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March 9, 2004

An Open Letter to Louisiana Educators: Teach More About Darwinism

After my daughter was murdered at Columbine High School in 1999, I was asked to testify before our United States Congress. Please allow me to share with you part of what I said that day:

"Since the dawn of creation there has been both good and evil in the hearts of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott (pictured below), and the deaths of that heroic teacher, and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries out for answers."

"I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy – it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves. I wrote [this] poem...that expresses my feelings best:"

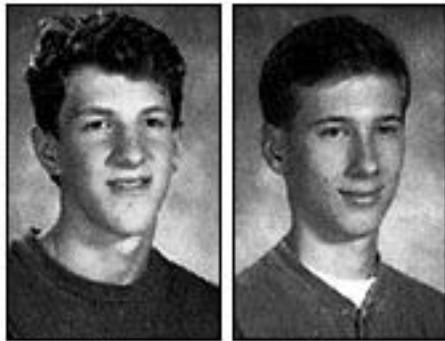
Your laws ignore our deepest needs,
Your words are empty air.
You've stripped away our heritage,
You've outlawed simple prayer.
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,
And precious children die.
You seek for answers everywhere,
And ask the question "Why?"
You regulate restrictive laws,
Through legislative creed.
And yet you fail to understand,
That God is what we need!



Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, soul, and spirit. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our make-up, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreak havoc. Spiritual presences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation's history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation? We have refused to honor God, and in so doing, we open the doors to hatred and violence."

Why should I be interested in what Louisiana schools teach regarding science? You should understand that some students, surely not many, but some, will take the concept that we are “nothing but animals” and “survival of the fittest” as justification for heinous behavior. Hitler did it. Stalin did it. And Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (pictured below), who chose Hitler’s birthday – April 20th – to kill my daughter and twelve others at Columbine High School did just that. Harris wore a **“Natural Selection”** t-shirt on the day of the killings and both had taken the evolutionary mindset to the conclusion that they needed to help the process along.

They made remarks on video about helping out the process of natural selection by eliminating the weak. They also professed that they had “evolved” to a higher level than their classmates. I was amazed at the frequent references to evolution and equally amazed that the press completely ignored that aspect of the tapes.



KLEBOLD

HARRIS

In the area of science, I understand that Louisiana State educational standards call for “recognizing and analyzing alternative explanations and models” and “formulating and revising scientific explanations and models using logic and evidence.” **I am not asking that you teach “creationism” in the schools.** Instead, what I am asking is that you adopt a resolution encouraging students to examine the growing body of evidence pointing to weaknesses in Darwinian evolution – if nothing else than to allow a glimmer of hope into some student’s mind that there is a purpose in this universe and in life itself. In

today’s value-free zones that our public schools have become, your emphasis on enforcement of the Louisiana’s science content standards as relates to teaching the scientific weaknesses of Darwinism could be the single most important thing you do for the students of today and the citizens of tomorrow.

Further, there are other known cases of similar happenings, though not as high in toll of sons and daughters as Columbine. Some examples:

Reader's Digest, (August 2001, page 170) recounts how a "Columbine copycat" massacre plot was foiled by an astute photo clerk in San Jose, California when she alerted police based on photos dropped off for development that showed 19 year-old Al DeGuzman (right) in a t-shirt saying **“Natural Selection”** and brandishing a pipe bomb and sawed-off shotgun. He had intended to gun down students at DeAnza College in Cupertino, California. On his website, DeGuzman reportedly wrote, "The only thing that's real is the word of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold--they knew what they had to do to change the world and they did it."



- Another "Columbine copycat" plot was foiled in New Bedford, Massachusetts in November 2001 with the arrest of Eric McKeehan (17; pictured left) and two other students who planned to kill "thugs, preps, and faculty" at their high school by detonating explosives and opening fire as they fled. Among the items seized from McKeehan's bedroom was a photo of Hitler (whose book, Mein Kampf means "My Struggle" and quotes admiringly from Darwin's Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.)



- Sixteen year-old Luke Woodham, (right), who on October 1, 1997, killed two students and wounded seven others at his Pearl (Mississippi) High School purportedly left behind writings identifying with Nietzsche's "God is dead" philosophy.



- In 1924, Clarence Darrow got two young murderers Leopold and Loeb (pictured left) reprieved from a death penalty sentence by arguing that they were inspired to commit murder from studying Nietzsche at the University of Chicago.

Much of this kind of behavior is borne of despair and hopelessness. If today's children are given at least a glimmer of hope that they may be something more than mere animals, today's schools, and tomorrow's culture, and future generations will be better off! Make no mistake about it, until we face this issue forthrightly, some students will continue to become hopelessly depressed, some to the point of violence. How much better would it be for all of us if they carried a message of purpose and change and triumph to cities, schools, universities, and to everyone they touched in their lives?

