
A Creationist's Story: My Life in Science and Education

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My Family History

My grandparents, **Benjamin** (Ben) **Buck** and **Minnie Echkoﬀ** (1902-1931) were married on April 1, 1919, and to this union was born 5 children, including my mother **Irene Martha** (b. November 27, 1920). My grandmother died when my mother was only 10 and my grandfather never remarried. Otherwise, my mother had a normal childhood. Baptized and confirmed at St. John Lutheran church (in Cole Camp, MO), she loved to dance, and often ran around with her cousin, Georgia. She also enjoyed spending time with her Aunt Pauline, her mother's sister. Active and adventuresome, she learned to drive her brother Norman's car when she was just a girl of 15. Soon after graduating from Meade High School in 1940, she and her sister, Donna, moved to Detroit.

In 1943 my mother married **Ernest Rudolph Bergman** (b. March 8, 1917 in Blackbury, county of St. Louis, MN). He was the third child of John and Mary Matilda (Maria) Bergman, both born in Finland. John died around 1919 and Marie in 1977 at the age of 85. John, a laborer, was 36 and Marie, a housewife, was 25 when my father was

born. Two other children born to this union lived, including **Esther** (her twin sister died during child birth).

My Childhood

I was born in Providence Hospital in Detroit, Michigan on May 30, 1946. The middle son of a family of 5, my two brothers were **Ronald** (Ron) **Gene** (b. December 13, 1943 in Detroit, MI), and **Michael** (Mike) **Ernest** (b. Nov. 1, 1952 in Detroit, MI). I lived in Royal Oak, Michigan from the time I was around age five until shortly before I married my first wife, Marie, on June 20, 1970. Before that we lived in Detroit in the Blackstone Manner apartments (near 8 Mile Rd. and Greenfield Rd.). We moved to Blackstone after the flat we rented (the 2nd floor of a duplex) near downtown Detroit caught fire. I remember I was taking a bath and my mother grabbed me, put a blanket around me, and we went out to our car, a 1948 Pontiac, parked in the street in front of our house. I vividly remember being in that car, scared, looking at the huge cloud of smoke poring from our house. Memories of this have lived with me ever since. My mother told me latter that the fire was caused by a lit cigarette that someone threw at the house. My brother was in kindergarten at the time (he went to James Verner Elementary—where they served Vernor's® gingerale each noon! It was close enough that he could walk to school).

My Interest in Science

Ever since I can remember, I have been fascinated by science—especially biology, astronomy, and chemistry. No doubt this interest stemmed in part from my father's lifelong involvement in science. My father, a electrical engineer graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit, often brought home a variety of scientific instruments that he used in conjunction with his work and outside projects. Our basement was

cluttered with books, chemicals, machinery, and general scientific paraphernalia, and my father would often show me the purpose of an instrument or the theory behind its use. He designed a variety of science teaching tools, one of which, an 8 by 10 foot silk-screened chart of the elements, is known as the periodic table. He also had achieved several patents for his inventions.

In the 1950s, when I was still a young child, I vividly remember my Dad drawing by hand (no computer assisted design technology existed then), using only ink and drafting tools, a 4 x 8 foot periodic table. He then silk screened the charts and sold them to colleges and universities throughout the United States. He also produced a smaller 3' x 5' wall size and an 8-1/2" x 11" notebook size version that college book stores sold thousands of for years until his patents expired. Then imitators rapidly sprang up, and produced similar charts out of paper for a much lower price, drawing away business. The chart was in general use at Wayne State University and many other universities around the country for many years. As a graduate student in chemistry at Miami University in the 1990s, I remember seeing one of his wall charts still proudly hanging on the wall!

Like the stereotypical nerd, while growing up I never attended sport events as did most people my age; nor was I talented athletically. (Actually, I was the almost always the last picked for required school sports events and remember that sports was always an area where I was sure to fail in front of all my peers. This area has been a sore spot ever since). Rather, my father took me to The Astronomical Society of Detroit, The Engineering Society of Detroit, and similar organizations to attend the many science events that they sponsored. One of our first projects was to make a six-inch reflector telescope for which we ground the mirror by hand. The astronomical society met on the Wayne State University campus in Detroit (the alma mater of my father, my older brother, and myself). The campus later became a familiar place where I would attend as

a student for my bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees. After nine years on that campus, you get to know the place very well!

I have always loved books, especially the more affordable used books. My first big money purchase as a child was a new set of the 15 volume *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia* bought in 1957 when I was just 11 years old. One of my most enjoyable experiences as a child and teenager was to take a bus to downtown Detroit to visit the many used bookstores in the city I could within walking distance. I always went by myself because none of my friends had any interest in this activity. I would catch the bus at 13 mile and Woodward Ave., and ride to the end of the bus line, then walk around downtown and onto Woodward (a total of about 4 miles) to the Big Book Store (the last store on my journey) and then catch a bus back home with my treasures. Going to used book stores, such as Kings in Detroit, is still one of my favorite activities and I have many fond memories of this activity.

My strong area of interest, both in the past (and present), has remained in the scientific area with a secondary interest in the behavioral sciences. On the *Kuder Preference Record*—a measure of interest—completed at Wayne State University on March 4, 1970, I scored in the 99th percentile in the scientific area and in the 95th percentile in the social service area. This means my interests match up with successful scientists and social workers. According to the *Strong's Vocational Survey*, I scored highest in the area of psychology which, I am told, would be expected considering my scores on the *Kuder Preference Record*.

The Tendency for Destruction

One experience I vividly remember while growing up was the joy of building “forts” or hideouts in the large woods near our house with my childhood friends. We

would gather up scrap wood (such as from various construction sites or when a building was being torn down) and put up a “fort,” typically a four by four foot box. Sometimes we would build an underground fort by digging a hole and putting dirt on a wood roof. It was not a rare activity for the kids in my neighborhood and allowed us a place to congregate to be with our friends, at a place of our own. Invariably, though, it would last a week or two (or three at the most) and somebody would discover and destroy it.

After pondering this problem, a friend and myself decided that we would build the roof of our next fort in the garage at his house and then, under the cover of darkness, dig the hole and set the roof on the hole and cover the roof with dirt. We included a trap door so that the roof would be completely covered. The fort was in a somewhat isolated corner of a small woods near his house. We carefully planned out the structure and, one evening late at night, we dug the hole, placed the roof on and, confident that it would last for a while, enjoyed our feat. We were partly right. It lasted for only about a month before it was discovered and wrecked. The roof (which we had carefully used two by fours to construct the framework, and three quarter inch pine to assemble the roof) was torn apart beyond repair.

This experience was one of many that impressed on me how destructive people were- they seemed determined that someone else doesn't have a place in the sun (or at least a place they can spend some time with their friends). True, those persons involved in the destruction were usually teenagers or younger, none-the-less, why people were so determined to harm others and destroy what others created has always baffled me. Why not enjoy the fort, instead of destroying it? Why not feel pride in what somebody else has done, vicariously admiring their accomplishment and then going on to other things? I see this same tendency in humans expressed in the antics of computer hackers, especially those who produce computer worms and viruses. Code red worm alone reportedly cost

over two billion dollars in damage. Why spend so much time and effort to destroy what others have achieved? This bent in people has always baffled me, both then and now.

