

Evolutionary Hypocrisy?

Creation—Evolution Debate

at Westminster Seminary on April 20, 2001

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The Lord of Glory said, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are” (cf. Matthew 23:15ff). Could the following words be applied fairly to teachers of evolution: **Woe to you, teachers of evolution, you hypocrites?**

The words Matthew recorded seem harsh, but they were words the loving and merciful Creator used when calling smug leaders to repentance and to real life in Himself. He took the path of scorn and rejection right to the cross, where He prayed for those who were putting Him to death. A doctor, knowing a cure, shows love when he informs a patient that he has cancer. Similarly, Jesus, the Great Physician, administered “tough love” while warning Pharisees. Some, like Nicodemus and Paul, heeded His loving rebuke to their eternal benefit.

Ph.D’s today hold exalted positions, but some, like Pharisees of old, seem to strain at gnats while swallowing camels. Continuing with the Lord’s imagery, like ornate tombs, they look scholarly and intelligent on the outside, but on the inside there seems to be hypocrisy.

Our understanding of human sin, of course, is far below that of the Savior’s. He can read the heart; nevertheless, we are encouraged by Scripture to imitate Him. He wants us to speak the truth in love. I try, however feebly, to do that in this article.

For over thirty years, I have had the privilege of teaching high school or university students in a variety of settings and have seen examples of gnat straining, camel swallowing, and hypocrisy on the part of teachers of evolution. I share one example here that seems to have the potential for hypocrisy, but I believe there are many other examples, as well. The one here concerns an individual for whom I have both regard and affection. I had invited this particular person, a professor of anthropology at UPenn (2016 at Princeton) to participate in a creation vs. evolution debate. The debate was sponsored by a Christian ministry at Westminster Theological Seminary and has since taken place. (There were approximately 400 people in attendance.) I was about to have lunch with this professor, and, perhaps because I reminded him that I would like to have or purchase a less expensive, maybe even damaged, model of a Neanderthal skull, he graciously gave me one. When I sought, during lunch, more details about



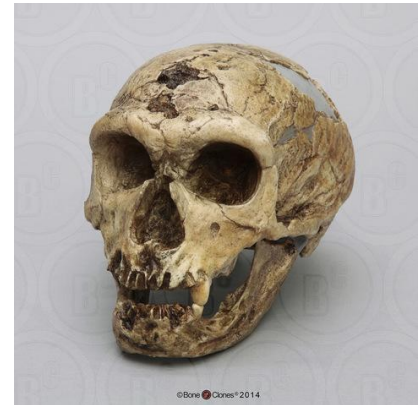
the model, he wrote the following on a sheet of paper: "Reconstructed Skull of the neandertal from: La Chapelle-aux-Saints (SW France)." A picture of the model is seen in the previous page.

In the summer of 2001, six months after my luncheon engagement, I had the opportunity of visiting the Musee de l'Homme in Paris. I was not able to see the original skull but did purchase a postcard showing the right side of the Chapelle Skull. The teeth of the model seem significantly different from the original. There is only one upper tooth remaining in the original. It is a bicuspid with three facets on the edge. Below is a picture of the one remaining upper tooth in the La Chapelle aux Saints Skull. The chips or file-marks can be seen on the tooth.

Picture missing.

This is a photograph of a portion of the upper jaw of the La Chapelle aux Saints skull. Note how very different this is from the model.

The reconstructed model suggests that sixteen upper teeth would be part of the original, but this is not the case. Should not a reconstruction more closely approximate the original? The model I received, as far as the upper jaw was and is concerned, is quite unlike the original. The one upper tooth that exists in the original does not appear to be adequately represented in the model. There are no file-marks. It is not set off by itself in any special way. In fact, it is confused with the other surrounding (nonexistent) teeth. Some might label such alterations and additions as "anthropological license." I myself would not have bothered much with such imperfections had I not received significant criticism from the same professor about his debating opponent after the debate and relating to yet another Neanderthal skull. This is where hypocrisy seemed to enter the picture. [Note, there is one upper tooth in the image above as opposed to a full set in the model.]



