Strategic Creation Ministry: Breaking Down the Specific Topics that Make up Evolutionary

Strongholds

Daniel A. Biddle, Ph.D.

Jerry Bergman, Ph.D.

Abstract

A survey was conducted on 292 student-aged respondents (age 14 to 24) who provided 404 of the "best evidences" for evolution. Their responses revealed that just four of ten evolutionary topics make up 72% of the "best evidences" why evolution is believable. These four are Human Evolution (25%), Evolution Theory Proper (Mutations, Selection/Adaptation) (21%), Fossils and Transitions (15%), and Science in General (i.e., as an authority) (11%). These findings reveal what creation ministries should be focusing on when dismantling evolution theory as part of a well-rounded ministry strategy. To evaluate the alignment between these ten evolutionary topics and the emphasis placed on them by creation speakers when debunking evolution, 29 experienced creation speakers were asked to assign weights to the ten topics. Creation speakers believed that the four topics of Deep Time (16.8%), Evolution Theory Proper (13.8%), Dinosaurs (13.1%), and Human Evolution (12.1%) were the most important topics to address. The reasons for these differences are discussed and strategies for creation ministries are provided.

One of the cornerstone verses relevant to the Biblical creation movement have found 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 inspiring: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

So, exactly what are the *strong holds*, *imaginations* and *high things* that are exalted above the *knowledge of God*? The Greek word translated as *imaginations* in this passage is *logismos* and means an *imagination, reckoning, computation,* or *reasoning*. Specifically, "reconstructing the [evolutionary] past requires imagination and theory as much as brute fossil finds."[1] Given that molecules-to-human evolution has never been observed and requires one to

speculate what might have happened in the deep, unseen past, evolution could be considered as such an imagination. Secular media and education systems now are the strong holds (established systems) and high things (authorities and icons) that attempt to hold up the imagination of evolution. Together, these strongholds and high things use the imagination of evolution to stand against the knowledge of God—the saving knowledge of a Creator to whom we all must give an account (Romans 1).

The good news is that we are given spiritual weapons for pulling down these strongholds and high things that hold up the evolution imagination. These weapons must be forged by prayer, careful thought and research, and then used in battle with faith and action. The Word encourages us to work in faith a labor of love with patience (1 Thessalonians 1:3) and to enter into battle "By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (2 Corinthians 6:7). While we must fight only the battles that the Lord appoints and fight them in His strength, we should know what the battle looks like and the weapons involved.

In the case of Creation Apologetics, it is helpful to know just exactly what the imaginations, strong holds, and high things are—their shape, composition, and nature. Paul employed this strategy when he opened the debate with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens by *starting with the Creation account* (Acts 17:16-34). Paul integrated Genesis into his evangelical outreach by establishing there is a "God that made the world and all things therein" who "Giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" and "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

Darwin, no doubt due to his theological education at Cambridge, and the requirement that students study of Paley's evidences, realized the major reason most people give for believing in God is the evidence of the creation all around us. To, in his words "murder God," required him

to come up with another creator, and this creator was evolution by natural selection.[2] Darwin was so successful in his alternative creation theory that today over 95 percent of all leading scientists are evolutionists and most of these are atheists.

One concept that is helpful for defining the "evolutionary imaginations" that bind the minds of unbelievers and some Christians is a *knowledge network*—the specific ideas and concepts that hold up the evolutionary belief system in their minds. With the evolutionist, this "evolutionary webbing" clouds their thinking and darkens their understanding, preventing them from seeing the truth about origins, Christ the Savior, and the truth and authority of God's Word. To some Christians, the knowledge framework of evolutionary ideas becomes inter-twined with sections of God's Word that they accept, but not without creating cognitive dissonance and uncertainty in the realm of origins and the authority of Scripture. God's Word is trumped by the "high thing" of "science" and millions of years and many local floods that are nowhere to be found in Scripture.

When reaching out to those trapped in the web of evolutionary lies, we (like Paul in Athens) need to be strategic. And perhaps the first step in this strategy is to learn exactly what the specific "imaginations" are that are standing between those we are trying to reach and the "knowledge of God." Just exactly what are the "imaginations" that actually make up the knowledge strong holds that keep people from knowing God? What are the specific pillars of evolution theory that are the most believable to Christians and non-Christians alike? What specific evolutionary lies are causing many believers to leave the faith?[3] Certainly knowing these specific imaginations will help guide Creation Ministries to focus on certain areas when it comes to dismantling the lie and constructing the truth.

