

October 21, 2003

Texas State Board Members
Texas State Board of Education
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

Texas State Board Members,

After my daughter was murdered at Columbine High School in 1999, I was asked to testify before our United States Congress. Please allow me to share with you part of what I said that day:

"Since the dawn of creation there has been both good and evil in the hearts of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher, and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries out for answers."

"I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy – it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves. I wrote [this] poem...that expresses my feelings best:"

Your laws ignore our deepest needs,
Your words are empty air.
You've stripped away our heritage,
You've outlawed simple prayer.
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,
And precious children die.
You seek for answers everywhere,
And ask the question "Why?"
You regulate restrictive laws,
Through legislative creed.
And yet you fail to understand,
That God is what we need!

"Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, soul, and spirit. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our make-up, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreak havoc. Spiritual presences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation's history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation? We have refused to honor God, and in so doing, we open the doors to hatred and violence."

I understand that Texas law requires that both strengths and weaknesses of hypotheses and theories be taught, including as regards biological evolution. I am not asking that we teach religion in the schools. What I am asking is

that you at least enforce Texas law that requires weaknesses of evolution to be taught – if nothing else than to allow a glimmer of hope into some student’s mind that there is a purpose in this universe and in life itself.

Your enforcement of the Texas statute could be the single most important thing you do for the students of today and the citizens of tomorrow.

Why should I be interested in what Texas does with its school books? You should understand that some students, surely not many, but some, will take the concept that we are “nothing but animals” and “survival of the fittest” as justification for heinous behavior. Hitler did it. Stalin did it. And Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, killers of my daughter and twelve other students and teachers at Columbine High School did just that. Harris wore a “**Natural Selection**” t-shirt on the day of the killings and both had taken the evolutionary mindset to the conclusion that they needed to help the process along. They made remarks on video about helping out the process of natural selection by eliminating the weak. They also professed that they had “evolved” to a higher level than their classmates. I was amazed at the frequent references to evolution and equally amazed that the press completely ignored that aspect of the tapes.

Further, there are other known cases of similar happenings, though not as high in toll of sons and daughters as Columbine. Some examples include,

- Reader's Digest, August 2001, page 170 recounts how a "Columbine copycat" massacre plot was foiled by an astute photo clerk in San Jose, CA when she alerted police based on photos dropped off for development that showed 19 year-old Al DeGuzman in a t-shirt saying "**Natural Selection**" and brandishing a pipe bomb and sawed-off shotgun. He had intended to gun down students at DeAnza College in Cupertino, CA.
- Another "Columbine copycat" plot was foiled in New Bedford, MA in November 2001 with the arrest of Eric McKeehan (17) and two other students who planned to kill "thugs, preps, and faculty" at their high school by detonating explosives and opening fire as they fled. Among the items seized from McKeehan's bedroom was a photo of Hitler (whose book, *Mein Kampf* means "My Struggle" and quoted admiringly from Darwin's *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.)
- The shooter in Pearl, Mississippi left behind writings extolling his admiration for Hitler and Nietzsche, both students of Darwinian theory.
- In the 1920's, Clarence Darrow got murderers Leopold and Loeb reprieved from their death penalty sentence by arguing that they were inspired to commit murder from studying Nietzsche at the University of Chicago.

Board members, ideas have consequences. Sometimes we don't like them, but to deny the link is literally fatal. I know this too well. The point is that if we continue to ignore the scientific weaknesses of Darwinism, in deference to teaching 19th century discredited science, God will use other means to get our attention. Bullying in the classroom is big news. Isn't it time we face the logical connection that if we teach "survival of the fittest" uncritically in the classroom, then some students may take this corrosive “kill or be killed” concept onto the playground or street?

Look at the words of some of the vocal defenders of Darwinian thought today. They are hardly dispassionate observers of nature.