Board members, ideas have consequences. Sometimes we don't like them, but to deny the link is literally fatal. I know this too well. The point is that if we continue to ignore the scientific weaknesses of Darwinism in deference to teaching 19th century, discredited science, God will use other means to get our attention. Bullying is big news nowadays. Isn't

it time we face the logical connection that if we teach "survival of the fittest" uncritically in the classroom, why should we be surprised when some students take this corrosive "kill or be killed" concept onto the playground or street?

I am saddened, but not shocked, that students at Dutchtown High School, right there in your backyard, were recently arrested for planning what they hoped would be an upcoming "Columbine copycat" rampage on Hitler's birthday, April 20, 2004.



Look at some of the words of some of the most militant defenders of Darwinian thought today. They are hardly dispassionate observers of nature. Steven Weinberg, Ph.D. Nobel Laureate in Physics (pictured left), who writes passionately about angels pushing asteroids, wrote in Dreams of a Final Theory that,

"The more we refine our understanding of God to make the concept plausible, the more it seems pointless."

In accepting an American Humanist Association award, speaking of religion in society, Weinberg said that,

"I hope this long sad story, fueled by the progression of priests, ministers and rabbis will come to an end. If science can contribute to this end, it will be the most important contribution we can make, that we see no more of priests, ministers and rabbis. **Religion is complete nonsense and terribly damaging to human civilization.**" [Emphasis added]

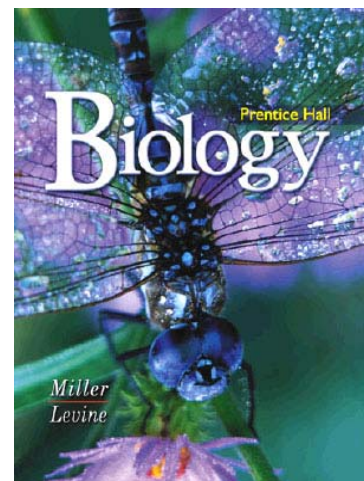
On the Freedom from Religion Foundation website, Weinberg is quoted as saying,

"I personally feel that the teaching of modern science is corrosive of religious belief, and I'm all for that! One of the things that in fact has driven me in my life, is the feeling that this is one of the great social functions of science – to free people from superstition."

Steven Schafersman, an acknowledged agnostic secular humanist, asks the question:

"Would you or have you ever entertained the possibility that evolutionary scientists could be right – that the universe and life is devoid of immanent meaning and purpose?"

To simply have an opinion about religious faith is one thing. However, many outspoken evolutionists go further, and use their status as scientists to undermine some of the very underpinnings of society. Dr. Kenneth Miller, (author of Biology texts currently in use in Louisiana,) in commenting about how people do not accept biologic evolution, wrote in Finding Darwin's God that:



“I believe much of the problem is the fault of those in the scientific community who routinely enlist the findings of evolutionary biology in support their own philosophical pronouncements. Sometimes these take the form of stern, dispassionate pronouncements about the **meaninglessness of life**. Other times we are lectured that the contingency of our presence on this planet **invalidates any sense of human purpose**. And very often we are told that the **raw reality of nature strips the authority from any human system of morality**.” [Emphasis added]

In the 1977 book The First Three Minutes, Dr. Weinberg wrote that:

"the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless."

Do students listen to this? Consider Columbine. Dylan Klebold said on one of the pre-Columbine murder video tapes,

“What ever happened to natural selection?”

Eric Harris, on his website, called natural selection

“...the best thing that ever happened to the Earth. Getting rid of all the stupid and weak organisms...”

Harris also inscribed in a classmate’s yearbook that:



“Natural selection needs a boost, like me with a shotgun.”

As noted above, when he died after the rampage that killed my daughter, Harris was wearing a t-shirt with the inscription **“Natural Selection”** on the front. Harris’ diary said that:

“Me and V [Klebold] will get revenge and will kick natural selection up a few notches.”

The Jefferson County, Colorado police noted that: Harris and Klebold ... talked about how “evolved” they were and how they considered themselves to be “above human.”

Jason Hoffman, (below) the 18-year old shooter at Granite Hills High School in California, who shot five and later committed suicide in jail, said that:



"I wanted to do suicide by cop," Hoffman said, according to the probation officer's report. "I got to thinking, 'What the hell is the point of life?'"

Hoffman’s words sound a lot like the Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Weinberg. But Dr. Weinberg has that part of things

decidedly wrong. I personally am convinced that God has a reason for everything, even when we do not understand it at the time. I also believe that there is a reason that decision makers such as you stand at a crossroads of our culture. It is not an accident that you are where you are in Louisiana, the state that George Gallup identifies as having the highest per capita church attendance in America.

