

News UPDATE

by Dr Monty White

MAY 2002

Christians—‘Fundamentalist Taliban Wannabees’?

Dear AiG supporter,

During our recent creation tour with Ken Ham, we were all swept up in a huge, unexpected media frenzy! In the humanist furore that was directed against a private school, AiG and Bible-believing Christians ... even the Prime Minister became involved! What a story to tell you this month!

This letter is much longer than the one we usually send you, but we decided that what is happening right now can alert you to something very important for the future of Great Britain, and thus it warranted a full report to you. I think this report is ‘must reading’ for every Christian who is concerned about the future of the Church and about Biblical authority in this country. The events of the past few weeks are fascinating, yet very alarming!



FIRESTORM OF DEBATE

There’s no doubt that God’s ways are very different from how we might choose to do things. Ken’s speaking tour of Britain demonstrated this to me once again—we need to expect the unexpected!

Many of you were praying for this trip. Thank you. You know that here in Britain the Church and Christian influence have waned significantly over the decades. For years, we have prayed that the Lord would open ministry doors for our Answers in Genesis office here in Leicester—and they have been slowly but steadily opening, praise God!

But I never would have guessed that our recent speaking tour would actually lead to a national firestorm of debate! The Lord has given our ministry unprecedented publicity, and our office has been inundated with mail, emails and phone calls. In fact, most of the population here has heard about the recent creation/evolution controversy. Here’s how the controversy erupted.

On the first day of the Leicester Creation Conference, BBC radio interviewed Ken and me. The first question the reporter asked came as a surprise to both of us: ‘Mr. Ham, were you shocked that your visit has sparked a controversy that reached the House of Commons?’

As you may know from reading the papers over the last few weeks, a creation group in Newcastle rented a school auditorium in nearby Gateshead, and invited AiG to do a seminar. The BBC reporter informed us that the meeting created headlines—which would last for weeks—across Britain. I have never

seen such publicity surrounding the creation/evolution issue in this nation!

Consider just some of the headlines from our world-renowned newspapers (The Guardian, Times, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph, Observer, Independent, Scotsman, Sunday Sun):

- US Creationists on mission to Britain
- Young Earth Creationists teach bad science and worse religion
- Our Father which art in Gateshead
- Creation theory is creeping into UK schools. Should we be worried? Yes, says science.
- God knows what Professor Dawkins is talking about
- Creationist talk enrages scientists
- Bishop calls for new check on Creation school
- An unholy row
- Storm over teaching of creationism at school
- Can religion and science ever be compatible in education?
- Evolution is God’s method of creation
- Academic criticizes creationist school
- Intolerance—Why do the chattering classes despise religion?
- PM backs creationism on schools’ curriculum
- In the beginning was the word . . . happiness
- Blair creates little happiness in the House
- PM sparks row over creationism
- Retreat into the cocoon of fundamentalist religion

These are just a few samples of the headlines across Britain! Not only this, but leading evolutionists such as Professor Richard Dawkins of Oxford University, Professor Steve Jones from London University and vocal humanist groups also became very publicly involved.

So how did a seminar at a rented school auditorium spark all this? I’ll let the anti-creationist newsletter of the British Humanist Association (of which Richard Dawkins is Vice President) share part of the story: ‘This weekend, a creationist conference is taking place at City Technology College Emmanuel College in Gateshead. The conference includes Ken Ham, the Australian creationist living in the United States and involved in having a creationist museum built in the state of Kentucky.’

The Guardian newspaper picks up the story here: ‘A conference at the school this weekend stars the head of Answers in Genesis, a leading proponent of American creationist Christianity, which has, until now, failed to gain ground on this side of the Atlantic.’

Another newspaper reported: ‘The creationist lobby has become increasingly notorious in the US, but until recently it has been relatively weak in Europe. The Anglican and Catho-

lic hierarchies have accepted evolution as fact, with the Pope saying [evolution] was “more than just a hypothesis”.’

Several articles, commentaries, editorials and letters to the editor appeared in various papers—most of which vehemently attacked those who take Genesis literally, and mocked Bible-believing Christians. The strong anti-Christian sentiment surprised many in our AiG-supporting churches, who had not fully realized to what extent Britain had not just rejected Christianity, but was passionately against it.

Now for some more fascinating background to the anti-Christian rhetoric that exploded here after the ‘incident at Gateshead.’

The school whose auditorium was rented happened to be one of the ‘faith schools’ set up by a previous British government. The religious group that helps fund the Gateshead school is also represented on the governing board, and thus has a say in the school’s educational philosophy. This happens at other schools, too; for example, as one newspaper reported, ‘Ibrahim Hewitt, of the Association of Muslim Schools, said his members’ schools (including six state-funded ones), taught children about Darwin, because they had to, but they also taught a different, Koranic [i.e. from the Koran] view’. (By the way—has there been any furore across Britain because some of these schools teach children Islamic doctrine? No, but if it’s Christian instruction ... !)