School

In Royal Oak, I lived at 3910 West 13 Mile road directly across from William Beaumont hospital until shortly before I was married. I went to Parker elementary school (which was less than a block away from our house) up to the 6th grade, and then to Jane Adams Jr. High for 7th and 8th grades, and on to Royal Oak Kimball High school until I graduated in June of 1964.

In the sixth grade, I took a great interest in astronomy, space travel, and related topics. As a result of this interest, I and several other students formed an “astronomy club.” My teacher, Mrs. Flickinger, was very supportive of my science interest and allowed me to make several presentations to other classes on astronomy and space travel. One of the teachers was so pleased with our astronomy club activities that she called our local paper, the *Royal Oak Tribune*, which featured an article about the club, of which I was then president. The Tribune ran the article and, as a result, I was privileged to make a presentation before the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and answer their many questions about astronomy and space science. From this experience I decided that I wanted to be a science professor (and have never wavered from that goal, although I have often been distracted from it).

Because we were on half days in the eighth grade, I was able to come in to school early for two or three hours each morning to work in the junior high school science lab with my science teacher, Mr. Courtney. This experience proved of great benefit, and earned me several recognition awards for science extra curricular activities. (I later learned that Mr. Courtney left teaching due to discouragement.) I continued to have a

great interest in science throughout high school, although my interest began to widen somewhat in high school. I joined the yearbook and school paper staff, doing some writing, and a great deal of photography. I was eventually appointed chief photographer for the yearbook and, also at this time, started doing freelance photography such as for local newspapers, general portraiture, and even some weddings.

Also, while still in high school, I started working as a jack of all trades at a small Royal Oak hospital called Oakland Center Hospital. My work even included some medical photography. Work at this hospital alerted me to the enormous sufferings that humans are obliged to undergo, and it is here that I developed an interest in medicine. This was a very good work experience, and I worked there for close to three years, during most of my high school. The medical director, Dr. Bernard Garapy, spent much time with me discussing medicine and related matters. At this time my parents were divorced and I somewhat looked up to him as a father. He even used to help me with my work, such as when I was rewiring a building at the hospital.

In high school, my interest in science continued to develop, as did my tendency to read everything I could get my hands on. This trait reflected itself in the general achievement tests that I completed in school. According to the *SRA Primary Mental Abilities Test* that I completed in High School, I scored in the 93rd percentile on verbal meaning, in the 92.9th percentile in spatial, and in the 95th percentile in reasoning. This interest also showed in my academic test scores. According to the Iowa High School Content examination, revised form L, I scored in the 94th percentile in the area of science and the 84th percentile in the area of social studies. Even in English, my worst subject, I scored in the 84th percentile, and, in math, the 73rd percentile.

Enter Religion

Although probably not unusual in our society today, I was raised around two different influences that not uncommonly were at the opposite end of the spectrum in many areas. As a result, my religious upbringing was pulled primarily in two directions. My mother became an active Jehovah's Witness (usually called "Witnesses") in the early 1950s, as did also many members of her side of the family. My aunt Virginia was the first to become a Witness in the late 1940s, and her two sisters, including my mother, soon followed. As a result most of my immediate family became Witnesses. I was for this reason raised around this faith, and soon become very involved. I remember as a child going to hear hour-long talks given by my cousins, and "Witness talk" was common in our household for years.

On the other side of the family, my father was an agnostic and was very involved in various secular humanist movements and activities for his entire life. Even though most of my relatives (and all of my many first cousins that lived in the Detroit area) were Witnesses, my father had a critical influence on my life. He was much more affectionate than my mother, who tended to be somewhat cold, rigid, and legalistic. This could be because she lost her own mother at a very young age. It was my father whom I could go to when I was troubled or needed comfort or attention. Unfortunately, this largely ended after my parents divorced when I was in seventh grade.

The divorce of my parents was, by far, one of my most traumatic life experiences and would have long-term effects on me, even to this day. As a result of this experience I became determined never to divorce. Several years later my father married a younger woman, Dorothy Hart, at the Unitarian Church in Birmingham Michigan, the church in which they were both then involved. They were married by Lester Mondale, the brother of former vice-president Walter Mondale. My father's marriage improved things, and I was able to visit him more often. Dorothy looked after us like a mother and, if it was not

for her and my fathers support, I do not think I would have made it through college. They had one child, Lorna, my half-sister.

My father and I had many long discussions—sometimes very heated—about religion and what he saw as the many shortcomings of all theistic beliefs in general, and the Witnesses in particular. Although his influence on me and my thinking was great, even then I tended to see atheism as more of a rebellion against theism than as a logical conclusion based on the empirical evidence. While I was growing up he championed all of the causes that liberals typically supported then (and often now) including banning guns, abortion rights, strict “separation” of church and state (which, in education, often amounted to prohibiting favorable mention of religion in the schools while highlighting the events in history that are often interpreted today as negative to religion), high taxes for the rich, and generous government benefits for everyone who needed them (usually the poor). As is true of many of us, he was to become less radical in later life on some of these issues.

As a youngster, I was involved in the Witnesses with my family (except my Dad, who was always very opposed to them and this was, in part, what caused the divorce), and as a young adult I decided I would throw my lot in with them. When I look back now, this was partly because the Watchtower was the only faith that I knew then. At that time the Watchtower strongly discouraged attending University, so, soon after I graduated from high school, I began working without pay as a full time Witness in a position they called a Pioneer.

We had to work to support ourselves, and also spent around eight hours a day or more in what we called missionary work, which essentially consisted of going from door to door endeavoring to “place” (actually sell) Watchtower literature and convince the householder to agree to what we called a “Bible study,” which was actually a systemic

study of a Watchtower publication, such as one titled the “Truth book.” Actually, our goal was to indoctrinate the householder into Watchtower theology so they would become a convert.

I, frankly, found this work very depressing, partly because I was, even then, beginning to question the validity of Watchtower theology and teachings. I tried to deal with these doubts by more intensive study of Watchtower publications, an approach that was successful for several more years. As a result, I was an active Jehovah’s Witness for over 20 years, from around age 10 to age 30. I was eventually appointed a servant (a book study conductor and the ministerial school servant) a position later called an elder. I even did some writing and research for the Watchtower writing department.

My Career Path

Soon I elected to leave the full time Witness work and resume working full time. In a few weeks I landed a position as a cabinet maker. I had always loved working with wood and felt that this was a career that I could enjoy. Unfortunately, though, the cabinet making industry was becoming more assembly line and automated. The company I worked for built primarily kitchen type cabinets and I was not able to indulge in the creative furniture building activities that I had assumed cabinet making involved. My concerns didn’t matter much, though, because I and several others were laid off after several months and had to seek employment elsewhere.

Within a week I found employment building furniture for Hugh Acton Company in Birmingham, Michigan. This work was more to my liking because we produced custom made expensive high quality furniture. Within a few months I became department head—but again I soon became bored after I “over learned” how to build the various pieces that we produced (including desks, cadenzas, tables and a variety of

primarily top of the line office furniture). I then became determined to move into another line of work.

