were encountered. It was often obvious that bias existed because of active involvement in the creationist movement. Research has well documented that a known scientific creationist who does not experience some bias in this crucial decision is a rare exception.³⁸ This view was fully supported by the interviews with creationist professors and others.

In many cases of religious discrimination, the university was open and blatant about such, either claiming immunity or citing various laws or precedents which they felt either rendered them unaccountable, or the law ineffective in rectifying their illegal behaviour. In one case the university did

*'not deny either religious discrimination or [lack of] university specified due process. Its entire case rests on immunity (as a State institution, immune from lawsuits unless plaintiff is given permission by the State to sue itself).'*³⁹

In this case, the university claimed that

'as a whole, whatever wrongdoing occurred, it is not liable to damages',⁴⁰

RESEARCH ON DISCRIMINATION

The writer surveyed 28 professors at a recent science convention about discrimination against creationists. All those interviewed stated that they doubted very much if their department would ever hire an out-of-the-closet creationist for a faculty position. Some claimed that they themselves were not opposed, but felt that because a creationist would likely encounter serious problems in their department, it would be best if they not support their hiring. One added that it would not be objectionable to defend Creationism on philosophical grounds, but an attempt to do so using biology would preclude hiring.

Although some prominent creationists have experienced little discrimination, or discrimination for which they could prove a *prima facie* case, almost 70 per cent of those Bergman⁴¹ interviewed claimed to have faced discrimination, and close to 40 per cent believed they had evidence to demonstrate their claims. The thousands of creationists with tenure in science departments usually achieve it by one of two ways. One survey found that the most common method is to stay in the closet — not openly identify oneself as a creationist (43 per cent); and the second method (38 per cent) is to become a creationist after achieving tenure.⁴² This study did not locate a single out-of-the-closet conservative creationist awarded tenure in any state university in the last ten years, and very few before. These results take on more meaning in view of the fact that two decades ago tenure was usually automatic.

Discrimination against Creationism and creationists is not only widespread, but often irrational. Fully 12 per cent of those interviewed stated they had received death threats,

and/or highly emotional, non-verbal feedback and irrational verbalisations against their persons.

THE LITERATURE'S DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM

The author reviewed all published articles that discussed Creationism printed from 1973 to 1995.⁴³ All of the standard periodical indexes were used, including those that covered the science, social science and popular journals. It was found that almost all of the articles published in the scientific, secular and/or liberal mainline religious journals, failed to condemn the current wave of discrimination against creationists. Many of the exceptions related to the Mims and Bergman cases.⁴⁴ Almost none condemned what often amounts to vile name-calling which now characterises articles published in the public press, or even the many employment terminations and degree denials. All articles were either silent on the issue, or openly advocated discrimination in various forms, although a few letters did condemn this form of disparate treatment.

This is in marked contrast to both 'fundamentalist' journals, and/or those which openly and actively support Creationism. Of these, the author located 143 papers that discussed the problem, but some discussed the issue only briefly or in passing. All either condemned or discussed methods of dealing with the problem of discrimination against creationists, although some letters published in these journals encouraged discrimination. This source was more difficult to research because even the better indexes, such as the **Christian Periodical Index**, or the **Catholic Periodical Index**, were incomplete, not listing many of the smaller or local religious magazines.

A survey of the journals which would be likely to publish articles specifically discussing discrimination against creationists, such as the **Journal of Church and State** or **Church and State**, the monthly published by *Americans United for Separation of Church and State*, found that, with few exceptions such as the Mims case, none of these journals has ever published even so much as a brief note relative to discrimination, degree denial, or firing of a creationist. On the other hand, almost all the so-called new right or conservative religious journals, such as the **Moral Majority Report**, **Christian News**, and **Christian Inquirer**, have published articles about this problem. This is ironic in that many of the visible, active 'creationists' with graduate degrees in science are not charismatic or politically on the so-called 'far-right', although many belong to conservative Protestant churches — such as Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Seventh Day Adventist.⁴⁵