Not only is “teaching the controversy” constitutional, public opinion wants both “strengths and weaknesses” of evolution to be taught. This has been true in the past, and even after nearly a half century of schools, government, and the media preaching one-sided evolution theory to us almost exclusively, it remains true today. People in their heart know that evolution is incapable of explaining everything. And careful observation of the polling data such as Zogby’s suggests that it is even more so today than years ago. Congress has also expressed this view, declaring in the 2001 *No Child Left Behind* Act that children should be taught the full range of scientific views that exist concerning biological evolution.



With public opinion overwhelming and growing, and with new science discoveries increasingly showing weaknesses in evolutionary theories, it’s clear that this issue will not go away. For example, I understand that the Texas State Board of Education recently ordered the Texas Education Agency to address factual errors in that State’s textbooks prior to issuance to students and teachers. In fact, earlier this month the Ohio State Board of Education voted to adopt a statewide model lesson plan on the "Critical Analysis of Evolution."

While unintended ignorance is excusable, unwillingness to learn is not, and preventing students from learning is reprehensible. *Columbine Redemption* urgently calls on Louisiana educators to enforce your State’s science content standards calling for teaching both sides of the greatest controversy of our time, and let’s all stop pretending that there is no controversy. Please do not go down on the wrong side of history in this vital issue. Our students, perhaps your children and grandchildren, deserve to be told that there is in fact a chance that the world is not useless, hopeless and without meaning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darrell Scott". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Darrell Scott
President and Founder
Columbine Redemption

Attachment: Proposed Science Education Policy Resolution

Columbine Redemption is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded by Darrell Scott, father of Columbine victim, Rachel Joy Scott. Darrell has spoken before millions of people through personal appearances, television, radio, and printed media. He delivered a message before the House Judiciary Committee in May of 1999. That speech became one of the most published articles on the internet, opening numerous doors of opportunity, which Darrell has used to motivate, educate, and bring positive change to many young people. Columbine Redemption has a website at <http://www.columbineredemption.com>.

PROPOSED SCHOOL BOARD POLICY SCIENCE EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Constitution declares that among the legitimate ends of government is “to promote the ...education ... of the people...” (1), and;

WHEREAS, Congress recently declared that “a quality science education should prepare students to distinguish the data and testable theories of science from religious or philosophical claims that are made in the name of science. Where topics are taught that may generate controversy (such as biological evolution), the curriculum should help students to understand the full range of scientific views that exist, why such topics may generate controversy, and how scientific discoveries can profoundly affect society.” (2), and;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court has declared that “...teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to school children might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of secular education.” (3), and;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has promulgated certain Science Content Standards, and;

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of this Board that some science teachers in the parish school system are uncertain of what can be taught about particular scientific theories, and;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Science Content Standards at page 11 hold that, "scientific information is continuously open to review and modification" (4), and;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Science Content Standards at page 11 further state that, "for scientific ideas to become widely accepted, peers must review, analyze, and critique results" (5), and;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Science Content Standards at page 19 declare that, "the process of scientific inquiry involves 'thinking critically and logically about the relationships between evidence and explanations, constructing and analyzing alternative explanations, and communicating scientific arguments'" (6), and;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Science Content Standards at page 12 indicate that science should be "presented as a... continuing process for extending understanding of the ultimate, unalterable truth" (7);

THEREFORE, teachers in the _____ Parish School District are expected and hereby encouraged to help students review, analyze, and critique the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to the course being taught.

* * * * *

Footnotes:

- (1) Louisiana Constitution, Preamble
- (2) H.R. 1 - "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001": Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference, Title I, Part A, item 78, edworkforce.house.gov
- (3) Edwards v. Aguillard 107 S.Ct. 2573, 2583 (1987)
- (4) Louisiana Science Content Standards, page 11.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Ibid, page 19.
- (7) Ibid, page 12.

Benchmarks: (Continued)

This policy is designed to help achieve the following Benchmarks in the Louisiana Science Content Standards:

BENCHMARKS 5-8

- SI-M-A6 – “comparing alternative explanations and predictions”
- SI-M-B4 – “using data and logical arguments to propose, modify, or elaborate on principles and models”
- SI-M-B5 – “understanding that scientific knowledge is enhanced through peer review, alternative explanations, and constructive criticism”

BENCHMARKS 9-12

- SI-H-A4 – “formulating and revising scientific explanations and models using logic and evidence”
- SI-H-A5 – “recognizing and analyzing alternative explanations and models”
- SI-H-A6 – “communicating and defending a scientific argument”
- SI-H-B4 – “analyzing a proposed explanation of scientific evidence according to the following criteria: follow a logical structure, follow rules of evidence, allow for questions and modifications, and is based on historical and current scientific knowledge”
- LS-H-C1 – “exploring experimental evidence that supports the theory of the origin of life”
- LS-H-C2 – “recognizing the evidence for evolution”
- LS-H-C3 – “discussing the patterns, mechanisms, and rate of evolution”