

Beliefs in God and evolution can go hand-in-hand

Christmas break. A time of endless bickering with families, increasing boredom and exciting reunions with high school friends who you have nothing in common with any longer. This time, however, things were a little more interesting. Over dinner six friends and I discussed more than the usual "Have you seen so-and-so?" and "Is he really dating her?" Surprisingly enough, one of the topics that came up over pizza was evolution; human and otherwise.



ELIZABETH PRESTON
Columnist

I admit that the vast majority of science remains far from my grasp, and I fear the biology class I have gamely signed up for this semester will be a miserable experience. Regardless, I have always (apparently incorrectly) assumed that there are some basic evolutionary tenets everyone subscribes to. Such as, oh, I don't know - the fact that humans evolved from a species of apes between four and eight million years ago.

Beginning with Charles Darwin's remarkable findings in the nineteenth century and reinforced

daily as more fossils and scientific theories come to light, humankind's beginnings have been proved beyond a shadow of a doubt. Yet some of the people I was at dinner with that night were actually stunned that anyone believed humans did evolve from apes.

I have read the first book of Genesis many times, but I cannot imagine believing it literally. While growing up, I questioned ideas such as the idea that the earth was started and completed in six days. I was taught that the "days" the Old Testament of the Bible refers to could have been millions of years, instead of our modern definition. I was also taught that believing in evolution does not preclude a belief in the Bible; the two do not differ unreconcilably. The passages could mean that God's touch created the first cell, and then instigated the process of evolution.

"Creationists," however, truly believe that the way man was formed was through the touch of God on soil, and that every living species was individually created by the hand of God. By this logic, all species were complete at conception, and remain unchanged over time. This is not only a completely untestable theory, it is also illogical.

Creationists offer no answers to where new species come from. They also do not address the amazing coincidence that all species on the plan-

et share genetic codes, termed DNA, or the fact humans and gorillas share roughly 99% of these genetic codes for proteins. If we pretend that evolution did not occur, the amazing similarities in bone structure and embryo development in species as superficially diverse as bats and whales is yet another amazing coincidence. Creationists do not offer any explanations for these mind boggling questions. When asked why God would include useless organs in species, called vestigial organs, some creationists say it is to test our faith. Thus the useless ear-wiggling muscle that all humans have is simply a big test given to us by God. Right, and Newt Gingrich didn't really say that about Hillary Clinton.

In contrast to these outlandish and improvable beliefs, science has offered us not only plausible answers to these questions, but testable and stable ones. Every new fossil discovered and every code of DNA explored backs up the theory that we all evolved from one cell that roamed the earth (so to speak) billions of years ago. In addition, radioactive dating, one of the many solid cornerstones that evolution rests upon, has been proven to be the most stable process on Earth. Nothing else even approaches its constant rate.

Besides the "humans created by the touch of God" theory, the most ridiculous thing creation-

ists insist on is their theory that the earth is only a few thousand years old. In truth, based on hundreds of studies of rocks, fossils, algae and the aforementioned radioactive dating system, the Earth and Moon have been proven to be about 4.5 billion years old. This is not a small discrepancy in numbers.

A Stanford university professor who has studied evolution for many years, Tim M. Berra, wrote an informative and interesting book on this subject; *Evolution and the Myth of Creationism*. In it he points out "People once thought the earth was flat and that it was the center of the universe. It is now high time we laid the creationist ideas to rest, as well."

Regardless of personal religious beliefs, as students of an institution of higher learning we are responsible for uncovering truth and learning the intricacies of life. We cannot allow ourselves to believe in theories that are supported by nothing other than unsubstantiated guesses, and then call ourselves educated. Even people who believe in a literal translation of the book of Genesis must find a way to reconcile their beliefs with the truth that science has shown us. It is the only way to move forward.

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major



Best concerts have least hype

Small local shows often offer more meaningful experiences

That's it," I thought as I squinted my eyes to make out the forms moving on the stage, "this is the last time I will pay inflated prices to see a band play a concert in an arena." You can't get a decent seat without doling over the dollars to a scalper or by chance getting lucky in the ticket lotteries that many ticket agencies have switched to. No more camping out in the parking lot of Foley's three days in advance for tickets to see your favorite band. And of course there is the 104 factor...