To illustrate the importance, let's contrast two different creation ministry approaches. Consider situation A: Bob, a passionate creation speaker, hears of his son's biology class learning "whale evolution" and decides to put on a "Debunking Whale Evolution" talk at his local church. Let's say 100 people show up, including many skeptics who were asked to attend by church members. Bob's talk is great—he completely dispels the idea that whales evolved over millions of years. How many people in the audience are transformed by the presentation? Likely only a scant few. Situation B is the same, but the topic is human evolution. How many people would be swayed to abandon the lie of evolution in exchange for the truth if this topic was highlighted rather than whale evolution? According to our research, many times more!

To find answers to these questions and define the evolutionary imaginations, we surveyed[4] 600 student-aged respondents (age 14 to 24) to identify the "best" and "next best" evidences for evolution (regardless of whether they believed in evolution). A total of 292 respondents gave 404 open-ended responses which were then coded into ten categories (see Table 1).

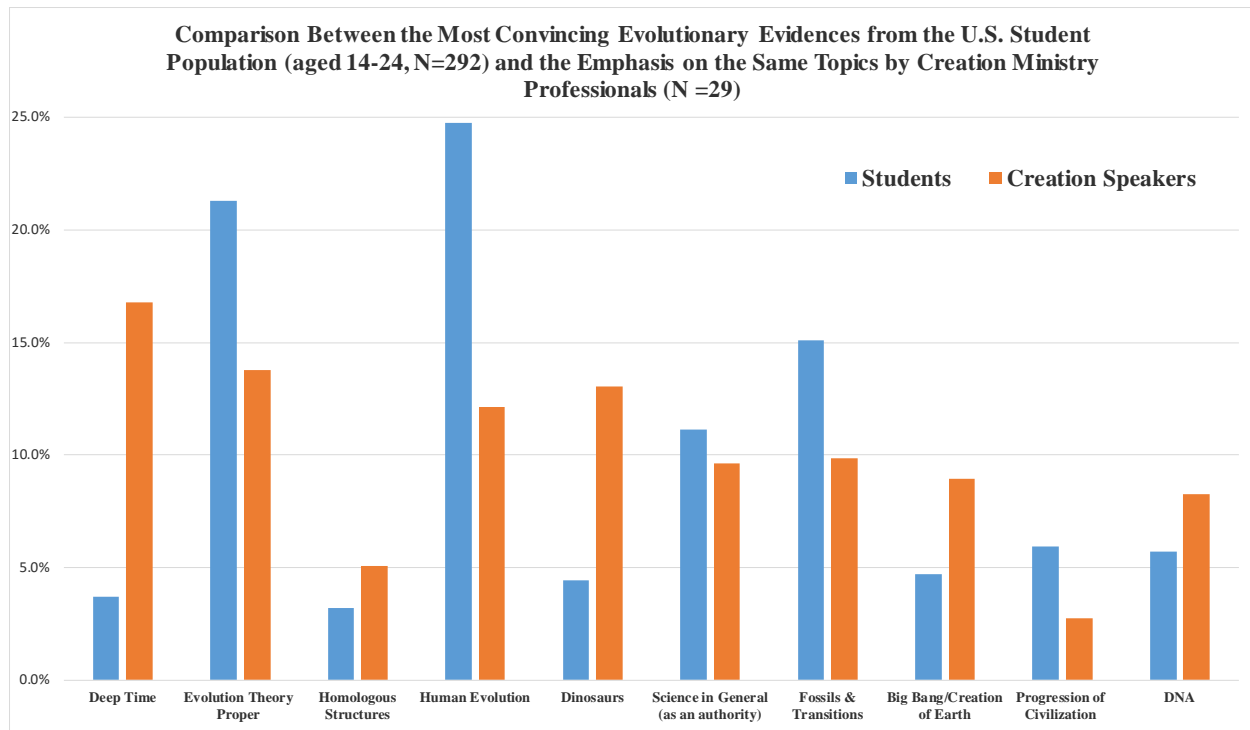*Table 1. Top Ten "Best Evidences" for Evolution*

Category Title	Definition	Respondents (Age 14-24, N=292)		Average Importance by Creation Speakers (N=29)
		Responses	Percentage	
Human Evolution	General human evolution, similarities between humans and apes, humans progressing over time (e.g., getting smarter), human-chimp DNA similarities, vestigial structures, embryo development.	100	24.8%	12.1%
Evolution Theory Proper (Selection/ Adaptation)	Adaptation, Darwin's Theory (Proper), vertical evolution, natural selection, speciation, Evolution Theory (Proper), mutations, Ice Age (e.g., extinctions).	86	21.3%	13.8%
Fossils & Transitions	General fossil data used by secular education and media as evidence for evolution theory (including "transitional forms").	61	15.1%	9.8%