Further, many of the creationists that the writer interviewed would not be classified as far-right, but were closer to historical mainline Protestantism. Although some were independent Baptists, a slight majority were either Lutheran or affiliated with non-denominational churches. In addition, several were Jews, and many were unchurched. It

also became apparent to the writer that, although all of those interviewed considered themselves *creationists*, they were by no means a homogeneous group in their interpretation of Creationism. They were as a whole religiously conservative, but some were middle-of-the-road or even left on some issues. Regarding racial/sexual discrimination and war issues, some would clearly be politically left (the writer did not specifically assess political attitudes, but they were at times discussed in the interviews). A fruitful area for future research would be to explore more fully the political and other beliefs of self-labelled creationists. Many were raised in the so-called 'peace churches', which historically have always been involved in social issues and historically have been connected to various social causes such as the anti-slavery movement. Several creationists interviewed were Free Methodists, a church formed partly because of opposition to slavery, and which still actively supports the Black, Women's and other movements.

THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY'S CRY FOR OPEN DISCRIMINATION

A major trait of anti-creationist literature is its over generalising, labelling, and the problem that those who advocate discrimination rarely define even basic terms such as 'creationist' or 'scientific creationists'. Those who attempt to, not uncommonly define them inaccurately. Many of those who classify themselves as *creationists* object to the term *scientific creationists*. Some prefer simply *creationists*, others *abrupt appearance theorists*, or even *anti- or non-evolutionists*. Still others are most comfortable with simply, *a believer in creation*, as opposed to *a creationist*. Some of the many positions on Creationism include *progressive, deistic, theistic, ex nihilo, and directive Creationism*. The only common thread that runs through all of these positions is that 'God did it'; the major difference between them is 'how'.⁴⁶⁻⁴⁹ These problems with the term *Creationism* were summarised by Hick, a theistic evolutionist, who concluded

*' . . . that the word "creationist" has become a label not only for people who believe that the universe is God's creation but also for those who insist that biological evolution has not occurred. I too am a creationist in the sense that I believe that the universe is God's creation, but I believe that God's creative work is progressive and continuous and that biological evolution is a part of it. And so I am sorry that the word creation has become linked with the obscurantist rejection of evolution. The kind of Creationism that I and other liberal Christians espouse is neither scientific nor antiscientific. The purview of science only goes back some fifteen billion years to the big bang. And, if the big bang should turn out to have been an absolute beginning, then science has nothing to say beyond it, though of course religion does.'*⁵⁰

The term as used in this paper refers specifically to those who deny evolution and are open about either criticising or

denying most gross biological changes. Most of the creationists who experience difficulty would be more closely identified with the position advocated by the *Institute for Creation Research*, or the *Creation Research Society* and other groups who stress a universal Noachian flood, creation in six literal 24-hour days, etc., although many by no means identify with this position. Actually, the most important element in causing problems is simply being labelled a creationist.⁵¹

Many if not most professionals who are generally in harmony with biological Creationism and are not openly identified with this position, consequently experience fewer problems. If few of one's colleagues are aware of one's beliefs in this area, one is far less apt to have difficulties. Nonetheless, many writers have actually openly advocated discrimination and even the immediate termination of all 'creationists'. Fezer pens that:

*' . . . in hiring teachers, or in certifying them as competent . . . consideration of various factors is appropriate. Where religious beliefs can affect job performance, it is appropriate to enquire as to what such effects are likely to be. [And] . . . those . . . who call themselves "scientific creationists", by that very self-designation and all that goes with it, demonstrate incompetence [and therefore should not be hired].'*⁵²

Fezer is advocating what is in America an illegal, but common practice. It is not only illegal to terminate an employee on the basis of religion, but even to ask in an employment interview the interviewee's religious affiliation, the name of his or her church, parish, or even the religious holidays that he or she observes because this indicates religious affiliation.⁵³

Those who are active in promoting religious discrimination are often open and blatant about their goals.