After seeing an announcement about our Gateshead meeting on the AiG Web site, a critic emailed the principal asking if this was the type of programme he should hold at the school. The principal replied that our meeting was a private function, with the auditorium being rented. The critic emailed the principal back and asked whether it was appropriate for creation to be taught in school. The principal responded by saying that creation was taught to some of the students as an alternative to evolution (noting that the school does follow the National Curriculum, including what is required to teach about evolution).

This person then sent the principal’s response to evolutionist Richard Dawkins, and also to a person in Government in charge of education and to humanist groups across Britain. A nationwide uproar ensued, all because prominent humanists like Dawkins found out that one school in the nation, which taught students evolution (according to the curriculum), also let some of the students hear about the possibility of creation! Remarkable!

DAWKINS INCENSED!

Dawkins, a leading evolutionist spokesperson in our country, was quoted in a newspaper report as being ‘incensed at the idea of creationism being taught to children at the taxpayers’ expense’. In the huge number of articles and other reports that appeared, absolutely no evidence for evolution was ever given—but there was certainly no lack of attacks on Bible-believing Christians.

News of the controversy here in Britain quickly made it to America! For example, a letter to the editor of the Guardian, from American professor Niall Shanks of East Tennessee State University in the USA, declared: ‘If the experience in the US is anything to go by, this attempt by assorted Christian funda-

mentalist Taliban-wannabees to turn the clock of science back to the Middle Ages will not stop with biology.’

CHRISTIANS ‘COMMITTING A CRIME’—?

As if it were a heinous crime for Christians to influence education in any way, one report stated: ‘Fundamentalist Christians who do not believe in evolution have taken control of a state-funded secondary school in England. In a development which will astonish many British parents, creationist teachers at the City Technology College in Gateshead are undermining the scientific teaching of biology in favour of persuading pupils of the literal truth of the Bible.’

The Independent on Sunday reported: ‘Last week scientists, humanists, philosophers and church liberals joined forces to denounce the Emmanuel City Technology College in Gateshead. The school, which is backed by evangelical Christians ... has presented creationist theories to children as part of their science lessons.’ What a crime! Some students actually heard about creation! ‘This has to be stopped,’ they argued!

The commotion reached the House of Commons, with Prime Minister Tony Blair being asked about the school during ‘question time’ in Parliament.

The ‘problem’ for the critics, though, was that this school

has achieved some of the highest ‘pass rates’ for the National Curriculum exams in the country, and has been rated by the government’s examining body for schools (‘Ofsted’) as ‘excellent’. A newspaper reported: ‘Tony Blair yesterday defended the college at Prime Minister’s questions, saying that it was achieving “very good” results. The government has designated Emmanuel a beacon school.’

Dawkins and other anti-creationists requested that the government re-examine the school now that it was known that some students hear about creation—despite the fact that tests showed the students were some of the best in the nation. BBC news reported, for example: ‘Professor Dawkins says the schools’ inspectors, Ofsted, who gave Emmanuel College a glowing report, could not have understood the school’s approach to science and should re-inspect.’

PRIME MINISTER BLAIR CRITICIZED

Prime Minister Blair was roundly criticized for defending the school. The humanists and evolutionary scientists (and even certain church leaders) didn’t care about the test results—achievement has nothing to do with it, you see. Students shouldn’t hear about creation at all—that’s the most important thing in their opinion.

A reporter in the Times stated: ‘If Tony Blair was a creationist then the right response was clear: he should have said so, and resigned at once.’ In other words, you can’t be a creationist and Prime Minister at the same time—a big no-no! (We don’t know Mr Blair’s beliefs on creation.)

The Times article continued: ‘We in Britain are hardly on the brink of a national slide into Christian fundamentalist education and ... the country’s youth does not face massive subversion by religious crackpots.’ The Times article then went on to say, ‘So long as the antibodies of common sense are all



Ken Ham speaking at the meeting at Gateshead school which caused all the commotion

around (as in Britain they are) early exposure to religion can provide a sort of inoculation, and I would personally encourage bands of hooded nuns, creepy evangelists, bearded rabbis and one-eyed imams to tour our primary schools wailing incantations and scaring the wits out of kids as a living demonstration of the madness of religion.'

A reporter in the Guardian stated: '... the creation myths are based on nothing but the fantasies of the ignorant who lived long ago To tell our children that ancient traditions, the dreams of our uneducated forefathers, and holy writings which must not be questioned or impugned for fear of blasphemy, are sources of authority about the world on a par with science, is a travesty.'