One of my hobbies in high school was photography (I was the chief photographer for both the newspaper and the yearbook, no small feat at Royal Oak Kimball High School where I attended, which had around 3,000 students then). This experience allowed me to leave the cabinet shop and land a job for Bloomfield Photographic in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. We did mostly commercial work, primarily photographing cars, shoes, wine, and other products for major corporations. Most of the work was still photography, but some involved motion picture work. Soon this work also became somewhat routine, especially since I was at the very bottom of the pile and saw the owner's son rise much faster in the business than I did. I assumed (possibly inaccurately) that this was due to nepotism and not talent. Regardless, this produced in me a depressing state of affairs that may have reflected itself in my work, and I was let go. Rumors had it that my religion played an important role (a coworker stated the department head did not like Witnesses).

I Started College

About this time a new state college was opening in my community, Oakland Community College in Bloomfield Hills, and I decided that I would sign up for classes. The only problem was that Witnesses were not normally allowed to attend college then. I knew the Brothers would give me problems, but I had a perfect excuse: the Watchtower taught that if your father wanted you to earn a college education, you should try to talk him out of it and pioneer instead. But, if he was adamant, you could then attend University with the Watchtower society's blessing. My father clearly *did* want me to go to college and *was* very unhappy with my spending my time proselytizing for the Watchtower, so I signed up for classes. I used to carry the Watchtower article on

this in my wallet to deflect critics. Actually, I began college with the goal of improving my knowledge in the areas that would help me to become a better photographer. Once in college, though, I soon went back to my original goal of becoming a science professor.

The family financial condition was such that they were not able to help me much. I started college at Oakland Community College partly because it was a small school with low tuition within driving distance from home, allowing me to live at home. My mother allowed me live at home rent free as long as I was in college. To help defray my school expenses, I obtained a position in the Audio-Visual Department at the college and, later, in the College Library (where I worked twenty hours a week for almost 2 years). I loved the work, and I loved my boss, a kind motherly African-American named Mrs. Louise Guiles, who even tolerated my youthful yapping about religion. Through this work experience, I was able to learn a great deal about many subjects, but my strongest area of interest continued to be in science. I was very happy in college, much more than I expected to be, and knew that this is where I belonged. My professors were, as a whole, very supportive and encouraged me to go on in school, which I did.

The college was experimenting with a new type of learning that relied more heavily upon workbooks, tapes, videos and other audio-visual equipment than traditional programs. I thrived on this approach and did so well that, in 1967, I transferred to Wayne State University in Detroit to finish my bachelor's degree. By then I had no doubt that I wanted to be a professor (the goal I had ever since sixth grade when I was elected president of the astronomy club and was privileged to go to different classes giving lectures on the space program, astronomy, and science). Partly because I had to work around thirty hours a week in order to meet tuition and other school expenses, I was not able to achieve the grade point average that I desired. Furthermore, my main interest in

school was learning, and I was less concerned about grades than most students, although I received mostly B's.

While still in college, I did a considerable amount of substitute teaching. Upon completion of student teaching, I was hired by the school district where I completed my student teaching (Lamphere School District in Madison Heights). I remained in this school district for a couple of years, and continued attending night-school, earning sixty-eight graduate hours within the next two years. A maturing of the district (which means that there were fewer school-age children in the area) necessitated the board of education dismissing all teachers with less than three years seniority (which included me). Teaching jobs in 1971 were extremely difficult to come by, but, fortunately, I found a part-time position teaching at Oakland Community College (by that time I had completed my Master's degree). I taught psychology and sociology classes, and spoke numerous times to church and civic groups on science and psychological issues.

After I started my doctoral work, I landed a research position for a corrections demonstration project in Oakland County with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) doing research. This was my first direct experience with both the court and research. The project agreed to help support me in completing a Ph.D. in research (the skills I learned helped immensely in this position) thus I gained extensive experience in both the world of government and research, two areas I have been fascinated with ever since. It was also suggested that, as I was working in the psychology area, I should pick-up more course work in psychology. I ended up with more hours in psychology than in my major, research and measurement.

At NCCD I was specifically employed in research in an experimental correctional demonstration project. My responsibilities included monitoring all data collection, writing various reports, interpreting the research data, and conducting a systems rate

analysis of the data on the relevant cases discharged from probation and parole within Oakland County, Michigan. I was also involved in the various write-ups and evaluations of the project, the evaluation of various psychological programs that were established in this research demonstration project, and other tasks. The function of the project was to research ways of changing the present punitive correctional system into a truly rehabilitative system based on a similar earlier project titled the *Saginaw Project*. The success of this project encouraged NCCD to institute a more extensive study that could better scientifically evaluate many of the ideas then widely accepted among criminologists but that were not yet empirically demonstrated.

The preliminary research on the Saginaw Project has been an important factor in successful criminal reform in many states. One of these areas is California, which has reportedly saved millions of dollars through the establishment of community based treatment. Yet, even in California, very little research has been completed in this area to demonstrate that this type of probation is as effective (or more effective) than prison commitment or regular probation. Oakland County was selected by NCCD for the project from a number of competing areas because it was felt that the court and the population in this location would be able to meet the necessary research requirements. The Community Treatment Project for Second Felony Recidivist Offenders, as the project came to be titled, was affiliated with the Oakland County Probation Department and one-third was funded by NCCD, one-third by the Federal government, and one-third by Oakland County. The research director of the project was originally Dr. Neithercutt, a California criminologist who was very involved in the research aspect of various criminal programs.

I was also then involved in group and individual counseling, gathering and analyzing psychological data for the research project. In the psychology field, I then

tended to be oriented to the so-called humanistic school, and concluded that knowledge for the sake of knowing is not enough reason to do research. Rather, research should be motivated toward improving the human condition. I also have a great deal of interest in creativity and creative behavior: my first Masters project was on creativity. My ultimate goal was to help alleviate some of the suffering that I so vividly experienced while working in the hospital. Although much of this suffering is medical, a far greater amount is psychological.

One who has worked extensively with social agencies, courts, etc., is keenly aware that all is not right with this country. A higher percent of our citizens are in prison than most every other country. Health statistics (disease rates, infant mortality rates, etc.) show that America ranks towards the middle or lower compared to all other developed world nations. This is incongruous with the fact that America, as it is the wealthiest of all nations, should have far *lower* mortality, crime, and suicide rates (which are above average compared most other nations). All of this cries for a solution. The fact that many other nations are doing a much better job than America, and with far fewer resources, hints that there are solutions. Obviously, they are not being fully seized upon in this country.

The research project was a demonstration project, thus was of limited duration. When the grant ran out, I was fortunate to land a job as an assistant professor at Bowling Green State University (I was selected out of over 40 applicants). While teaching at Bowling Green I began working on my second Doctorate (which was largely complete except the thesis). Also while at Bowling Green, I immersed myself in writing and research, and managed to publish about 200 articles while I was there, a rate considerably above the norm for college professors (the average lifetime productivity is about five articles, partly because many do not publish anything). In addition, while

there I published (or had in press) about 20 books, monographs, and book chapters (many related to religion, which inferiorated my colleagues). Writing now generally comes easy for me and, as I am highly motivated, I invest a great deal of time in this area. A research article, a theory discussion article, or even a literature review, is, to me, like a piece of art, and its production provides an enormous sense of satisfaction. I have always enjoyed creating, and this pursuit has expressed itself in many areas, including carpentry, woodworking and, later, writing.

