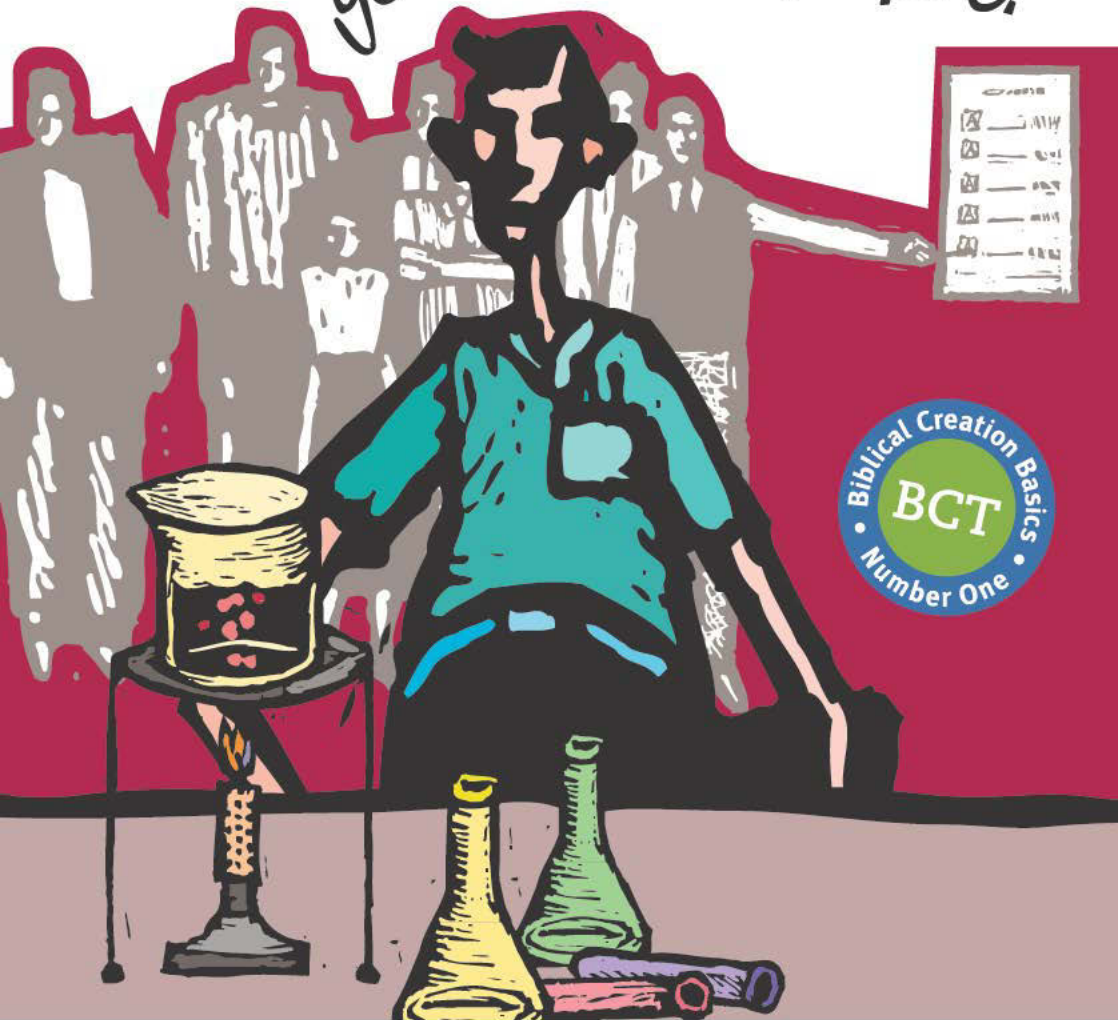


I'm a creationist...

get me out of here!



How to handle evolution at school or college

Paul Garner

So you're a Christian young person studying science? You believe in creation, because that's what the Bible teaches, but you're wondering how to handle the issue at school or college. You have some difficult decisions to make.

Will you openly challenge what you're being taught about evolution, or will you keep quiet? Will you avoid science as much as you can and opt for other subjects? Or will you embrace science and hope that your faith stands up under the challenge?

Being a creationist at school or college is not easy and in this booklet we want to give you some advice based on the experiences of others.

Firstly, and most importantly, your starting point for thinking through the creation/evolution question must be the Word of God. Ultimately we accept the fact of creation because the Bible teaches it – not because scientific arguments persuade us of it. **Study the Bible** so that you're confident in what you believe about creation and why. Pray and ask the Lord to help you trust his Word even when you're faced with ideas that seem to challenge it.

A second important principle is that as Christians we should seek to **honour God** in all that we do – including in our studies. So aim to be the best student you can be. If you're academically minded, work hard to get good grades in your chosen subjects. Read widely. In this booklet we've included a list of recommended books and other resources to help you.

My third point is one that might surprise you: it's very important that you **don't dismiss evolution lightly**. Evolution is convincing to many intelligent and thoughtful people and you need to understand why. There is evidence for evolution and you need to be familiar with it. In fact, your aim should be to understand the theory better than those who accept it. So listen to what evolutionists say with the goal of trying to understand, not simply to refute. Show that you really understand evolution and the evidence that supports it and you'll be better equipped to serve the Lord as a result.