Dawkins stated to the press: 'Any science teacher who denies that the world is billions (or even millions) of years old is teaching children a preposterous, mind-shrinking falsehood. These men disgrace the honourable profession of teacher.'

CHURCH LEADERS SIDE WITH THE HUMANISTS

Church leaders also became involved. The Bishop of Oxford was heard on radio and quoted in the newspapers with statements such as: 'This attempt to see the Book of Genesis as a rival to scientific truth stops people taking the Bible seriously. Biblical literalism brings not only the Bible but Christianity itself into disrepute.' Wake up, Bishop, sir! People all through Europe, including Britain, have stopped taking the Bible seriously because of compromise like yours, and look at the state we are in!

The Rev. Arthur Peacock, recent winner of the \$1-million Templeton Prize for progress in religion, commented, 'Creationism is bad religion and false science.'

A reporter in the Observer warned the public that this issue of creation being taught to students, 'Raised fears that the fundamentalist doctrines that have polluted US education may now be spreading to Britain.'

A teachers' union spokesperson, commenting on the test results for students at the Gateshead school, declared: 'What's the point of having better educated bigots?'

An enraged British teacher sent Ken Ham this email: 'Keep your lies and nonsense away from the UK In the very near future, historians will look back at your movement and cringe with embarrassment. How could a country that put men on the moon throw everything out of the window? The day I am forced to teach the bilge you spout is the day I quit.'

I could share much more fascinating and eye-opening quotes. And their common thread? Vehement anti-Christian rhetoric. Why? One insightful commentator in the Daily Mail stated: 'Emmanuel is a non-denominational Christian school [actually a 'faith school'] run by evangelical Christians [not all the teachers are Christians, by the way]. This causes a frisson of alarm in those who—especially since September 11—think that faith schools are recruiting grounds for bigotry. ... This has created a climate of hysteria which has engulfed the Government's plans to raise the number of faith schools, which it wants to encourage on the not unreasonable grounds that they are generally very successful and popular with parents. ... The attack on Emmanuel reveals an alarming intolerance. For what exactly has the school done to attract such opprobrium? It merely teaches creationism, the Biblical story that the world was created in six days—which some evangelicals interpret metaphorically—in its Religious Education classes.'

My friend, this should be a warning to us of things to come

for the Church in Britain. The fact that leading humanists found out that one school—partly funded by the Government—allowed some students to hear about creation exposed an extreme intolerance toward Christianity in our country!

A nation that was the home of Wesley, Whitefield, Bunyan and Spurgeon; a country that once taught the Bible in its schools and universities; a nation that was once pervaded by Christian principles—now it has all but lost its Christian foundation.

Why? Because the Church by and large has compromised with evolutionary beliefs, including the idea of millions of years. It is well known that British Christianity was quick to adopt compromise positions, such as theistic evolution. The Bible lost its authority in the minds of most of the British.

The humanists recognize that to allow creation as a possible teaching option in schools is to undermine the very foundation of the humanist religion that has now deeply infested Britain.

This is the very same reason AiG had such an emotional reaction from humanists across America to the building of our Creation Museum near Cincinnati. But just as the news about the opposition to the museum gave the ministry tremendous exposure throughout the US (and the world), so the Gateshead publicity has been phenomenal for AiG here in Britain, and throughout Europe.

AiG—A UNIQUE MINISTRY

Not many ministries these days provoke such a national response as we've seen both in the US and now right here at home. This just reinforces our previous claims that the issue of the reliability of the book of Genesis (and the creation/evolution topic)—the authority of the entire Word of God from the very first book—is where the real battle for Christianity is 'at' in today's world.

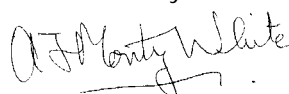
An incredible spiritual struggle is before us. The intolerance to Christianity is growing—and the Bible-proclaiming ministry of AiG exposes the extreme intolerance of humanists. (Frankly, I don't know of any other ministry that sees this.) We do so much appreciate your partnership with AiG, and God has used it to powerfully challenge the world with the Creation/Gospel message.

Please pray for AiG this month as never before—being reminded of how AiG confronts the compromise of Church leaders regarding evolutionary beliefs as well as the humanists here in Britain. This Bible-upholding ministry is truly a work of the Lord. AiG is at the front lines of an enormous battle for the hearts and minds of people. We need your prayers more than ever. There is an enormous spiritual battle going on.

If God's people, including our Christian leaders, don't start reclaiming the ground lost to humanists and begin standing firmly on the authority of the Word—from the beginning in Genesis—Christianity will be well on the way to being all but outlawed in our once very-Christianised Western world.

