

Brian Bauknight  
Senior Minister  
Christ UM Church  
Bethel Park, PA

11/25/05 – Pastor's Column in newsletter

## Creationism and Evolution

The recent off-year elections were a mixed bag at best. While a few more Democrats were thrust into office than Republicans, I see no clear trends or mandates. The only thing of which I am confident is that most political leadership is a mess right now – from local government to Washington DC and back again.

One particular voting issue appalled me, however: the votes in Dover, Pennsylvania and in Kansas around “evolution” vs. “creationism.” As one high school senior from Kansas put it on the morning after the elections, “I am embarrassed.”

I understand that teachers cannot “preach” faith-based principles in the public schools. But in the faith-based framework within which I try to live my life, there is simply no controversy. I think you can believe and study evolution AND believe in a creator God. One writer whom I read recently called for Christians to advocate “theological evolution.”

Some of you will recall that I preached on this issue in late January of this year. I called it “The Creationist Conundrum.” (You can read it in the sermon section of our web page; or call Judy Steeb to make you a printed copy to pick up.) In that message, I said this: *“The bottom line is that I have never had any internal conflict about creation. Evolution has never really bothered me at all....I find it rather amazing that Genesis 1 (written 3000 years ago and in oral tradition before that) and modern science say very similar things.”*

I concluded that message with these words: *“Evolution and natural selection are not the enemy. Evolution is only wrong if God is deemed irrelevant to the mix. I love the opening chapters of Genesis. For me, they do not contradict science or scientific inquiry. Rather they are a witness to the One who is beyond it all.”*

I truly wish we could get over this issue, and on to much more important ones. Southwestern Pennsylvania and our nation have so many other matters that demand thoughtful conversation and action. Most of the energy spent on this subject is wasted precious human energy.

My children learned about evolution in school. My grandchildren are learning it now. I will gladly, eagerly supply the theological framework to give wholeness to the topic and shape to their lives.

Brian Bauknight