

## Did Darwin Renounce Evolution on His Deathbed?

by John D. Morris\*

The story has circulated for decades. Charles Darwin, after a career of promoting evolution and naturalism, returned to the Christianity of his youth, renouncing on his deathbed the theory of evolution. The story appears to have been authored by a “Lady Hope,” and relates how she visited him near the end and received his testimony.

Evolutionists in general and his surviving family in particular have disputed the account. Those with him at the time insist there was no evident changing of mind. Indeed, in his autobiography written late in his life, Darwin fully supported evolution. He admitted the concept was distasteful to him and had brought him much dismay, but he still held it.

Lady Hope was real, the wife of Lord Hope. She was a fervent Christian and friend of Darwin’s wife, also a strong Christian who prayed for and witnessed to him all their married life, to no avail according to him. Nevertheless, many have researched the story, and all have concluded it is probably an “urban myth.”

In his later years Darwin did soften in his attitude toward Christianity. He even allowed a local church to hold their meetings on his property, and asked that his bedroom windows be opened so he could hear the hymns being sung. A Christian

can only hope that the seeds planted earlier took root at the end, and that he did place his faith in Christ before he died.

A similar scenario took place more recently with the death of the great spokesman for evolution and atheism, Carl Sagan. He received strong witness of Christianity from many people; most notably ICR’s physics chairman Dr. Larry Vardiman. They corresponded for years, during which God’s plan of salvation and the evidence for creation were clearly discussed. Dr. Sagan fully understood the salvation message but specifically refused it. He said he wished he could believe, but was convinced evolution was true and there was no God. He contracted cancer and passed into eternity in 1996.

His wife, Dr. Lynn Margulis, herself an avowed anti-Christian, took a different tack than Darwin’s wife, however. She took great pains to insure that no one could ever write an “urban myth” about her husband. She organized a vigil at his bedside to make sure no Christian came near. No last-minute prayer, no final testimony was allowed.

Again, a Christian can only trust in the grace of our loving Lord and wonder if the seeds planted took root before it was too late. There is no joy for a Christian if anyone, even a lifelong opponent of the cross, slips into a Christless eternity. ☞

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# Giving an Answer

by Frank Sherwin, M.A.\*

Everyone holds to a worldview—a philosophical outlook on life—no matter how ill-defined. Whether one is a believer or not, their worldview is formed and molded by their family, culture, education, books they read, etc. One Christian writer defined a worldview as,

... a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world.<sup>1</sup>

The Christian worldview looks to God (Hebrews 11:6) through Jesus Christ for our origin (Genesis 1:27) and our destiny (Romans 10:9; Luke 23:43). We intuitively know of God through His “clearly seen” creation (Romans 1:20), even though it has been corrupted by sin (Genesis 3). This belief system also states there are moral absolutes (Exodus 20) and there is truth (John 14:6). Indeed, all truth is God’s truth. This is why a Christian’s involvement in science is so intellectually satisfying: science is the search for truth—His truth!

Many holding to a secular worldview embrace Mr. Darwin’s 1859 book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* not because it is scientific (he never discussed the origin of species and the first fifty pages was a bland discussion of pigeon variation), but because his book described creation *without* a Creator. Many in Darwin’s day—like today—found such secular explanations academically agreeable, leading the “dean of evolutionary biology,” Ernst Mayr to say:

The Darwinian revolution was the most fundamental of all intellectual revolutions in the history of mankind. While such revolutions as

those brought about by Copernicus, Newton, Lavoisier, or Einstein affected only one particular branch of science, or the methodology of science as such, the Darwinian revolution affected every thinking man. A world view developed by anyone after 1859 was by necessity quite different from any world view formed prior to 1859.<sup>2</sup>

Sadly, Mayr was correct. This pervading worldview has corrupted society. For example, large corporations have long ago adopted a win-at-any-cost, survival-of-the-fittest mentality as the business animal claws itself to the top of the corporate ladder. American business practices—even the vocabulary—are often based on Darwinism. The Christian influence in this critical area has been minimized.

Peter states, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). Being ready to share the Christian worldview anywhere in society involves a thorough study of God’s Word (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Matthew 28:18–20). Let each of us know why we believe what we believe—especially in terms of our origin and destiny—and pass this wonderful news on to others (Romans 10:13–17).

## Endnotes

1. Sire, J. 1976. *The Universe Next Door*, Inter-Varsity Press, p. 17.
2. Mayr, E. 1988. *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, p. 182. 

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## Arctic Heat Wave

Drill cores from beneath the floor of the Arctic Ocean have revealed a startling find. Fossils from around the 430 meter mark indicate the seabed was once a balmy 23 degrees centigrade (74 degrees Fahrenheit)! Today's temperatures beneath the Arctic vary within a few degrees of zero. The find is thought to reflect a global condition of warming, suggesting that all the oceans were once *at least* this warm pointing to a period called "the Paleocene/Eocene Thermal Maximum" (PETM). Although it has long been suspected, from oxygen isotope data derived by analyzing both the deep sea Cenozoic record and from ice cores, such remarkably warm temperatures have taken most scientists by surprise. However, this fits in very well with the young-Earth creationist view of history which includes a global Flood.