Your partnership with us in prayer is the most important support you could offer to us. Yes, thank you for your essential financial support, but most of all this month, please remember AiG in prayer as we proclaim Biblical authority.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Dr Monty White
Chief Executive



Come to our open day at AiG headquarters, Leicester

On Saturday, 7th September 2002, from 10.30am to 4.00pm, we are holding an Open Day at our headquarters in Leicester.

This day will give supporters the opportunity to meet the AiG staff, hear about our ministry, share in what God is doing at the meetings at which we speak, visit the headquarters to see where we work, and also to pur-

chase materials (books, videos and audio cassettes) at discount prices.

At 12 noon, we are planning to hold a half-hour testimony time.

At 2.00 pm, we will be holding a thanksgiving service at which Professor Andy McIntosh will speak to us.

Please make a note of this important date in your diary and make sure you join us.



Please pray for us and let others know about meetings in their area.

1 May, Bethany Christian Fellowship, Talke Rd, Walsall, West Midlands. Philip Bell. Contact: Jeff Jones on 0192 286 6560.

2-6 May, Dr Monty White will be ministering in Prague and other areas of the Czech Republic.

10 May, 7.30 pm North Curry Baptist Church, Windmill Hill, North Curry, Taunton, Somerset. Dr Monty White. Contact: Ed Bartlett on 0182 327 4070.

11 May, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Roundswell Community Centre, Barnstaple, Devon. Dr Monty White, Philip Bell. Contact: Tim Street on 0127 137 3376.

17 May, 7.30 pm, Emmaus Christian Fellowship, Capesthorpe Rd, Orford, Warrington, Cheshire, Philip Bell. Contact: Steven Cartledge on 0192 541 5719.

16-19 May, Dr Monty White will be ministering in Bulgaria.

1 June, 7.00 pm and 2 June 10.45 am Louth Evangelical Church, Monks Dykes Rd, Louth, Lincolnshire. Dr Monty White. Contact: Mr Chris Sharp on 0150 735 9147.

8 June, 2.00 pm–5.00 pm, Day Conference, St Paul's Protestant Free Church, 67 Wickham Ave, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex. Dr Monty White. Contact: Dr Peter Gadsdon on 0132 348

4052, or email the church office using < stpauls.bexhill@btinternet.com >

9 June, 5.00 pm, Bethel Evangelical Free Church, Burleigh Ave, Wigston, Leicester. Dr Monty White. Contact: Pastor Philip Raine on 0116 288 0556.

20 June, 7.30 pm, Elim Pentecostal Church, Narborough Rd/Harrow Rd, Leicester. Philip Bell. Contact: Pastor Tonks on 0116 254 0583.

23 June, 10.30am, 2.00pm and 6.00pm, Bell Green New Life Church, Armfield St, Bellgreen, Coventry, Warwickshire. Philip Bell. Contact: Pastor Patrick Boyle on 0247 637 4435.

27 June, 7.30 pm, Elim Pentecostal Church, Narborough Rd/Harrow Rd, Leicester. Philip Bell. Contact: Pastor Tonks on 0116 254 0583.

July 6-12, Youth Camp, Bergeijk, Holland. Philip Bell, Contact: David Boyd 00 31 413 342650.

6 July, 2.30 - 8.00 pm, Bethany Evangelical Church, Lower Prestwood Rd, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton. Dr Monty White. Contact: Gary Edwards on 0190 272 8667

13 July, 7.30 pm, Young People's Meeting, Down Baptist Church, Luxted Rd, Down, Kent. Dr Monty White. Contact: Pastor Hart on 0168 986 1886.

13-14th July, International Baptist Church, Eindhoven, Holland. Philip Bell. Contact: Jan Vander Myl on 040 243 7979.

20-24 July, Firestarter Youth Camp, Isle of Man. Philip Bell. Contact: John Harris on 0162 468 1821.

21 July, 6.30 pm, Broadway Baptist Church, Douglas, Isle of Man. Philip Bell. Contact: Paul Sayers on 0162 462 6813.

23 July, 7.30 pm, Ramsey Elim Church, Ramsey, Isle of Man. Philip Bell. Contact: Rev Mike Mason on 0162 481 6417.

4 August, 11.00 am & 6.30 pm, Maranatha Fellowship, 73 Holyhead Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham. Dr Monty White. Contact: Lorna Singh on 0121 523 9717.

18 August, 10.45 am & 6.00 pm, Carley Evangelical Baptist Church, Wharf St North, Leicester. Dr Monty White. Contact: 0116 289 0471.

28 & 29 August, various times, Congregational Church, Skinner St, Whitby, Yorkshire. Dr Monty White. Contact: Joe Montgomery on 0194 782 0286.

29 August - 1 September, Philip Bell will be speaking at a Youth Camp in Southern Poland.