

A Christian Response to Intelligent Design
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I am ordained Minister in the United Church of Christ. I am also the daughter of a retired junior high science teacher. And I am deeply troubled by the introduction of the psuedoscience of Intelligent Design in public school science curriculum. As a Christian, I want to go on record that not all Christians share either the Intelligent Design nor its cousin, Creationism, view of the world and its origins.

The teaching of Intelligent Design as a legitimate scientific theory has no place in public school science classes. Scientific theories, like Evolution, are based on study, research and the scientific method of trial and error in exploration. That research has been a part of the scientific theory of Evolution all the way back to Charles Darwin and his "Origin of the Species."

In contrast, Intelligent Design does not start with scientific exploration, but with religious belief that is then imposed on the "research." Intelligent Design is neither scientific nor a theory. It is a religious belief and should be regarded as such. As such, it could certainly be used in a comparative religion class. But it has no place in the science lab.

Moreover, what the proponents of Intelligent Design misunderstand is that we Christians undermine the grandeur **and** truth of the Bible itself when we try to make religious faith into scientific fact. Genesis and the other books of the Bible tell the truth, but it is not the truth of scientific fact. It is the truth of poetry and faith.

I learned that truth from the most Christian person I know--my mother, who was both a scientist and a person of profound faith. She received her Masters in Plant Pathology after discovering a new bacterium in 1939 and during World War II, worked with other women scientists to develop the mass production of penicillin. After my father's death, she taught 7th and 8th grade science (including Evolution) in public schools for over 25 years.

At home and through our church, my mother instilled in me and my siblings a sense of wonder and awe at God's creation--but not a literal creationism. She taught us the fundamentals of the Christian faith (but not to be Fundamentalist in our thinking). One of the basic tenets of Christianity is to love God with "all your heart, soul, **and mind**." For my mother, that meant we used the best that science had to offer to explore this universe. She taught us not to be afraid of questioning and of knowledge. She also taught that true scientific inquiry doesn't begin with a preset belief—like Intelligent Design—in mind. Nor does true science manipulate the data to support that belief.

From her, we learned the difference between scientific fact and religious faith. We learned that both ways told the truth. But we also learned there were appropriate settings for each. The science lab was not the place to teach religious belief. It still isn't.

One final point. One, if the proponents of Intelligent Design insist that such religious belief belongs in the science curriculum, they should also support the teaching of the Hopi's Emergence stories or the Navajo Blessingway in the same class. They certainly tell a truth about creation as well.