At this time I was asked to testify before Congress. My experience with the legislature was very favorable. For example, I was asked to testify in Lansing, Michigan relative to the prison system (at that time I had been involved in corrections for about a decade, either working directly in prisons, for probation or parole departments, or in research). At this time, I became fascinated with the legislative process. The similarity between the legislature process and college teaching soon became apparent. The legislature utilizes information in creating policy (and an important aspect of this is information gathering, synthesis, and its application). As a professor, I felt extremely frustrated in that much of the data and information that I had gathered was not being used in a practical way except as class material (or to be expounded on in journal articles). I became increasingly aware that a real interest of mine was in influencing social policy, applying the information that I researched to the myriad of social problems facing us today. I have since been involved in this world in a number of ways, and have always wanted to orient my life more in this direction.

Leaving the Witnesses

Feeling guilty about attending college and being a Witness, I endeavored to become an even better Witness (psychologists call this compensation). As a result, I studied Watchtower publications more diligently and endeavored to deal with my

previous doubts. I felt that in order to be a more effective Witness, I should try to be able to answer contradictions and the problems that I saw in Watchtower history and theology, and so endeavored to focus on studying these areas in depth. To do this, I began a collection of Watchtower publications (and eventually collected thousands of books, booklets and magazines, almost a complete set of everything the Watchtower had published since 1879, save a couple of very rare items that I ended up with photocopies or reprints instead). My collection eventually resulted in a book published by Greenwood. I read this material voraciously and, at first, my reading supported the Watchtower, but the more I read (especially in older Watchtower publications) the more problems that I encountered. My extensive study of the Watchtower, first undertaken to defend them, eventually caused me to doubt the truth of Watchtower teachings. That became a severe crisis of conscience.

A major problem was the Watchtower had repeatedly proved wrong and had to change its “inspired” doctrine and official teachings—so much so that many of the doctrines taught by C. T. Russell, the founder of the Watchtower, were in many ways drastically different than the doctrines taught by the Watchtower when I was a member (mostly under the N.H. Knorr presidency).

As I researched the Watchtower, I became aware of the extent of the Watchtower’s many failed prophecies and changed doctrines. Finally, in 1973 I brought my concerns about 1975 to the attention of the brothers (a big mistake, I later learned). I noted that the Scriptures teach “no man knows the day and the hour” (Matt 24:36 and 25:13) and stressed to that we may end up with another fiasco as had happened with our previous prophecy failures, specifically 1874, 1914, 1925, among other dates (see Gruss, 2001). Some actually argued that when the statement “no man knows the hour” was written in Scripture, humans did not *then* know the date, but we *do* know the approximate

date today. I also would bring up information at church meetings that I thought were of interest, such as the Watchtower used to teach that Adam and Eve would be resurrected (the Watchtower later taught that Adam and Eve would be consigned to the second death, i.e. everlasting destruction).

Statements such as this at first brought disbelief (my fellow congregational servants—later called elders—wondered where I got these ideas from). Then they informally brought up charges of apostasy (and when I showed them the specific publications that taught these things, instead of absolving me, it tended only to make them angry, asking “Why are you reading these older publications anyway? What is your point?”) I know now that the Watchtower freely hurls the charge of apostasy to chill dissent. They have had so many major schisms in their history that they now respond by nipping in the bud *any* deviation from official doctrine.

The blood transfusion prohibition especially became a concern to me (many Witnesses die as a result of its refusal) and the more I studied this topic, the stronger my determination to oppose this doctrine became. The conflicts became greater as I read more, causing the alienation between me and my fellow Witnesses to become worse, until it was clear to me not only that the Watchtower was not God’s organization as they claimed but, worse, they were flat out wrong, even in many of their *basic* core teachings (tragically wrong). This conflict soon led to a crisis of faith that reached its head in the early 1970s. I hung on for a few more years and didn’t leave until after the infamous 1975 end of the world prediction fiasco (I formally resigned a few years later). The Watchtower predicted the end of this system of things and the beginning of the new world would occur before October of 1975.

My wife then, Marie Annette, did not have the inclination to study these issues as much as I did. (This was not due to lack of intelligence. She graduated with honors from

the University of Michigan). One result was that I became alienated both from the Watchtower and my family. This was one factor that contributed to the deterioration of my marriage (in time, she would also leave the Watchtower, as did most of my family and many of my friends my age—today, as far as I know, most are no longer Witnesses, and most are agnostics, or at least non-religious). In my family, only two aunts remained Witnesses, and both of these are now deceased. I often wanted to go back to where I was raised and visit those I knew while growing up, but once you leave the Watchtower, you are totally cut off and can no longer talk to Witnesses in good standing. This rule, usually rigidly enforced, prevents those who leave from adversely influencing those remaining.

Starting Over

When I left the Watchtower (another long story), I was totally disillusioned with all religion, the Bible, and God. I soon became involved in the atheist movement (partly due to the influence of my father) and soon knew (and counted as friends) many of the nations leading atheists (including Gordon Stein, Ph.D., Garry DeYoung, Ph.D. and, of course, Madalyn Murray O'Hair and her son) and published scores of articles in their various magazines. I read atheistic literature religiously for years (and still do). I even became the faculty advisor to University Atheists at Bowling Green State University.

Although I found good friends in the atheistic movement, I became increasingly disenchanted, especially with atheist scholarship. I knew enough about history and religion to recognize that many of their arguments against Christianity were terribly distorted and ill informed. It was often implied in their literature that all of the problems in the world were due to Christianity, yet I knew that the personality conflicts in the atheist movement were often even worse than that which existed among even the

Witnesses! My problem with the Witnesses was, as a whole, not the people but the leadership, especially the lawyers who ran the Society.

It soon became very apparent after devouring atheistic literature for over a decade that the arguments atheists used to prove their world view boiled down to only two basic concerns, i.e., the existence of evil in the world and the firm belief (actually the assumption) that evolution (meaning evolutionary naturalism or Darwinism) could fully explain the existence of the living and non-living world. Consequently, atheists had “no need of that hypothesis” (the hypothesis that a God exists) because they believed that everything, including life, can be adequately explained by naturalism.

Another factor that bothered me was that few atheists were doing much to make the world a better place aside from fighting against Christianity and all form of theism. I knew of no hospitals or schools started by atheists (although most were in favor of higher taxes to allow the state to build hospitals and schools) and, although they would help each other, most did little to help others except to complain about the putative sins of the Christians. They would often express frustration about the problems in organizing atheists, noting that they were an independent lot that did their own thing and were not joiners.

Some concluded that God may exist, but He has had nothing to do in the creation of the universe or, as Phillip Johnson likes to state, he has been, historically, permanently unemployed. The Witnesses are long-age creationists, and thus I had some familiarity with this world view. I also had studied biology in college (and later would become a high school biology teacher, and also, even later, I taught biology at the college level—now for over 20 years) so I was very familiar with the evolutionism arguments. When I became disenchanted with atheism, I decided I again needed to reexamine my world view.