Steven Weinberg, Ph.D. Nobel Laureate in Physics, who many of you heard wax eloquently regarding angels pushing asteroids, said in *Dreams of a Final Theory* that,

"The more we refine our understanding of God to make the concept plausible, **the more it seems pointless.**" [Emphasis added]

But, as the commercials say, there's more. He goes on, in accepting an American Humanist Association award, speaking of religion in society, that,

"I hope this long sad story, fueled by the progression of priests, ministers and rabbis will come to an end. If science can contribute to this end, it will be the most important contribution we can make, that we see no more of priests, ministers and rabbis. **Religion is complete nonsense and terribly damaging to human civilization.**" [Emphasis added]

On the Freedom from Religion Foundation website, he is quoted as saying,

"I personally feel that the teaching of modern science is corrosive of religious belief, and I'm all for that! One of the things that in fact has driven me in my life, is the feeling that this is one of the great social functions of science--to free people from superstition."

To simply have an opinion about religious faith is one thing. However, many outspoken evolutionists go further, and use their *status as scientists*, not the science, to undermine some of the very underpinnings of society.

None other than Dr. Ken Miller, in commenting about how people do not accept biologic evolution, wrote in *Finding Darwin's God* that,

"I believe much of the problem is the fault of those in the scientific community who routinely enlist the findings of evolutionary biology in support their own philosophical pronouncements. Sometimes these take the form of stern, dispassionate pronouncements about the **meaninglessness of life**. Other times we are lectured that the contingency of our presence on this planet **invalidates any sense of human purpose**. And very often we are told that the **raw reality of nature strips the authority from any human system of morality.**" [Emphasis added]

In the 1977 book *The First Three Minutes*, Dr. Weinberg wrote that,

"The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless."

Do students listen to this? Consider Columbine. Dylan Klebold said on one of the pre-Columbine video tapes,

"What ever happened to **natural selection**?"

Eric Harris, on his website, called natural selection

"...the best thing that ever happened to the Earth. Getting rid of all the stupid and weak organisms..."

He also inscribed in a classmate's yearbook that

"Natural selection needs a boost, like me with a shotgun."

As noted above, when he died after the rampage that killed my daughter, he was wearing a t-shirt with the inscription "**Natural Selection**" on the front. Harris' diary said that,

"Me and V [Klebold] will get revenge and will kick **natural selection** up a few notches."

The Jefferson County, Colorado police noted that, "Harris and Klebold ... talked about how **"evolved"** they were and how they considered themselves to be "above human."

Jason Hoffman, the 18 year old shooter at Granite Hills High School in California, who shot five and later committed suicide in jail, said,

"I wanted to do suicide by cop," according to the probation officer's report. "I got to thinking, **'what the hell is the point of life?'**"

Hoffman's words sound a lot like the Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Weinberg. But Dr. Weinberg's pointless outlook is decidedly wrong.

I personally am convinced that God has a reason for everything, even when we do not understand it at the time. There is a reason you fifteen members stand at a crossroads of our culture. It is not an accident that you are where you are and that your vote is so pivotal...and historic.

Public opinion wants both "strengths and weaknesses" of evolution to be taught. This has been true in the past, and even after nearly a half century of schools, government, and the media preaching one-sided evolution theory to us almost exclusively, it remains true today. People in their heart know that evolution is incapable of explaining everything. Careful observation of the polling data such as Zogby's suggests that it is even more so today than years ago.

Science, too, is coming down on the side of there being many unanswered questions regarding evolution. With public opinion overwhelming and growing and with new science discoveries increasingly showing weaknesses in evolutionary theories, to vote against Texas law at this point will be the rough equivalency of voting with the Supreme Court in the infamous Dred Scott decision that is well known as one of the worst decisions in the history of the U.S. Supreme Court. It is clear that this issue will not go away.

Please do not go down on the wrong side of history in this vital issue. Our students, perhaps your children and grandchildren, deserve to be told that there are valid scientific criticisms of evolution and that the world is not useless, hopeless and without meaning. Your simple vote could make all the difference.

Sincerely,

Darrell Scott
Father of Rachel Scott
President and Founder
Columbine Redemption