

# Strategically dismantling the evolutionary idea strongholds

I appreciated the survey work published by Dan Biddle and Jerry Bergman in issue 31(1). I participated in a webinar by Dan Biddle about these data (facilitated by Eric Hovind), but I don't think that the conclusion, that creation speakers focus too much on attacking deep time, is warranted.

The survey was based on an Amazon exit poll that asked student-aged young people what they found to be the most convincing arguments for (biological) evolution. They were not asked what most causes them to disbelieve the Bible's history. The latter question, I'm confident, would have resulted in a quite different result.

Also, deep time is so widely accepted, it is part of the landscape for most people today, the backdrop to all other thinking, so there was no need for the students to be convinced of deep time; that was already in place, and hence its low status in terms of convincing them of biological evolution.

The importance of human evolution is interesting, but it seems at the least premature to draw the conclusion that attacking deep time is misguided.

Human evolution is certainly an 'icon of evolution' and I believe that it is good to deal with it, briefly, in talks, but it is not the main thing. Rather, the false history is the main issue, which undermines the Bible's Gospel narrative at its roots. Many don't realize that they believe a false history until it is pointed out to them. This then opens the way for them to believe the Bible's history, which includes salvation. Otherwise, our messages might convince them that biological evolution has problems, but that the overarching narrative remains

in place, which implies that the Bible's salvation story from the beginning remains a fairy tale.

Nonetheless, the authors' approach is a step in the right direction of seeking to more rigorously and objectively quantify the prime targets of creation outreach.

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## » Dan Biddle and Jerry Bergman reply:

Don Batten points out the importance of the foundation of evolution—deep time—and states that our conclusion, “that creation speakers focus too much on attacking deep time”, is not warranted. We agree that creation speakers need to focus on the deep time issue. We note, in the results section of our article, that a “pronounced gap between the students and creation speakers was observed on the topic of deep time”, and we point out that deep time was “only mentioned by 4% of the student population but given a 17% weight by creation speakers”. We explained this disparity by stating: “We believe this is because creation speakers rightfully understand that radiometric dating is foundational to evolution theory in general, and therefore should be addressed in biblical creation ministry efforts.” So, we clearly note the significance of addressing deep time.

However, we have collectively found that the deep time issue is very difficult to convince people of, even those who are very educated. While we have had success in convincing people of the evidence against secular evolution, sometimes it is more difficult taking them to the next step and unwinding their deeply seated ideas about the deep time clock. I'm sure many creation speakers would agree that it's sometimes easier to talk people out of believing in traditional evolution than it is regarding the 'millions of years stronghold'. In fact, we find that many

Christians who are being awakened to the truth of creation sometimes 'retrench' to a compromised view (gap theory, progressive creation, etc.) before they will eventually settle into a 'full conversion' of the truth on creation as clearly laid out in Scripture.

Our article emphasizes that the neural network that makes up the framework of evolution that is held in the majority (72%) of our sample is made up of four topics: human evolution, Darwin's Theory, transitional fossils, and science as an authority. We have found that the ideal strategy is to integrate the issue of deep time when addressing these four key topics. For example, in the case of human evolution, we find it useful to contrast the biblical account (with man being created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day some 6,000 years ago) with the idea that humans started evolving from ape-like creatures millions of years ago (e.g. Lucy dated at 3.12 Ma). This can be easily done by reasoning if evolution really happened over millions of years, the fossil record should be full of transitions, not the scant examples of supposed transitions (such as fewer than 20 australopithecines and so few *Homo habilis* specimens they can fit into just a shoe box). The same is true with the remaining three key pillars that make up the idea of evolution in the majority of the sample. So we believe that an integrated approach is perhaps the best way, but hold fast in our conclusion that creation speakers will do more damage to the lie of evolution by focusing on these four pillars rather than on some of the other pillars that were not rated as highly as these four.

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