

Intelligent Design and the Evolution of Creationism

Many long-term observers of creationist organizations must have been struck, as I have been, by the evolution of creationism over the years from crude early prototypes to the more refined and successful descendants around us today. Ironically, the gradual modification and adaptive radiation of creationism in its many guises mimics the very process that is anathema to all true creationists - evolution by natural selection as first expounded by Charles Darwin.

As in the natural world, not all of the earlier, primitive varieties of creationism have become extinct. Some have even survived to the present in protected niches alongside their more successful relatives. In the early 21st century, the Flat-Earthers and Geocentrists are definitely endangered species nearing extinction, but the Young Earth Creationists (YECs) are still remarkably common and widespread. The past decade, however, has seen the remarkable rise of a new mutant offshoot, the Intelligent Design Creationists (IDCs). I prefer to call them the IDEists, because when they use 'Designer' they really mean 'God' but, for tactical reasons, prefer not to mention him/her.

Progressive displacement of YECs from their ecological niches by IDEists appears to be largely due to direct competition and the latter's more effective camouflage, disguising their true colours as a pseudoscientific religious movement. This accounts for their considerable current success, especially in North America and Australia, at the top of the creationist food chain.

We can illustrate this by comparing YECs with their newer competitors, the IDEists. We haven't space here for a full analysis but fortunately, in the Age of Google, ignorance is no excuse.

YECs are clearly an obsolete creationist model locked into a literal interpretation of Biblical Genesis. YECs cite a mythical 6-day creation event

around 6000 years ago, and a later one-year Flood Event some 4,300 years ago, to explain the Earth's geological and life history. For a colourful illustration of the latest refinement in young earth creationism check *Answers in Genesis*, a Qld.-based YEC organization and the personal web-site of their geological spokesman, '[Tas Walker's Biblical Geology](#)', clearly based on Bishop Ussher's 17th century model!

For decades YECs have tried to infiltrate their creationist model into science classes of American schools. They have failed because of its overtly Biblical basis and thanks to the protection of the U.S. Constitution. Australia unfortunately lacks constitutional protection against teaching religion in its science classes.

Observing the YECs lack of success, their successors the IDEists have regrouped, mutated and involved a new attack strategy. They have abandoned the book of Genesis and replaced it with a less confrontational Book of John ("In the beginning was the word") and have even tossed out the six-day biblical creation and flood—the very basis of young Earth creationism.

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