*'Creationists often complain that their theories and their colleagues are discriminated against . . . as a matter of fact, Creationism should be discriminated against . . . no advocate of such propaganda should be trusted to teach science classes or administer science programs anywhere or under any circumstances. Moreover, if any are now doing so, they should be dismissed.'*⁵⁴

Patterson, although he does not define his use of the term 'creationists', concludes that *no one* that this label fits is qualified to be a scientist or educator. After calling their world view 'propaganda', he openly concludes that those who advocate this position should be terminated. At the least, he stresses, creationists' transcripts should be 'marked' so that schools and employers can easily discriminate if they elect to do so.⁵⁵ All of this, although blatantly illegal, has in general been tacitly approved by our courts, educational establishment and government. Although most Civil Rights legislation clearly specifies that employees must be evaluated *only* on the basis of job criteria that are specifically relevant to the position, Civil Rights agencies have done little or nothing to stop these illegal practices. Patterson advocates

employment evaluation openly based on one's religious beliefs, concluding that:

*'creationism is discriminated against, but this is precisely as it should be. It is the responsibility of teachers and school officials to discriminate against . . . anyone who advocates . . . [creationism]. I'm glad this kind of discrimination is finally catching on, and I hope the practice becomes much more vigorous and more widespread in the future.'*⁵⁶

This is exactly what is now commonly occurring.^{57,58} This is why the writer, after extensive research, has been able to locate so few active out-of-the-closet creationists that have been awarded tenure in the last decade at an American or Canadian secular college or university. Most have been denied and fired.⁵⁹ Several names have been mentioned as possibilities which have not, as of yet, been researched, but most of those investigated in the past were either in-the-closet creationists, or became creationists after tenure was granted. Winder concluded:

*'Creationists can hold faculty positions at secular universities successfully but they must suppress their views [on creation]. There are creationists, including [in] science, here [at his University] but there is no outward manifestation [of their Creationism]. Any activity and they would soon be harassed!'*⁶⁰

Naturalists make no bones about the 'problem' and their concern over finding a 'final solution'. Admittedly some scientists do not advocate the above, but argue that the issue can be settled by intelligent debate:

*'How are the dark forces of anti-science to be combated? Holton's answer is the traditional one — education Unfortunately, [open] university provides one of the most congenial homes for advocates of the various anti-science world pictures he decries. Perhaps I am too cynical, but I think that the high-tech animation of "Jurassic Park" is likely to combat "Genesis" much more effectively than any noncredit course in evolutionary theory I also share Holton's skepticism about even the most intellectually respectable of the anti-science world pictures . . . but Holton has so little sympathy with these movements that I did not find his critiques of them all that persuasive. The modern world picture in which science plays such a central role is so clearly superior to any of the post-modern anti-science alternatives that those of us who hold this world picture can afford to be generous. Even when such anti-science world pictures as Creationism are set out as sympathetically as possible, they still come up wanting.'*⁶¹

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STUDENTS

In discussing whether creationist students should be discriminated against, one well-known science educator approvingly quotes those who conclude that a professor should have the right

'to fail any student in his class, no matter what the grade record indicates', and even advocates,

*'retracting grades and possibly even degrees, if [a person espouses Creationism] . . . after passing the course or after graduating.'*⁶²

He also stresses that *it is the university's responsibility* to terminate creationists and rescind their degrees, advocating that even students with excellent grades who produce highly regarded work should be denied their degree and expelled from the university if it is discovered that they are a creationist! He argues that grades do not necessarily measure competency, and a student can memorise material and be able to discern the 'correct' answers on tests yet still hold views which in Frazier's mind at least are incorrect. They thus should be failed or denied a rightfully earned degree, or if previously awarded, it should be retracted. Zuidema reports that some professors have proposed that

*' . . . grades or degrees of university students who hold special creation concepts after having taken science courses [should be retracted]. In other words, flunk them — retroactively, if necessary!'*⁶³