Having said all of that, *acknowledging the strength of evolution does not mean you have to accept it as true*. Powerful and persuasive ideas like evolution can be wrong. The history of science is littered with elegant theories that had a great deal of evidence in their favour – but which turned out to be incorrect. The Bible gives us every reason to think that evolution is the wrong explanation for the history of life. But let's not content ourselves with poking holes in the theory either. Creationists need to come up with scientific theories that explain the evidence better (see panel below).

As a student a good strategy is to *ask questions*. But while you're in a position to ask probing questions about evolution, you won't always have good responses to objections against creationist ideas. In fact, someone more knowledgeable than you will almost always win a debate even if their arguments are deeply flawed. Remember that you're at school or college to learn, not to win an argument with your teacher or school friends. So don't make a nuisance of yourself in the classroom! And *never ridicule* people who accept evolution. An important part of your Christian witness will be the way that you behave towards others. Learn to treat people with respect, even when you strongly disagree with them.

Earlier I mentioned the need to read widely. Make sure you *read the best creationist literature*. I'm going to let you into a secret – not all creationist books are



Building better explanations

One of the greatest challenges for creationists today is to develop robust theories that explain the data of biology, geology and astronomy better than the conventional alternatives. For example, in biology creationists have been developing new methods of classifying species according to their created kinds and in geology a theory called catastrophic plate tectonics has been proposed to explain the geological processes associated with the global Flood.

New ideas and fresh thinking will always be needed if creationist research of this kind is to prosper. Perhaps the Lord will lead you to get qualified in a relevant area so that you can contribute something genuinely new or ground-breaking. There are exciting possibilities!



Developing scientific models based on the Bible is essential for creationism to prosper. For example, the Bible's account of a global Flood provides a useful framework for explaining the Earth's rock record.

very good! But our reading list suggests some excellent titles. Get to know the sound arguments – and those that are best avoided. Also, make sure that you read books by evolutionists and become familiar with the evidence presented in them. Again, we've included a selection in our reading list.

As you read, you'll soon discover that not all the questions confronting creationists have good answers. But that's okay – science is fun because we don't know everything! Try to **be honest about the problems** you see without being overwhelmed by them. If you have the opportunity, why not study one difficulty in more depth? As you do so, you'll often find that the problems are not all on the creationist side! And more positively, look for new ways of understanding the world that are consistent with both the scientific evidence and the Bible. If you go on to become a scientist, you may even be the person who comes up with new or better answers.

And this leads me to my final point: **why not consider studying a relevant subject at university?** I'm thinking particularly of biology, geology or astronomy. If you're up to the challenge, why not specialise in



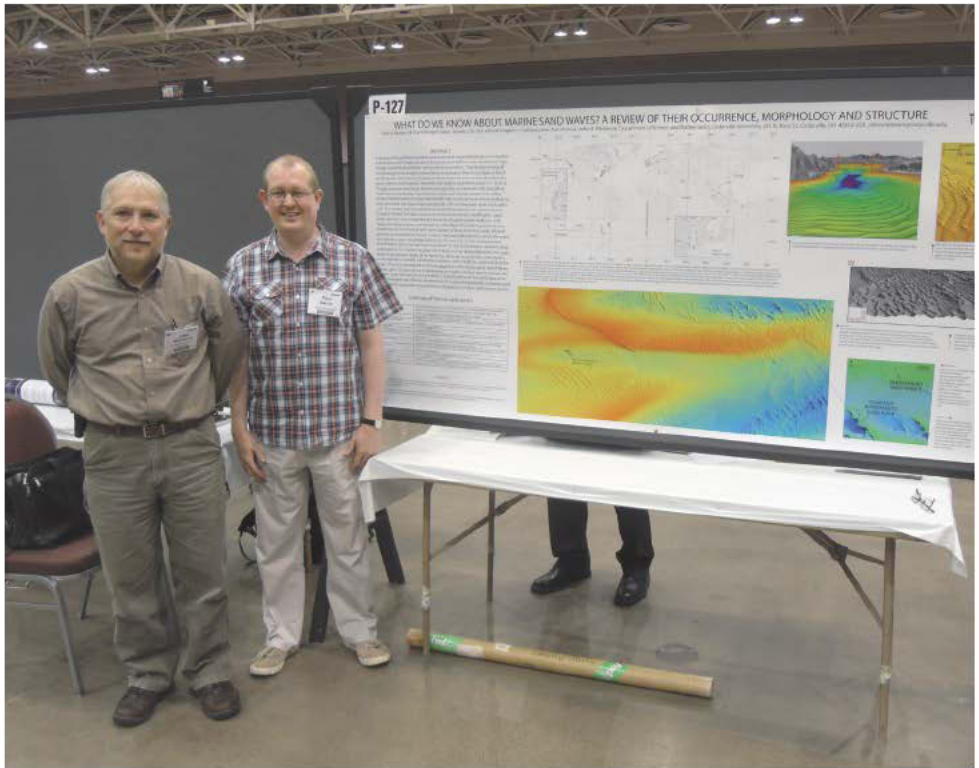
a particularly ‘difficult’ area like palaeontology or radiometric dating? The ‘difficult’ areas are the ones that are most relevant to creationism and – who knows? – you could become an expert in one of them and make a real contribution.

