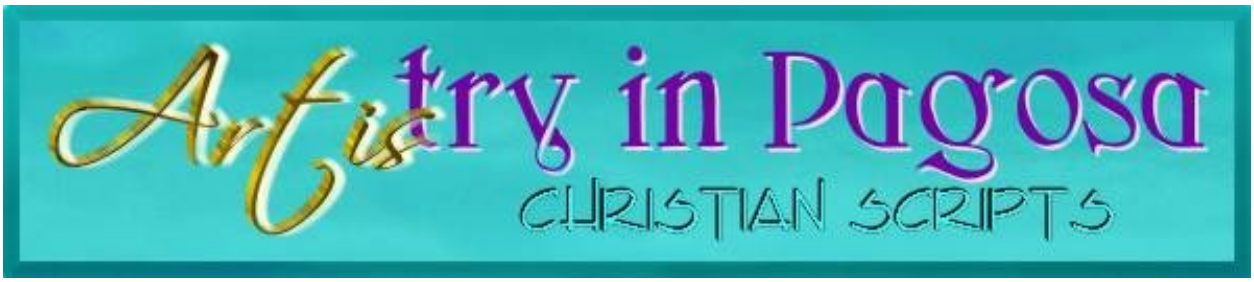

The Faith of Evolution
By Rick Artis

Scripture:

Romans 1:20
20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Theme:
The difficulty of accepting evolution at face value

Applications:
Faith
Evolution
Not accepting evolutionary information at face value
Not allowing cultural values as fact

Cast:
2 male
1 older for teacher
1 younger for student
1 female
Perhaps high school age
Extras for classmates

Setting:
High School Science Class

Time:
Day, normal class time

Characters:
Mr. Stein, Science teacher
Tim (or Tabitha) Reynolds, pro-faith
Jenny (or Jerry) Hatcher- pro-evolution
Other students for effect and questions

Performance time:
Approx. 17-20 minutes

Stein-
Ladies and gentlemen, as promised, today's class will be a discussion of the relative merits of scientific evolution and scientific creationism, often called intelligent design. As you know, I am legislatively prohibited from giving you any information concerning scientific creationism. That is why Mr. Reynolds and Ms. Hatcher will be discussing the two sides of the issues. This is not a formal debate, simply a discussion of the various points in the form of a dialogue. Let's meet the discussion leaders. Mr. Reynolds?

Tim-
Most of you now me. I'm Tim Reynolds. I'll be discussing this issue from the creation perspective.

Stein-
Ms. Hatcher?

Jenny-
I'm Jenny Hatcher, I'm a scientist. *(murmur of giggles from the class)* I'll be on the pro-evolution side.

Stein-
Excellent. Here's the loose format of today's discussion. I'll throw out a point and let you banter back and forth. Should the points seem to be made or things start to drag, I'll offer another point. If either of our distinguished participants fails to adequately support their point, I'll ask for additional information or supporting material. Along the way, if something is unclear, you will also be able to ask for clarification. Shall we begin? *(Nods and yeses from the crowd and participants*) Very good. Ms. Hatcher, please address the basic premise of evolution.

Jenny-
Thank you, Mr. Stein. As Charles Darwin posits in his life's work, 'The Origin of the Species', over millions of generations, life has evolved from the simplest of forms to the millions of varieties we see today. As each cycle of reproduction occurred, subtle changes happened. These changes, or mutations, were either positive or negative relative to the, then current, living conditions. A positive change made the species more 'fit' to continue. A negative change made it less 'fit'. You see, 'survival of the fittest' is not 'survival of the strongest'. Survival required being able to adapt to the changing environment. Over time, sequential mutations became new species. Each of these species mutated into other species and sub-species. That is why there are millions of different types of plants and animals today. And because we have these many species, life for all is easier to maintain. *(pause)*

Stein-
Mr. Reynolds, your response?

Tim-
I'd like to ask for a bit of clarification before I respond.

Stein-
That's fine. Go ahead.

Tim-
Based on this point, is it safe to say that you are a proponent of bio-diversity?

Jenny-
Of course, the hierarchy of the overall food chain is vital to maintain all life. The propagation of as many species as possible guarantees the survival of more species, including humans. That is also why we need to be aware of what's happening around the world. Encroachment of humans into the habitats of other

species is rapidly increasing the extinction rates of many other species. It's an interconnected spiral. More species yields more species, fewer yields fewer.

Tim-
Thanks, Jenny. On the surface that sounds very logical. Let me see if I can summarize your point… As long as there are creatures that are lower on the food chain, those higher up will have something to eat and therefore they can survive. As we know in most cases, the lower food chain species propagate in significantly larger numbers. So many feed the one. For example, there are billions of ants for every anteater. Is that a reasonable summary?

Jenny-
Yes Tim. Thanks for making my point so well. *(more giggles)*

Tim-
Just making sure I have your premise in mind. If you'll permit me to create a visual picture. Let's go back in time… a long… long way. Here's the setting. No life exists. The Earth is a ball of rock. There may not even be an atmosphere. Some scientists postulate that, at some unspecified time, geothermal events start to produce atmospheric gasses that are trapped near the surface by gravity. Sometime later, chemical reactions among the gasses formed water that settled into the low areas, where by the way, the heavier carbon dioxide settled as well. Jenny, is that a reasonable picture of the world before life began?

Jenny-
Seems pretty close and certainly close enough for this discussion.

Tim-
Is it also a safe assumption to say that carbon dioxide is incompatible with sustaining most animal life forms?

Jenny-
I think I see where you're going with this. Evolution requires the adaptation of species. Animal life may have been more tolerant of other gasses in the beginning.

Tim-
But don't scientists agree that many dinosaurs died after moving into areas where carbon dioxide collected?

Jenny-
There is evidence of this in the fossil record.

Tim-
So, you're saying that somewhere between first life and dinosaurs, animal life stopped breathing CO2 and started breathing oxygen?

Jenny-
Not exactly…but adaptation had to have taken place.

Tim-
Ok, let me get back to my story. So the water settles into the low spots of the ground. We'll even assume that there is a large mixture of chemicals present in these lakes. The mostly carbon dioxide atmosphere is toxic to most animal life. Hypothetically, in this toxic environment, with little or no oxygen and no bio-diversity, somehow life popped into existence. So here's' the question, 'What did this first life eat?' Jenny, with no oxygen and no food how long would any life form live?

Jenny-
Not very long. But that's not the point.

Tim-
Even assuming that this first creature was a cannibal, having to eat another of its kind to survive, and two of these developed at the very same time in the initial life force explosion, it seems that one would eat the other and this first generation would die off before being able to mutate very far.

Jenny-
That's not what happened.

Tim-
How do you know? Were you there?

Jenny-
Of course not.

(Continues…)