KYLE LITTLEFIELD
Columnist

The dreaded 104 factor. In the Houston area the radio station Power 104 usually promotes big concert events. Power 104 has the knack for taking a good song from a good band and running it into the ground. Its listeners are largely composed of trendy high school and junior high kids. Usually these are the kiddies that get tickets to see a band even though they are only familiar with one song ... y'know, the one they play on 104. When you go to see this band and are surrounded by these people who are talking in the middle of the songs that aren't played on the radio, this is good sign that the threat of the 104 factor is great. And when the band starts that familiar melody of that hit single heard on the radio and these people suddenly start screaming loudly and dancing melodramatically, you will now you have been victimized by the 104 factor.

It all suddenly began to make sense to me; I can see good bands, not pay the inflated prices, and remain in the Bryan/College Station area. Local music shows are more intimate, the musicians are passionate about their art and they need not rely on pyrotechnics to get through to the audience.

There are plenty of places to see good music around town, however, naming them is beyond the scope of this piece.

Many places charge \$5 to \$10 at the door to see a good band that is stopping through town. This is a good deal compared to 25 to 30 bucks to see bands play a big arena. Some popular bands, such as the Eagles and the Rolling Stones, are getting \$75 to \$100 dollars a ticket, and for what? So you can see the show on the big diamond vision screen that dwarfs the actual musicians. I'd rather be able to watch the guitarist's fingers as he/she bends the strings and hear new music that probably isn't being played on the radio. Just because a band isn't on a big record label or has no record deal at all doesn't mean that their music is no good. Impress your friends by being familiar with bands that don't have a video in rotation on MTV. They will think you are "alternative," and hey, being "alternative" is cool these days.

I have seen many great bands and have met many interesting musicians by going to local shows. Last semester I got to see Doyle Bramhall, a blues musician who was a friend and a co-songwriter with the late, great Stevie Ray Vaughan. If I remember correctly, the show cost about \$10.

I will remember this show much more than when I saw U2 at the Summit for \$25. Don't get me wrong, I think U2 is a great band but their appeal is immense and as a result they must play arenas like the Summit before thousands of people. The magic may be there for the first 25 rows of people, but the rest of the people aren't getting their money's worth.

On the other hand, I got to not only hear Doyle Bramhall play but got to chat with him between sets. And maybe the best part of local music yet, it is so diverse. Bands that play country to rap and everything in-between perform in Bryan/College Station so there is something of interest for just about everyone.

So when Green Day or whoever the new "buzz" band is comes to play the Astrodome, save your precious money. Save some gas too — see a local show. Your ears will still ring, but it won't be from the annoying cries of the 104 factor.

Kyle Littlefield is a senior journalism major

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Established in 1893

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EDITORIAL

I HAVE A DREAM

A&M is correct to observe MLK Day but should not overlook other holidays

All Americans should recall the benefits of Martin Luther King Jr.'s accomplishments and achievements. By advocating peace instead of violence, King taught people to love one another and treat people as equals and as human beings.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," King told thousands in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

His words again echoed through the nation yesterday as a reminder of the first great steps of the civil rights movement.

As Americans and as people of the human race, we should take time to reflect on King's achievements and should try to come even closer to reaching his goals. Although the nation continues to be plagued by violence, racism and hatred, King's message still serves a purpose — a hope that one day communities, states and nations will be united by peace and love instead of violence.

King is a great role model, not only for African Americans but for everyone. He helped lead great advancements of his race and all others. Most visibly, blacks and whites can now sit in the front of buses, use the same water fountains and eat in the same restaurants. These achievements