When leaving the Witnesses, I found out so many things that I “knew” with confidence that were true were, in fact, false. All too many ideas, I learned from bitter experience, were nothing more than wishful thinking, such as many of those that were part of Watchtower theology. Thus, in building a world view that was based on reality (and not myth or the unsupported ideas of people), I had to begin somewhere. So, like the famous philosopher René Descartes, I was forced to make a fresh start - to doubt virtually *everything*. Everything my textbooks and teachers told me, and all my cherished beliefs. Descartes concluded that the only things he did not need to doubt was that he himself existed (“I think, therefore I am”), that the external world exists, and that God existed. In contrast, I began only with the assumption that I and the external world existed, and then endeavored to build my world view from this point. Descartes also taught that to prove anything, one must start, not with faith, but with doubt. As happened with Descartes, I too, in my thirty year quest, also reached orthodox Christian theological conclusions.

The place I concluded I had to begin evaluating my world view was to try to answer the question “does God exist?” Much of this doubt was due to the steady diet of anti-theistic, anti-religion that I was exposed to in college (I was then working on my second doctorate at Bowling Green State University).

To answer the most basic question, i.e., “Does God exist?” I focused on the two most common proofs that atheists use to argue that God does not exist, the existence of evil and whether there is good scientific evidence that the creation in fact created itself by natural law, or required an outside intelligence as postulated by the intelligent design movement.

The “existence of evil” problem did not seem difficult to answer because, as a trained and licensed therapist, I knew from my clinical experience that most problems

today are caused by people, often the person with the problems (usually due to relationship problems with spouse, family, children, and others). I also knew, as taught by all theistic religions, that free will allows humans to choose, and in choosing, some will choose to do good, others will choose to do evil. Forcing humans to choose only good removes human free will, and, as a result, we then become mere robots. In spite of the evil, would life be better if we were all robots? Freedom is often the most valuable of human goals, and loss of it the most resisted of evils.

My interest in this area is one factor that motivated my study of psychology. Partly as result of this interest, I eventually became a psychology professor. I also worked for a number of years at various psychiatric clinics, such as Arlington Psychological Associates in Toledo Ohio, under a licensed psychologist until I was licensed myself (an area in which I have not practiced for a number of years now, but I still keep up my license). Licensure requires not only graduate degrees, but several years of supervised experience under a licensed therapist.

The existence of pathogens, such as virus and bacteria, is also given as proof of the absence of a creator. This issue, though, was also not problematic. I knew that the vast majority of bacteria, viruses and even insects, and plants were not pathogenic—it is relatively unusual for an organism to be pathogenic, and it seemed quite clear from my class work in science that this was usually either due to mutations, or an organism infecting an inappropriate host. My college microbiology professor, in an excellent book that he wrote (and these ideas were also reflected in his lectures), eloquently showed the common assumption that most bacteria are harmful is a gross distortion.

These answers may not sound very comforting when one is in the middle of suffering. Nonetheless, after much study (and writing many papers on this topic), I concluded that the historic orthodox Christian answer is the most viable solution to the

omnipresent problem of suffering in our world. Furthermore, it was now clear to me that atheists did not have the solution except, it seems, to condemn the church for not eliminating the problem of evil (as if it could). As noted, I am not aware of a single atheist hospital, charity, or school that an atheistic organization started, and few atheists that I knew did much charity work (and I knew many). Most of them lived a life in harmony with their beliefs ... there is no god, no heaven, no hell, no creator, and humans are a result of many cosmic accidents. Therefore, they concluded, live and let live and enjoy today to the fullest, for tomorrow we will die.

The Question of Evolutionism

Like Descartes, I too began with the idea that the entire world behaved mechanically and could be understood only by the laws of science (or at least this was, for me, a viable beginning point). The period of doubt, though, for me would also be a period of growth. I no longer would accept what I was told as a young man, but would research (and question) each basic assumption that I held. I began researching the foundational belief, whether God exists. There were only two basic explanations for the existence of the created world and life; that these things either were created by an outside intelligence or that they were not. Since I concluded that the external world does exist, the only other possibility was that they created themselves (i.e., naturalistic evolution).

This starting point, consequently, was naturalism versus theism, the great question that all else hinges on when building a world view. My interest in evolution stemmed from my interest in science. If evolutionism (often called Darwinism or neo-Darwinism because the basic views of Darwin, such as pangenesis, are no longer accepted by scientists) was true, my question was answered. There is no need for God and, thus, he probably does not exist (or if he does, he is irrelevant in the affairs of humans). Thus began my quest to determine whether or not evolutionism was true. I realized this was an

enormous subject that would take a lifetime of study, but I optimistically concluded that it *could* be answered (or at least I would try to answer the question). This was an assumption, but I had to begin somewhere.

Since I had become disillusioned with the Watchtower, and found them to be anything but honest, I distrusted any and all religious literature, even on the topic of creation/evolution. I had read some of this material before, but most all of my reading and studying for college was material that had been written by evolutionists. I even wanted to name my son after Ashley Montague, the famous anthropologist who had written many books that I had read (my wife did not like that name, and so we went with her choice, the biblical Aaron which we spelled Aeron).

I began with the most basic evidence for evolution found in standard college biology textbooks in the chapters on evolution (I used the textbook that I had used in college). I assumed that the author had carefully studied the subject and had outlined in his textbook the most powerful (and most well supported) proofs of evolutionism. I also consulted other textbooks and found the same set of proofs were common to most all of them. I even reviewed many non textbooks on evolution, and from them outlined the chief evidence for the theory. This evidence included vestigial organs, homology, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, beneficial mutations, evidence of poor design, or the so-called flaws in design, the fossil record, atavisms, nascent organs, the argument from imperfection, natural selection, microevolution versus macroevolution, shared genetic errors, the backward retina, junk DNA, and other topics.

In determining if evolutionism was true, it soon became apparent that some questions were more difficult to answer than others. Of the set of proofs that I encountered, I concluded that the easiest one to answer would be “do vestigial (useless) organs exist?” These useless organs were seen by evolutionists as a major proof of

Darwinism—God would not create organs that were functionless and often became diseased, such as the human appendix. Therefore, the Darwinists reasoned, no God created us, we must have evolved. At one time it was claimed that over 130 vestigial organs existed in humans, and, although the list has been shortened since then, scores still exist. I selected the examples I commonly found and began my library research using only *secular* academic literature (which I wrongly concluded then was unbiased) to determine whether or not these structures were, in fact, vestigial. I reasoned that this would be an easy question to answer because all I had to do is find out if these organs have a clear and important function, or if they were useless, serving no function whatsoever (or served functions that were important in an evolutionary ancestor, but were unnecessary, or, worse, deleterious, in humans today).

One by one, I found clear functions for *all* of the putative vestigial organs commonly listed for humans—loss of some were actually life threatening, such as the thymus and pineal gland. I found the vestigial claims for many examples, such as the plica semi similunaris, was due to poor scholarship and lack of awareness of the relevant medical or biological literature. This research eventually resulted in a well received paper that I presented at an *American Scientific Affiliation* conference. After several years of research, my list dwindled to nothing (at least for humans) and so I began working on animals, and largely found the same thing (although much less is known about animal structures, and thus less research is available, consequently, some of these areas cannot be answered yet). This research later resulted in several published papers and, eventually, a full length book.