This proposal, Wirth responded,

*' . . . is nothing less than gross religious discrimination. . . . A student's command of a subject in science can be disassociated from his religious beliefs. In other words, someone with religious beliefs can function as a scientist.'*⁶⁴

Further, many educators have stated in print that they feel that it is *irresponsible* for a university to grant a creationist a Ph.D. degree. Flacks openly concludes that:

*'It is a pathetic commentary on our universities that grant doctorate degrees . . . without fully determining a candidate's true understanding of universal knowledge and logic The alleged concept of "scientific" Creationism is not only an illogical contradiction in terminology but an absurd fiction.'*⁶⁵

Thus, he concludes, creationists should not be awarded advanced degrees. The reason for this discrimination, many of its proponents claim, is not concern over religion, but competency. An anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft of this paper (which was rejected by the journal on the grounds that creationists *should be discriminated against*) said:

' . . . the opposition [to creationists] rests instead on a conviction that "creationism" . . . precludes neutrality/objectivity, adequate methodology, and the integral nature of science (physics, astronomy, geology, biology). There is a perceived way to best do science and see one discipline in the context of others Must a department accept someone whose "creationist" case seems erroneous methodologically and factually simply because one pleads "religious or academic" freedom? Departments evaluate people not only on knowledge and expertise but on their research and on its likely fruitfulness. They see creationists of the "young earth" or "anti-evolution" sort as incapable of sustaining a research program on these bases. Religious freedom

is not a ground for academic incompetence in research (and creationist research has, I think, very little to show for its labors). Freedom carries responsibility to one's colleagues, profession, and research.'

G. Merle Bergman is more specific about the problem of firing creationists:

*'I am aghast at the suggestion that . . . [a creationist was fired] because of his religious views, as expressed in his writings on the subject. Obviously nothing could be further from American tradition and constitutional principles than that a man be denied opportunity on the basis of his religious thought. On the other hand, I have to ask myself how practical it is for a creationist to impress scientifically minded men and women with his objective — which is certainly a prime virtue for any teacher. I could not myself consider that a teacher had much of a grasp on reality if he or she believed that the creationist view of the universe was a realistic one. There is no point in reviewing the reasoning on both sides . . . Suffice it to say . . . that from the point of view of science, evolution is proven many times over, whereas Creationism is . . . a leftover from very primitive folklore.'*⁶⁶

Whether or not the creationist world view and belief structure is correct is irrelevant in this discussion. Our primary concern here is freedom of religion and belief, and the right to work and pursue one's education regardless of one's religious views, as the law and the American Constitution guarantee. And this includes the right to do research and go where the results of one's research leads. Powerful persons in the academic community concluded that Galileo was incorrect and thus incompetent. And for this reason, to the embarrassment of scientists today, some endeavoured to ruin his scientific career.^{67,68}

When we permit fallible value judgments as to the correctness of a person's view on controversial topics (as surely is the case with Creationism) to terminate a person's career, the door to discrimination is opened against any person who disagrees with the beliefs of the administrative or power structure.⁶⁹ Yet, G. Merle Bergman concludes:

*I think . . . faculty [firing a creationist is] a reflection of their view that [these people are] too far removed from reality to be able to direct young people along objective paths. The issue is whether this view is a reflection of religious prejudice. They are not judging the man's right to hold and to express religious views different from their own, but his ability to define reality. That that ability is colored by his religious outlook merely muddies the waters.'*⁷⁰

He thus actually concludes that creationists are not able to 'define reality' or, in psychiatric terms, are insane! This is the same ploy used in the old Soviet Union to confine those who objected to communism in psychiatric hospitals. Although Zuidema⁷¹ stresses it is not religion, but competency, that is of concern, the veracity of the Scriptures has historically been of *central* concern to most Christians. As

the above anonymous reviewer concluded:

'The crux of the matter, obviously, is the question of competency to teach science [and] evolution concepts, being essential to an understanding of the life sciences, might arise. One critic . . . has even questioned whether faculty . . . who accept Scripture literally are qualified for faculty or administrative positions. Isn't the integrity of scholars at the heart of this [controversy]?'