If that’s the path you choose to take, *stay in touch* with experienced creationists who can support you. As I said at the outset, being a creationist at school, college or university isn’t easy. You’ll face many intellectual and spiritual challenges, and it will help you enormously to have the support of a good local church and others that have been through the same experiences. We in BCT would be more than happy to offer information and advice. You can get in touch with us by post, telephone or email (see back cover).



See us at:

www.biblicalcreationtrust.org



The author (right) giving a poster presentation at the Geological Society of America annual meeting.

And finally...

Here are *three hypothetical scenarios* designed to help you think about the principles set out in this booklet. If you found yourself in these situations, what would you do?

You're being taught about evolution in a science lesson. The teacher asks whether anyone in the class doubts the theory of evolution. Would you put your hand up? If so, what would you say?

You're in a biology exam and are asked a question about evolution. Would you take the opportunity to challenge evolution? Would you mention your own creationist beliefs?

One of your friends—also a creationist—says that people must be stupid to believe in evolution. Do you think he's right? How helpful is that attitude?



Recommended resources

Books

From an evolutionary perspective:

On the Origin of Species by Charles Darwin (Penguin Classics, 1985 [1859], 477 pp). Every creationist student should be familiar with Darwin's argument. Essential reading.

What Evolution Is by Ernst Mayr (Phoenix, 2002, 318 pp). A popular account of evolution by one of the leading evolutionary biologists of the twentieth century.

Evolution: A Very Short Introduction by Brian and Deborah Charlesworth (Oxford University Press, 2003, 168 pp). A useful primer for the general reader.

Evolution by Mark Ridley (Blackwell, Third Ed., 2004, 751 pp). One of the most widely used undergraduate texts. For advanced study.

Evolution by Douglas Futuyma (Sinauer, Second Ed., 2009, 545 pp). Another widely used undergraduate text. For advanced study.

From a creationist perspective:

The New Creationism by Paul Garner (Evangelical Press, 2009, 300 pp). A popular summary of the work that creationists are doing to build scientific theories on a biblical foundation.

Faith, Form, and Time by Kurt Wise (Broadman and Holman, 2002, 287 pp). A bold and comprehensive creationist model of origins.

Explore Evolution by Stephen Meyer, Paul Nelson, Jonathan Moneymaker, Scott Minnich and Ralph Seelke (Hill House, UK Ed., 2009, 159 pp). An attractive, even-handed presentation of the arguments for and against evolution. Should be read alongside more positive creationist treatments.

Faith, Reason and Earth History by Leonard Brand (Andrews University Press, Second Ed., 2009, 508 pp). A fine textbook for more advanced study. (It should be noted that the author is a Seventh Day Adventist, although that position does not come across strongly in the book).

Beginnings by Leonard Brand and David Jarnes (Pacific Press, 2006, 175 pp). A helpful and thought provoking book for the general reader. Can be considered a popular abridgement of *Faith, Reason and Earth History*.

Earth's Catastrophic Past (2 vols.) by Andrew Snelling (Institute for Creation Research, 2009, 1102 pp). A comprehensive work setting out a modern creationist approach to geology.

Understanding the Pattern of Life by Todd Wood and Megan Murray (Broadman and Holman, 2003, 231 pp). An excellent introduction to creationist biology, with an emphasis on baraminology (the study of the created kinds).

Websites introducing creation research

Biblical Creation Trust: <http://www.biblicalcreationtrust.org>

Journal of Creation Theology and Science: <http://www.coresci.org/jcts>

Creation Biology Society: <http://www.creationbiology.org>

Geoscience Research Institute: <http://www.grisda.org>

Core Academy of Science: <http://www.coresci.org>

Human Genesis: <https://humangenesis.org>



I'm a creationist... *get me out of here!*

'You believe in creation, because that's what the Bible teaches, but you're wondering how to handle the issue at school or college.'

'Being a creationist at school or college is not easy and in this booklet we want to give you some advice based on the experiences of others.'

About the author

Paul Garner BSc MSc FGS is a full time researcher and lecturer for Biblical Creation Trust. He has a masters degree in geoscience from University College London, where he specialised in palaeobiology. He is a Fellow of the Geological Society of London and a member of several other scientific societies. His first book, *The New Creationism: Building Scientific Theories on a Biblical Foundation*, was published by Evangelical Press in 2009. He is married with two grown-up children and resides in Cambridgeshire, England.



E-Mail: paul@biblicalcreationtrust.org Tel: 01353 721578

www.biblicalcreationtrust.org



[biblicalcreationtrust](https://www.facebook.com/biblicalcreationtrust)



[@bct_origins](https://twitter.com/bct_origins)



Biblical Creation Trust

Published by Biblical Creation Trust, PO Box 325, Ely, CB7 5YH
Registered Charity No: 1094782

© Biblical Creation Trust 2016