Several implications follow from a warm ocean. Warm waters would result in high rates of evaporation, high rates of precipitation, and a very wet world. How wet? ICR research has predicted that a globally uniform sea surface temperature of 30 degrees centigrade would result in sustained precipitation in localities at over eight inches per hour. Heaviest precipitation would have been over the polar regions where the precipitation would fall as snow, the snow would compact to ice, and the ice would move out as glaciers. If the PETM corresponds to the immediate post-Flood period, an Ice Age following the Flood makes great sense. Second, a warm ocean would mean enormously energetic storms. A computational run using a globally uniform surface temperature of 37 degrees centigrade eventuated in cyclones of hundreds of miles in diameter breaking out across wide portions of the earth and not just the lower latitudes. Called "hypercanes," these

by William A. Hoesch, M.S.\*

storms would have generated horizontal winds of over 300 mph, vertical winds of 100 mph, and precipitation of over ten inches per hour. It is not difficult to imagine moisture-laden fronts ripping across polar regions producing temperature drops of scores of degrees centigrade. Flash-frozen mammoths recovered in the Arctic have up until recently been a cryogenic mystery. Although the mystery is by no means solved, a more credible answer is now possible. Such conditions so far from human experience apparently took place in the relatively recent past.

Many scientists suspect some kind of catastrophic release of carbon dioxide is to blame for the warm spell; others argue that a rise of temperature would be the expected *cause* rather than the *effect* of a carbon dioxide rise. But there is a more obvious possibility. If a global Flood occurred in recent world history, then one would expect warm oceans and a relatively temperate (or cool) air mass would have followed. Reasons for warm oceans following the Flood include: relatively warm pre-Flood oceans, extraordinary levels of submarine volcanism during the Flood, and possibly elevated rates of radioisotope decay during the Flood. Only a few decades ago it might have been considered preposterous to suggest oceans of 30-plus degrees centigrade that drove an "abbreviated" post-Flood Ice Age (of relatively short duration), but not today. Questions such as the duration of the Ice Age, the lag time between the end of the Flood and maximum ice advance, and many others, will await future research. In the meantime, the overall Flood model of Biblical Earth history looks very good. 🌱

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# Titan vs. Billions of Years

by David F. Coppedge\*

The landing of the Huygens probe on Saturn's moon, Titan ranks as one of the most dramatic achievements in space exploration. When Voyager flew by in 1981, Titan looked like a hazy ball at visible wavelengths. Its surface lay shrouded in mystery for 24 years, as scientists tried to model what would happen under a nitrogen-rich atmosphere spiked with methane. The difference between what they expected and what Huygens discovered should be of great interest to creationists.

Titan is the only moon with a substantial atmosphere, composed primarily of nitrogen and just under 5% methane. It became apparent from post-Voyager models that the atmosphere is unstable. Unlike on Earth, where the nitrogen, carbon, and oxygen are recycled, the methane on Titan has only two places to go: down or out. In the upper atmosphere, methane is continually stripped of electrons from bombardment by the solar wind and cosmic rays. Free hydrogen escapes to space. Depleted of some of the hydrogen, the carbon atoms recombine into more complex molecules, some with nitrogen (nitriles) and some with carbon and hydrogen (hydrocarbons). Ethane, propane, acetylene, and benzene have been detected as products of this strange atmospheric chemistry.

Of particular interest is ethane, a stable molecule with two carbons and six hydrogens. Ethane falls to the surface as a liquid and cannot return to the atmosphere. Scientists were confident that the conversion is irreversible, and should lead to a buildup of ethane, forming lakes and possibly oceans on the surface. By the late 1990s, oceans of ethane several kilometers deep

were anticipated. Artists' conceptions up until the landing imagined large expanses of liquid ethane or methane dotting a frozen landscape of water ice.

In 1997, a Titan-IV rocket blasted Cassini and its Huygens probe toward Saturn and Titan. During the seven-year cruise, Earth telescopes with improved spectral resolution detected light and dark areas the size of continents, but no global ocean. Finally, on January 14, 2005, Huygens successfully parachuted to the surface, taking priceless photos and measurements all the way down. It was designed to operate on a solid or liquid surface. Mission scientists actually hoped for a splash.

The results were as surprising as they were sensational. Instead of finding lakes or oceans, Huygens landed on a dry lakebed, where liquid methane appeared to saturate the surface but not form pools. River channels suggested erosion of icy mountains by occasional cloudbursts of methane rain. Contrary to predictions, Huygens measured ethane in only trace amounts. If ethane production had been going on for billions of years, where was it? Subsequent radar scans by Cassini showed vast areas covered by wind-driven dunes of icy grains. It appears that Titan is, for the most part, a freezing desert.

In short, Titan turned out to be very different from predictions made using long-age assumptions. The near absence of ethane remains a profound mystery. Now that the data have been published (*Nature*, 12/08/2005), creationists could do good work modeling Titan's atmospheric dynamics unfettered by long-age assumptions. 

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