The above line of reasoning has horrendous implications. As McGuigan said of one discrimination case a creationist was then fighting in the courts:

*'Conservatives, supporters of academic freedom, and friends of liberty in general will be watching this case carefully, more than a little nervous about their own futures if such a miscarriage of justice is not overturned.'*⁷²

Persons who advocate currently unpopular views in science and other academic disciplines (such as the non-Marxist economic view by sociology, government, and history faculty) have always faced serious problems. In general, though, conservative Christians are now facing the most serious problems. Thus Wildman stated:

*' . . . the persecution of practicing Christians has already begun, albeit not in a physical manner . . . [there are already many] cases in which educators who subscribe to the creation theory have suffered because of that intellectual belief. These cases have not been heavily reported in the national secular media, although . . . had the individuals been dismissed from a Christian school for teaching evolution they would have made major headlines . . . The irony of [these] . . . cases . . . is the silencing of academic freedom by those who supposedly support [it] . . . and the condoning of . . . the persecution of those who dare to believe in Creationism because of intellectual honesty. We do, however, indeed find it odd that the creation theory cannot be taught in schools because it is "religion", but the evolution theory is openly taught — sometimes not as theory but as fact — despite the fact that it is a basic tenet of the humanist religion. (See Humanist Manifesto I) "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."'*⁷³

The justification for religious persecution has always been the presumption that those persecuted deserve it because their view of reality is incorrect or erroneous, often called heresy. If one is able to justify discrimination on the grounds that the victims are not 'accurately able to assess reality', or because their view is based on metaphysical presuppositions as opposed to an examination of empirical data, one could use this reasoning to discriminate against *any* and all religious beliefs. All sacred positions are to some degree based upon a view of reality which is less than fully empirically supportable.⁷⁴ Faith, the bridge between empirical reality and belief, is an especially important aspect of the Judeo-Christian-Muslim world view. For one to categorically state that someone's view of reality is wrong, and thus this justifies

denial of employment and consequently denial of life's basic necessities, is an horrendous conclusion. Normally the state steps in only if beliefs are translated into illegal criminal actions such as assault.

Mormons believe that all humans have always existed and in the after-life will become gods, that Adam and Eve were literally created in Independence, Missouri, and that, in spite of what many scholars have concluded are its many inaccuracies and errors, **The Book of Mormon** is inspired by God.⁷⁵ They also would have a poor grasp of reality, according to those quoted above. Thus, should not all Mormon teachers also be terminated?

Likewise, Catholics obviously do not have much of a grasp on reality in that they believe, in contradiction to all chemical analysis, that the Eucharist literally changes the bread and wine into the physical body and blood of Christ. Thus, all Catholic teachers likewise should be terminated. The explanation that *transubstantiation* causes 'substantial change', which scientists today cannot study, or 'accidental change' in Aristotelian terminology, one could easily conclude is a rationalisation to cover an irrational conclusion.

Some also may feel that Jews, believing that they are God's chosen people, and that it is morally wrong to eat pork (a perfectly nutritious food if cooked properly) and that someday a 'messiah' will come to earth from heaven, obviously do not have a very accurate grasp of reality. Thus, should they also be terminated from their teaching positions, denied degrees, etc.? One could argue in the same way about all religious faiths, including atheism which Melton⁷⁶ defines as a religion in the American liberal tradition.

In the old Soviet Union, this exact reasoning was utilised to justify discrimination against *all* theistic positions. The signing of a statement swearing that one is an atheist was once required to teach in a Soviet university.⁷⁷ It was obvious to them that anyone who held a religious viewpoint, even a 'liberal' one, does not have an accurate grasp of reality and thus should 'not be in a position to influence young people along objective paths' and therefore should not be allowed to be teachers regardless of their academic record. All religious views, they concluded, are myths impeding an objective grasp of reality. One must obviously first ask, 'Who is qualified to be the judge of such things as the world views of others?' Bergman tries to answer this as follows:

*'Even if one holds controversial views which are directly related to one's teaching or occupational assignment, it is generally conceded that, if one can accurately articulate the opposing position (such as a young earth creationist who can accurately explain and present the data, reasoning, etc., used to support the old earth position), then one cannot charge incompetence, and discrimination should not take place.'*⁷⁸

One's private religious views, whether right or wrong, are usually irrelevant in the work place. A person can be a highly competent mathematician, and yet hold views on astrology or parapsychology not commensurate with the contemporary scientific consensus.⁷⁹ Some professors of the

author's acquaintance follow astrology, or give credence to other ideas that many authorities conclude have been clearly refuted. If all of these likewise are terminated, who is going to be left? Our foremost concern should be religious freedom and freedom of conscience. Where genuine differences of opinion exist, concerns relative to one's teaching qualifications may be discussed, but teachers should be evaluated primarily upon their knowledge and expertise in their speciality area, not their religious views or scientific conclusions.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Few persons or organisations have concerned themselves with the rights of religious minorities, and even fewer with those of creationists — and some who have experienced difficulties would more accurately be classified as progressive or liberal creationists.⁸⁰ The academic community now seems to be becoming more open and blatant relative to this form of discrimination. Laws are useless unless enforced, and as we have noted the government has so far in most cases refused to enforce existing laws relative to this form of religious discrimination. They often now do not aid creationists or those with a conservative religious orientation in general. As the anonymous reviewer quoted above concluded:

'... governments and universities have not enforced existing laws because religious discrimination is really not the basic issue . . . Creationism of many sorts has proven to be astoundingly unfruitful as a research program and so distortive of factual material that it is unclear how that material can be competently taught.'

Can we truly call our society free if Meikle's call, quoted below, is implemented?

*'It is the responsibility of professional societies to discriminate against [creationists] . . . by separating them from teaching through exposure and removal. It is the responsibility of the public school system to do likewise.'*⁸¹

The solution to this problem is best summarised by Wildman who, in his public presentations,

*'... has been telling his audiences that unless the Christian community becomes involved in the struggle for [religious freedom] and does so quickly, that those being born today will be physically persecuted if they desire to practice their Christian faith. "I fully understand how radical this statement sounds, but it is an intellectually honest statement — not one to shock".'*⁸²

The only thing preventing termination of employment for many creationists, tenure, may not be as safe as assumed in the past. As Zuidema found:

*"Academic freedom" and "tenure", those twin hollies of academia, have been restraining factors by keeping state university faculties from openly challenging . . . their creationist colleagues. Yet some brave souls have sought confrontations.'*⁸³

The appropriate response to this problem is to bring to the attention of the authorities the commonality and seriousness of this problem. Religious discrimination is illegal, and thus vigorous efforts need to be made by those discriminated against and the various law and policy enforcement officials to fight it. This will help to ensure that the law is taken seriously and enforced. Increased public awareness is immensely important in dealing with this problem. In addition, several precedent court cases would reduce the likelihood that employers in the future discriminate against creationists. If the likelihood of losing a case is high, forcing payment of wages, damages, lawyer's and other costs, most employers would probably not discriminate. They now clearly perceive, and presently correctly so, that the likelihood of a conviction in a religious discrimination case is extremely low. They are now for this reason often not hesitant to discriminate. They can now often cover their tracks, generally have available highly paid attorneys, and are often able to win cases by skirting around the law or dragging it out for years.

To their credit, many individuals *are* concerned about the civil liberties and rights of individuals, even those that they personally disagree with. In reviewing several religious discrimination cases, the author found that it is not uncommon to find some persons active in defending the rights of those religious minorities that they clearly disagreed with. Their support comes from their conviction that all persons have the right to hold a set of beliefs, however unpopular, if they are sincerely held and are not openly detrimental to the welfare of the local community or the population as a whole. The belief that we are created beings, deliberately designed by God, is hardly detrimental to the community's welfare, and it could be argued that it is useful in facilitating behaviour which is supportive of community order and functional morality.

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