Science in General (as an authority)	Science as an authority (e.g., "scientists say evolution happened," "hundreds of studies have proved evolution to be true").	45	11.1%	9.6%
Progression of Civilization	Progression of civilization over time, such as societies becoming more advanced, development of technology, knowledge advancement, etc.	24	5.9%	2.8%
DNA	DNA studies in general showing the similarities between creatures (not specifically humans and chimps, listed above) and the evolution of the cell.	23	5.7%	8.3%
Big Bang/ Creation of Earth	The "big bang" and how this shows the creation/development of earth and the universe.	19	4.7%	9.0%
Dinosaurs	Dinosaurs in general (including their extinction, place in time, etc.).	18	4.5%	13.1%
Deep Time	Deep time, including geologic time/layers, Carbon Dating, Radiometric Dating rocks/strata.	15	3.7%	16.8%
Homologous Structures	The similarity of structures between animals.	13	3.2%	5.1%

The sample that was surveyed was 44.7% male, 55.3% female, 37.5% were between 14 and 17, 62.5% were between 18 and 24, and 60.2% identified as "Christian." Interestingly, there were no significant difference between the frequencies of the "best evolution evidences" when the data file was split between "Christians" and "non-Christians."[5]

To find the alignment between these "best evolutionary evidences" and the topics that are typically "debunked" by Creation Speakers, 29 experienced Creation Speakers (with an average of 20.4 years' experience) were asked to distribute 100 points among the ten topics to indicate the emphasis they would place on each during a hypothetical one-hour presentation that had the single goal of "debunking" the evolutionary beliefs held by students aged 14-24. The results are shown graphically below:

Figure 1. Comparison Between the Most Convincing Evolutionary Evidences from the U.S. Student Population (aged 14-24, N=292) and the Emphasis on the Same Topics by Creation Ministry Professionals (N =29)

Comparison Between the Most Convincing Evolutionary Evidences from the U.S. Student Population (aged 14-24, N=292) and the Emphasis on the Same Topics by Creation Ministry Professionals (N =29)

The most pronounced gap between the students and Creation Speakers was observed on the topic of "Deep Time," which was only mentioned by 3.7% of the student population but given a 16.8% weight by Creation Speakers. 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 most Biblical Creation ministry efforts. Conversely, the students obviously felt that this area was not at this time a major concern, although it no doubt will be if they continue to learn about the creation position on evolution.

Another interesting observation was the responses from the students regarding the general authority of "science" as evidence for evolution. Comments such as "what science has found" or "what science can prove" made up 11.1% of the "best evidences for evolution" offered by students, with Creation Speakers giving this a close emphasis at 9.6%. This finding clearly indicates that Biblical Creation ministries need to continue to differentiate between observational and historical science. Using scientific dating methods to speculate that the earth is over 4 billion years old is much different than applying scientific principles to advance the field of medicine. Truly many students fail to see this distinction.

The topic of dinosaurs also revealed a gap between the two groups, with only 4.5% of the student-aged population placing dinosaurs on the "best evidence" list, but the Creation Speakers

placing a 13.1% weight on this topic. Perhaps the Creation Speakers placed such a high emphasis on dinosaurs because the topic is both interesting (i.e., it draws a crowd) and it encapsulates several of the other evolution pillars, such as Deep Time (i.e., fresh biomaterials[6]), Evolution Theory Proper, and Fossils and Transitions (e.g., the completely missing dinosaur ancestors and transitions).

Perhaps the most remarkable finding is the emphasis that was placed by the student-aged population on human evolution. With 25% of the "best evidences for evolution" falling into this category, this topic should become more of a priority within Biblical Creation ministries. Looking at the entirety of the results, just **four** of the evolutionary topics make up **72%** of the evolutionary "best evidences": Human Evolution (25%), Evolution Theory Proper (Mutations, Selection/Adaptation) (21%), Fossils & Transitions (15%), and Science in General (as an authority) (11%). Thus, if a Creation Speaker had only an hour to talk 1,000 people out of "the lie," their talk would be more likely to succeed with **72%** of the audience by focusing on these top four topics!

---

[1] Ruse, Michael and Joseph, Travis. *Evolution: The First Four Billion Years.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009, 462.

[2] Bergman, Jerry. *The Dark Side of Darwin.* Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2015.

[3] Bergman, Jerry. *Evolution is the Doorway to Atheism: 52 Case Histories of Prominent Atheists and others.* Southworth WA: Leafcutter Press. Expected in 2016.

[4] Survey results were completed in July, 2016 using Pollfish.com.

[5] The frequency counts for the ten topics for the "Christian only" respondents were 23.2%, 20.3%, 15.4%, 12.4%, 6.6%, 6.6%, 3.7%, 4.1%, 3.7%, and 3.7% (topics listed in the same order).

[6] Thomas, Brian. *Original Biomaterials in Fossils.* Creation Research Science Quarterly, 2015, Volume 51, Number 4 (Spring).