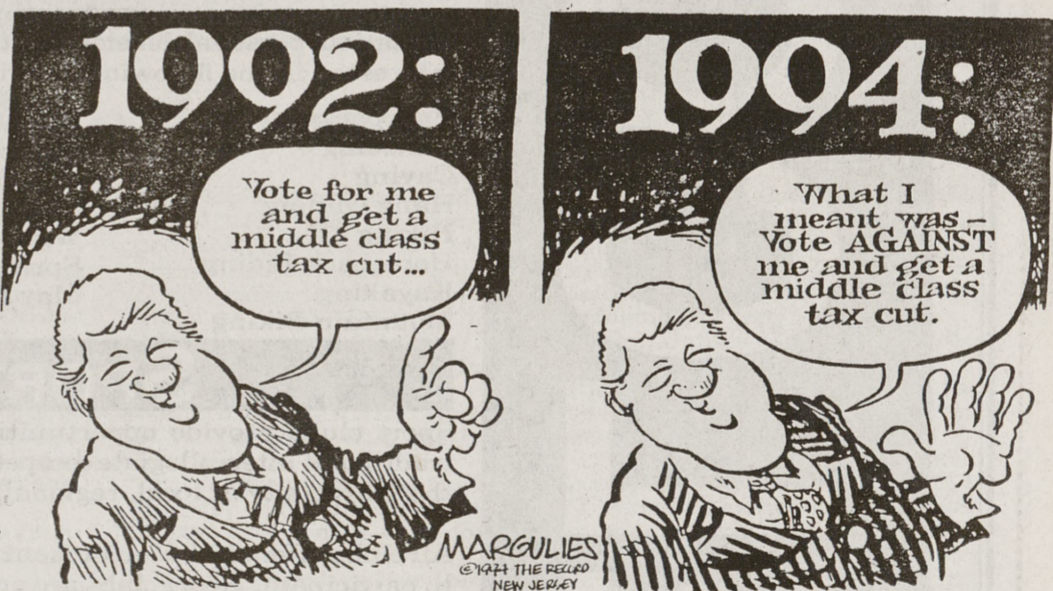
alone made King a great leader, worthy of recognition.

But more importantly, he stood up for his beliefs and was not afraid to take risks. He sacrificed his time, his freedom and his life for a cause — to bring all people together and give them all the same rights.

Even though the United States has made much progress since the days of King, America could use more people like him. As students, we are the future leaders of the country and we should learn from King's legacy — to be tolerant of others, to judge them for who they are and to understand their cultures and backgrounds. King's legacy of a dream should inspire future leaders to serve our society with the same dedication.

Many groups are still fighting for equality, respect and a piece of the American dream. Martin Luther King Jr., like all human beings, suffered his share of mistakes and failures; but his achievements should be celebrated.

The University made the right decision to observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day this year. However, some holidays are still overlooked. Holidays such as Memorial Day and Veteran's day, with meanings so intricately bound with many Aggie traditions, should also receive Texas A&M University's reverence and respect.



Opinion page represents voices of A&M student body

The sound of tireless voices is the price we pay for the right to hear the music of our own opinions." — Adlai Stevenson II



STERLING HAYMAN
Opinion Editor

Well folks ... don't think I could've blurted it out better. It's Springtime here at good ol' Maroon and Whiteville. Time to shell out some hard-earned cash for some more new edition textbooks. Time to get back in the habit of attending classes (or to start the habit for that matter). But most importantly, it's time get our ol' opinionated juices flowing again.

Now that football season is over and Bonfire's remains have been tilled into the polo field, that scarce little devil called "free-time" has resurfaced. My hope is that you will devote some of this free time to reading this semester's Opinion page.

The Opinion page is a forum for the voices of A&M. That's why it was created, and that's why it still exists. It will only continue to exist as long as the students remain vocal about events and issues that affect their lives.

Are the opinions always mainstream? Nope. Are they always bipartisan? Don't bet on it. Are they always of the upmost concern? Sure — didn't you follow the month-long debate over double-strapping vs. single-strapping backpacks? Lemme tell ya ... we cover all the hot issues on this page!

All kidding aside, the Opinion page is prime stompin' grounds for some pretty heavy views.

The Mail Call section, over the past semester, has been filled with student feedback about issues ranging from racist fliers all the way to the tolerance of different student with sexual persuasions at the University.

With a campus as large as ours and with a student body as diverse as ours, there is always going to be healthy debate on various topics. This is the public outlet for such debate. I hope that this page will serve as an expression of many views on the Administration, the policies of the student and faculty governments, the actions of our federal government and any local issues that strike a nerve in the student body.

The process for submitting mail is simple:
1. Crank out a letter on that piece of notebook paper, PC or type-writer.
2. With letter in hand, trot right on down to the

basement of the Reed McDonald building (Room 013 to be exact).

3. Taa-daa, you're done!
All letters require a signature, a valid student I.D. and a phone number. That's all, folks. We do reserve the right to edit such letters for style, clarity, length and accuracy. The more letters we receive, the more we will publish.

A helpful hint: Try to steer clear of haiku poetry, sonnets or hieroglyphics. Also, keep letters less than 300 words. No novels or short stories accepted.

If you would like to submit a guest column, call The Battalion Opinion desk to discuss the matter.

Oh, by the way, e-mail and faxes are also accepted. The fax number is 845-2647, and Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu is the e-mail address.

Student participation is crucial to maintain the highest quality Opinion page.