I then selected the next proof of evolution and, again, delved into the secular literature, producing several articles, monographs, or book chapters on my findings. Slowly, but surely, I was able to eliminate *all* of the main arguments used to

support evolutionism by researching *secular* literature only (and I am still working on further refining my research). Reviewers of my early papers on creationism often noted that I did not cite any creationist sources (and often had to add them after the paper was accepted “to acknowledge creationist research in this area”). At some point, I crossed the line, realizing the case against evolutionism was overwhelming and, conversely, the case in favor of the only alternative, creationism, was likewise overwhelming. My research eventually caused me to reject the macroevolution scenario based on mutations as the ultimate source of the original genetic information from which natural selection selected.

If this is the case, why are there so many evolutionists? It is my conclusion that the reason is because many are what Eric Hoffer called “true believers,” just as the Witnesses are (Hoffer, 1951). I had vividly experienced this mind set in the Watchtower: when I presented a concern to the brothers, they would rationalize my concern away (or argue that it was of no importance). When I would show them documentation in the official Watchtower literature (such as the many changes in Watchtower teaching) they would rationalize it as the light getting “brighter and brighter” as the end of this old world (and the start of the new) comes closer.

When I showed them that the changes were often back and forth, they would dismiss this concern by such rationalizations as “Jehovah’s organization taught untruths in order to test the loyalty of his people!” Although many Witnesses became disillusioned and left (as I noted, many of my friends and all of my family eventually left), there is a core set of true believers for whom it seemed that no amount of information could dissuade them from their beliefs. Despite the devastating case against the Watchtower, they still have around ten million adherents.

Likewise, many evolutionists are true believers in the full sense of the word. Most have heard only one side in college or from the mass media (and very few

are aware of the weight of the evidence on the other side). Unfortunately, few people have the time or inclination to carefully investigate the case against Darwinism. Many people have, though: I have in my library over 5,000 books and monographs written by people critical of the basic Darwinism world view—many were written by Ph.D. level scientists who are not creationists (or even Christians). And, unfortunately, the mainline churches tend to uncritically accept social convention, which today is evolutionism (a conformity that gets them in much trouble when fads change or when a fad proves wrong). In Nazi Germany very few churches (and very few “Christians”) openly spoke out against Naziism and the Holocaust, as has now been well documented (see Zahn, 1964 and 1962). Likewise, the administrations of most mainline churches openly *supports* the naturalistic atheistic world view preached by Darwinists and *oppose* the overwhelming scientific case for an active creator theism (Johnson, 1995).

Another factor that moved me to the creationist side was the under handed, often totally unethical, techniques that evolutionists typically used to suppress dissonant ideas, primarily creationism (Bergman, 1996). Rarely did they carefully and objectively examine the facts, but usually they focused on the suppression of creationists, *ad hominem* attacks, denial of their degrees, denial of their tenure and, in general, irrational attacks against their person. In short, their response in general was totally unscientific and one that reeks of intolerance, even hatred.

My review of the anti-creationist literature has forced me to conclude that it is, in general, appalling, not only because few anti-creationist writers understand the creation movement, but because most try to prove their point by using rhetorical techniques much as a debater would merely to win an argument. This method is very limited in helping a person to determine what is, in fact, true, and is too much like the arguments that I rejected when I left the Witnesses. I actually found much similarity between evolution

“true believers” and the Witness “true believers.” Only by letting the facts speak can reality be determined. True believerism, whether displayed by Witnesses or Darwinists, prevents the facts from speaking for themselves and, ultimately, prevents understanding reality.

My Religious Search

When I became convinced that evolutionism was simply wrong, just as I became convinced the Watchtower was wrong, I was inevitably led to the conclusion that, if life cannot be explained by naturalistic means, it can be explained only by an intelligent creator, requiring theism. If a creator exists, this means that humans may have some obligation to Him. This led me to the conclusion that one of the theistic religions must be valid. I then started exploring the major world religions and, since I was convinced that life required a creator, I focused on the three main theistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. My study of these three theistic religions has led me to the conclusion that Christianity, specifically historic Christianity, is true.

In short, I took a similar path taken by Dr. Mortimer Adler and many others, and came to accept Christianity as valid through science (but I recognize that I have much more to learn and study to do in this area). Many critics of the creation world view conclude that creationists accept this world view *because* they accepted Christianity first (and, in many cases this is correct). Many people, though, accepted Christianity *because* they rejected evolutionism (and only then did they accept creationism). Only then were they able to accept Christianity (and many of those who have rejected Darwinism have not yet accepted Christianity). Rejection of evolutionism may be the first step, and then accepting a creation world view is the *second* step. Then Christianity may become a third step that must be sought first to be reached. As the Scriptures teach, “come now, let us reason together” (Isa 1:18) stressing the importance of rational discourse.

The next step is try to answer “Which church is closest to historical Christianity?” Among the “Christian” religions that I explored included “Christian” Science founded by Mary Baker Eddy. My attraction was partly due to the influence of some Christian Scientists that I met while still a Witness. I soon found many of the same problems with them as I did with the Witnesses. Christian Scientists teach that God is good, all powerful (omnipotent), and everywhere (omnipresent), therefore evil could not, in fact, exist *anywhere* on Earth. If a person believes evil (such as sickness) exists, this is an illusion that must be dealt with by the “truth of Christian Science” i.e. there is no evil except the illusion of evil which, if it is banished from the mind, eliminates evil (Bergman, 2002). How they could hold to this belief when their children who become type I diabetic’s normally die if not treated by medicine, or when their children that develop childhood illnesses die, whereas children of non Christian Scientists receive antibiotics and usually recover without problems? This has been scientifically documented.

The Christian Science church consists of many well educated individuals; many are professionals who have done well in the business or professional world, especially law. These people deal with the fact that their religion results in the premature loss of many of their members with such rationalizations as medicine has its failures too. They argue that over 50,000 children die every year from medical failures so; likewise, we have a few failures as well. The only way to make comparisons, though, is to use a random sample research design to compare persons treated with Christian Science therapy (which is, in fact, no therapy, but rather doing nothing but merely trying to convince the person who is sick that he or she is, indeed, *not* sick) in contrast with diabetics treated with insulin (see Kramer, 2000, and Fraser, 2000).

Of course, this experiment will never take place because we know what the effects would be (and if the experiment did occur, there would surely be many wrongful death lawsuits). Yet millions of people once adhered to Christian Science, fully believing that it offers a valid view of reality (and that medicine is not only an illusion, but perpetuates a wrong belief and, as a result, causes death). I would later find that the specious line of arguments against intelligent design were similar to those used by Christian Scientists.

Other religious groups I explored in some depth included Mormons, Bible Students, Christadelphians, Unificationists, Scientology, and scores of other groups.

Bowling Green State University

I was going through the transition from a skeptic to a believer during the time when I was a professor at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. My colleagues were very unhappy about the direction my research was taking me, and they made it very clear that they disagreed with my religious conclusions. I had many long, sometimes heated, discussions with them and experienced the same response that I experienced from the Witnesses—many were true believers in the full sense of the word and were simply unwilling to look at the evidence (and most of my colleagues knew *little* about either creationism or evolutionism except that evolutionism was, they firmly believed, true—and creationism was “only religion” outside of science and, by implication, was not relevant or, worse, not true).

In discussing this area with them, it became apparent that the basis for their conclusion was they knew that all the experts knew that Darwinism is true and its critics were all ignorant, as the media usually implies (or openly states). Furthermore, they were not interested in learning much about the evidence. Why should they be

interested? They already knew Darwinism was true, so why read about it? Buying into the media propaganda, my critics, both at Bowling Green and after, invariably questioned my intelligence. The fact that I am a member of MENSA (as are a number of creationists), had a 4.0 GPA for both my earned Ph.D's, have close to a 4.0 for all 5 of my masters degrees, and scored in the 98 percentile for the GRE in my area did not (and still does not even now) impress them much. All of these achievements caused some of my critics to state that I was like Isaac Newton, a genius, but the last of the magicians (an idea that is also now being questioned).

The results of my research, needless to say, alienated me from my BGSU colleagues, and, as a result, they voted to deny me tenure—and the reasons they gave were blatantly clear (and in writing). The NEA evaluated the case and concluded that the university blatantly violated their own due process procedures and, further, concluded that the reason I was denied tenure was quite openly because of my religion. During the ensuing collection of information, including various documents, letters, depositions, and other information, discussions of my religion clearly dominated—pages and pages about their disapproval of the religious path I was taking and my conclusions in this area openly dominated their concerns.

I had over a dozen signed affidavits from colleagues stating that the reason for my termination was, openly, my religious beliefs and conclusions. I found the exact same antagonism among my colleagues that I had found among Watchtower adherents. They were simply different forms of true believers, even though their rationalizations were, in many ways, very similar. They objected to my religion (I was just in the process of leaving the Witnesses then) from the first year I was on the staff. And they admitted in the court case that followed that they knew I was a Witness the first year I was hired and did not approve.

My response to my situation at BGSU was to put forth enormous effort in the three areas—teaching, research, and publication—that tenure was to be based upon, according to our charter (a legally binding contract). As a result, I did not give my family the attention they deserved. I assumed that if I had an excellent academic record, the university could not deny me tenure in spite of my religious bent. I knew that tenure denial for a white male would likely be the kiss of death in academia. I knew many, such as a Witness friend—a Stanford Ph.D.—to whom this had happened (he went through much the same that I did including a divorce). After he was denied tenure, he was unable to reenter academia, although he did land some part time appointments. One of the brightest persons I have ever known, he is now an ex-Witness and an agnostic.

When going through my tenure struggle, I came home from work one day in late 1979 to an empty house (very unusual for me, as my wife did not work) and started cleaning the kitchen as I waited for my wife and two children to arrive home. Instead, I received a phone call from her indicating to me that she was going to file for divorce. She was fed up with my struggle, the long hours, the nasty comments from my peers about religion, and, in short, the whole situation at the University and, to get away from it all, she left me. Only the night before, she was as affectionate as usual. She would not tell me where she was, and I did not find out until over a month later that she was staying at her aunt's house in Michigan. This was the most devastating event of my life.

I was unable to change her mind, and the divorce eventually went through. We were married in June of 1970 and had been married for almost 10 years by this time. I protested to my attorney, stressing I did not want the divorce. He noted that the courts are not in the business of keeping marriages together but granting divorces. Furthermore, they did nothing to help save the marriage except, at my insistence, to order one

counseling session (which, as is often true, turned out to be a total waste of time). She soon remarried and, not unexpectedly, her new husband made it clear that he did not like me. For this (and several other reasons) since then, I had virtually no contact with my two children for almost a decade even though they lived only a state away. This was extremely difficult, and the hope that I would continue a relationship with them motivated my staying in the Ohio area. My ex-wife has since stated several times since then (after living with an abusive husband and ending up in a home for battered women) that divorcing me was the worst mistake of *her* life. I later learned her husband, Rick, who used drugs and was an alcoholic, severely physically and emotionally abused my two children, especially my son Aeron. The abuse has left severe scars that remain to this day. In one month I lost my wife, both children, and was forced to formally resign from the Witnesses due to an article I published about them in a scholarly journal, meaning I could no longer associate with most all of my friends and also my family members that remained Witnesses.

After I was forced out of Bowling Green State University, I became an associate professor of psychology at Spring Arbor University (basically a good experience but, again, even at a “Christian” college I experienced a lot of the same antagonism from dogmatic Darwinists—many took a similar position that I did while I was in college, namely that the two belief structures (evolutionism and Christianity) were separate but equal and could comfortably co-exist, a rationalization that I now believe is irrational. In fact, the two different belief structures are 180 degrees the opposite of each other. Either the universe had a creator or it did not have a creator, and there is no middle ground. Theism concludes that the universe and life has a creator, and orthodox evolutionism will not let a divine foot in the door (or they try to ignore the whole conflict by claiming that religion and science are two separate fields, and mixing the two is somehow “wrong”).

Unfortunately, I stayed at Spring Arbor for only a year and a half. While at Spring Arbor, I worked in the prison in a research project, thus continuing my experience in this area. I also taught in the math area at the University of Toledo for six years (they treated me exceptionally well and I never ran into the problem over origins there) which helped me focus on the need for rigorous proof in my continuing quest to understand Darwinism.

Five years after my divorce, while teaching at Defiance College I met a wonderful young woman, Dianne Steinke. She was a teacher returning to college to be recertified. We were married on Dec. 28, 1985, less than 6 months later. I have been fortunate in love as few men have been. We have a wonderful relationship, and not a day goes by where I don't appreciate how fortunate I am to be married to her. The college where I now teach, as far as I know, all of the full-time and part-time biology faculty are firm creationists of some type (from YEC to OEC and ID). In my present academic position, I teach basic biology, chemistry, genetics, geology, and biochemistry to undergraduates, primarily to individuals headed into some area of the medical and health field.

Continued Graduate Work

After I started teaching at Northwest State, partly due to pressure to strengthen my credentials in biology, I went back to graduate school at the Medical College of Ohio (MCO) in Toledo. My present employer is very supportive of this endeavor, and I am able to arrange my classes to meet my educational needs. I ended up with four masters degrees, earned at MCO, the University of Toledo, and BGSU. My primary interest in graduate study is to be able to carry out further studies in my area of interest, primarily molecular biology and genetics, and to continue my research and study in this area. My specific areas of interest relate to cancer research in the area of mutations, carcinogens,

and teratogens. Within this area, a specific area of interest is mutational hot spots, and the reasons and implications for this event, and the reason for the mutational patterns typically found when genes are analyzed. I worked in cancer research as a student until MCO hired me as a research associated and adjunct professor in 1998 where I worked until my boss, Ming You, M.D., Ph.D., went to Ohio State University to assume an endowed chair.

It is often stated that mutations arise randomly, and this, no doubt, is true for some. It is my conclusion, though, that mutations are far less random than commonly assumed. If they are random, this implies we are helpless or limited in preventing them. If they are not random, this implies that their prevention, or at least dealing with them, is far more feasible. I also have an interest in analyzing comparisons between genetic sequences both within humans as well as in primates and other animals. Much of the cancer research that I have done used animal models, primarily mice and rats and, therefore, I am more aware of the similarities and differences between various mammals which is important to understand the implications of the research findings with animal models.

A concern is we have been successful in curing cancers in animals but it has proved very difficult to successfully apply this model to treating cancer in humans. Rationally, the gene that produces the protein units that, for example, are involved in the Krebs cycle would have to have a high level of similarity in order to produce protein structures that are able to function (such as, for example, ATPase).

My Educational Philosophy

I have found teaching one of the most rewarding of all life activities. It is only due to my students that I have stayed in teaching and science. My students, as a whole,

tell me that I am an excellent teacher and I generally score high on student evaluations and have won several teaching awards. In addition, I enjoy research and have been highly successful in publishing (many journals reject from 60 to 90 percent of all articles submitted). My experience has served as a catalyst to develop my educational philosophy. An important psychological need that normally is not focused upon as such is the need to learn. While not as important as food, love, or sex, frustration of this need can nevertheless result in unhappiness and in some persons even psychological symptoms. It is increasingly being recognized in corrections that an important aspect of rehabilitation is helping the offender to involve him or herself in worthwhile activities, and one activity that has been found to be extremely important is the pursuit of knowledge.

From my experience in corrections and as a clinician, improving the availability of education can do a great deal to help ameliorate many of the social problems that presently plague us. Giving the students life survival skills, or those skills that they need to help them satisfactorily adjust to life's contingencies and cope with the requirements of western society, is an extremely important function of any college. Training for a trade (or a skill) is also important, but a college should focus on what I call "training for life." The local college is increasingly playing an important role in satisfying the need to learn. Some of the reasons include it is more economical, closer to where most students live and work, and, consequently, it is for many the most realistic alternative to a four year university.

The saying that "anything can be done if you know how" means that knowledge is one of the most important factors in being able to succeed in almost any human endeavor, and this includes success in job, family, home, and even in psychological and physiological health. My teaching in the behavioral science areas has focused on this

very practical, relevant teaching philosophy. In teaching adult courses to underachievers, drug addicts, and general criminal offenders in a prison, I have found this orientation to be extremely successful, and probably more so with problem students than with those that are more goal-oriented. My work with individual students has proved to be very rewarding. While I have a great deal to learn and, in retrospect, can often say “I wish I would have done....” I have been able to influence many of my students in a positive direction. In the future, I plan to continue to refine my general philosophy of education, and improve my teaching methods to facilitate these goals.

I have found my varied teaching background extremely useful in my present college teaching assignment. I have now taught the equivalent of one year full time at the elementary, junior high school, and high school levels, and for over 30 years at the college level. I have also worked with a variety of students and have been able to familiarize myself with many educational techniques. While teaching at the elementary level, I worked with a fifth grade psychologically handicapped class. These students in many ways resembled the type of person that I worked with at the probation department and it is my experience that many of the problems that probationers experience could be remedied by learning.

Consequently, one of the most important areas where research is needed is the effect of education on learning-handicapped students, a label that fits the majority of probationers and inmates. Their inability to deal with everyday events and problems stems in part from their inability to profit from their past experiences. The typical strong dislike offenders express against those in authority often stems back to the problems that they experienced in school and their past relationships with teachers. Development of good relationships with teachers is often also handicapped by many middle class teachers’ inability to appropriately deal with lower class students.

Having thus said this, one might wonder about my continued penchant for graduate education. One reason, aside from the need to meet my employer's requirements, is that I find learning one of the most rewarding of all life's joys. Having read voraciously since I was a young child, I have always had a passion to write (although my dyslexia largely put a clamp on this aspiration until, in college, I located a typist to help bridge the problem). I have no pretenses about finding the answers, although I keep looking, probably mostly out of habit. I have always believed that education was an answer, but now feel that it is an illusion that one can answer *all* of life's problems through education or research. Medicine possibly may someday cure many of our medical problems, but a psychology and sociology utopia seems less feasible. Ideas are still fascinating to me even, though I have come to be skeptical of many. On the famous Internality-Externality scale, I would now tend to have high external loci of control. College students tend to score internally—meaning they attribute their success to themselves and their own talents. This, I believe, is naive and partly due to our conditioning by the system. Luck plays an incredibly important role, although social skills are probably more important.

I now enjoy immensely reading, writing, researching and presenting the results of my research orally in debate and by other mediums. I try to be balanced and have developed my talents in other, non-academic areas. My hobbies include photography, of which I have taken thousands of pictures and won several awards; and have also done some medical and scientific photography. I also enjoy restoring antique furniture and have completed several dozen major pieces. In 1968 I was privileged to go to Europe for about three months with a group of students from Wayne State University, and again in 1981, and 2000 to speak at several colleges.

Some Conclusions

All told, my intellectual journey now has resulted in over six hundred publications (including twelve books and monographs) which have been translated into fourteen different languages. My understanding of the issues I have researched has matured considerably since my first publications in the early 1970s. My early works represent my thinking at that time, and since then I have continued to grow and mature in my thinking. Part of my growth has been facilitated by my academic pursuits.

There is no question in my mind that evolutionism and its branches of Darwinism will eventually fall, just as Marxism and Freudianism did. The belief structure is wrong and has produced an enormous amount of harm in history. When I mention this, my colleagues (and the atheistic community) typically point to what they believe is the harm caused by Christianity. This putative harm of Christianity, though, often results from *not* following Christianity, not from following it. Those who knew, understood, and lived the teachings of Christ would not have perpetuated the sins attributed to “religion.”

While still at Wayne State University, I heard a lecture by a well known philosopher who claimed that “we’ve given Christianity two thousand years, and it has failed. Now is the time to give atheism a chance” (I heard much in favor of atheism and against Christianity at University). In fact, we have *not* yet given Christianity a chance. In Europe and most of the world, even those portions that claim to be Christian, most of the people were nominal Christians (Christian in name only) at best. They did not have Christianity (or Christ) in their hearts and minds, and did not manifest the fruitage of the spirit (and this, unfortunately, is still largely true of many of the major denominations today). I find it appallingly ironic that, in the creation/evolution controversy, the mainline denominations invariably line up with evolutionism. As atheist Eugenie Scott has said, in convincing the public of the truth of evolutionism, one man in a collar is worth ten scientists any day. While involved in the atheistic movement,

several of the leaders remarked to me that the mainline churches are atheists' best friends because they support the ideology—evolutionism—that they believe will eventually destroy the churches and theism as well. Many prominent atheists felt the clergy are fools, helping to sow the seeds of their own churches' destruction. They are, in the words of Lenin, “useful idiots” (Charen, 2003).

It is also true that there are true-believer creationists just as there are true-believer evolutionists, but many creationists were once on the other side of the fence and converted as a *result* of their openness to the facts as I did. We have been there and done that, and hold to the creation world view *not* because we were taught it as children. I learned both sides as a child (the theistic side from my mother's knee, and the atheistic side from my father's) and have now been on both sides as an adult. I moved to one side due to my three-decade-long study of the scientific literature in both academic and library settings.

I have also learned that one must become conversant with the science literature in order to make an informed decision on creationism. And only by being a voracious reader can one learn and understand what people have found out about reality. One must also let reality speak, and Darwinists today refuse to do this. They insist that the universe and life, which, although it appears to be designed, really is not (and they hang onto this belief regardless of the evidence). They are true-believers in the full sense of the word, just like Witnesses and Christian Science adherents.

Post script:

My father died of pancreatic cancer on June 9, 1998. My mother died of complications from Alzheimers and Parkinson's disease (the specific cause was pneumonia) in 1996 after a long illness (from 1986 to 1996) during which she was

lovingly cared for by my brother Michael. She retired as an accounts manager from *Consumers Power Gas Co.* on January of 1985 after 25 years of service.

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