The same professor, though permitting the debate to be videotaped, does not want copies of it to be sold (or even distributed) because his opponent offered evidence that the professor disputes. The opponent claimed that he had found a missing piece of the famous Swanscombe (Neanderthal) Skull and was for the first time, at the debate, announcing it publicly. He claimed that the "mastoid" piece (near the temple) fits a model of the Swanscombe Skull nicely and that there were possible trephination (surgical) marks on the fossil. This, he indicated, suggests that Neanderthals were much more advanced in medicine than evolutionists believe. (File marks on the La Chapelle tooth, also, may suggest more sophistication in dentistry than is normally attributed to Neanderthals.)

As both moderator of the debate and as president of the, I sensed a responsibility to try to resolve this impasse. On the one hand, it seemed that one debater was trying to censor the other, while on the other hand, I did not want to be involved in promoting falsehood. As the creationary debater had submitted the artifact to the British Museum, I contacted Professor Chris Stringer, Head of Human Origins, Department of Paleontology, The Natural History Museum, London. He

wrote to me a number of times during the summer and fall of 2001. (He also eventually returned the disputed artifacts to me personally, and I subsequently returned them to the owner.)

On 11/27/01, Dr. Stringer wrote regarding one artifact from Swanscombe as follows: "It is of course possible that there are, say, Mesozoic fossils in the Swanscombe gravels." (Earlier he had indicated that the artifact was only gravel, but subsequently the owner pointed to evidence that the piece was true fossil.) Previously, on June 8, 2001, Dr. Stringer had



written: "I do consider that Dr. Cuzzo acted in good faith in this case, and did the right thing in returning this material for examination. The pieces in question, particularly the 'mastoid', were suggestive of human bones in their shape, although I think he would not have considered them to be fossil human bone if he had been able to make direct comparisons of their appearance with genuine fossil bone from Swanscombe."

In summary, our creationary debater, "...acted in good faith" by submitting the samples to the proper authorities for examination. There remains dispute as to whether the piece is from the Swanscombe Skull, but is this really just cause for tapes of the debate to be censored? Do not debates, by their very nature, necessarily involve dispute? The creationary debater undoubtedly discounts much of what his opponent had to say, but he is not attempting to censor a videotape involving his evolutionary opponent's views.

In the end, it may be very difficult to prove one way or the other what the actual truth is concerning the artifact. I personally do not know. There are arguments on both side, but to censor the distribution of a videotaped debate because one party believes the other is not accurate seems like censorship. One could well argue from this type of reasoning that most debates should be censored. This seems somewhat like nit-picking or straining at gnats. I believe in truth and so am happy and willing to hear anything of substance that an opponent might offer. As for the camel imagery, passing off as reconstructions deliberately altered models of the Chapelle aux Saints Skull seems more like camel-swallowing to me. Reconstructions should not be artistic inventions, and their goal should be to attempt as close an approximation to the original as is reasonable--not to an imagined, pre-original.

Nit-picking about a questionable mastoid piece while deliberately selling misrepresentations seems hypocritical, but I am not the judge of the heart. I did write the following to the professor on 11/27/01: "Regarding the matter of honesty, when I visited the Musee de l'Homme this past summer, I purchased a postcard of La Chapelle aux Saints. In the model you gave me, there are 16 teeth in the upper jaw. The postcard, however, reveals no such number. You told me over lunch that the model you gave me was of La Chapelle aux Saints, but I don't believe you

informed me that...the teeth were added. Don't you think that giving a deliberately altered model is a bit misleading?"

Why have I not received a response to these words when I had received many previous responses? I do not know. Maybe there are mitigating circumstances. Maybe his computer broke down. I do hold open the possibility, however, that this professor may be a little embarrassed by the inconsistency of distributing and possibly selling misleading models of the La Chapelle Skull while at the same time disallowing the sale and distribution of the ministry's videotape which contains a claim by an opponent he disputes.

As I wrote above, there are many other examples of what I see as evolutionary hypocrisy, events I have personally experienced and/or witnessed, such as the censorship of creation advocates, failing to own up to published fraud, refusal to admit to racial bias, etc. Because we are all sinners, each of us tends to be hypocritical in one way or another, and creationists too can strain at gnats while swallowing camels.

There is only one solution to our hypocrisy. Many believers have repented of sin, some perhaps with tears. Others who have never done this might like to reflect further or even pray to The Maker, Creator Christ, the Lord of Glory. Perhaps they could use words something like these: "Lord Jesus, I'm a proud person. I've taken pride in my learning and have all too often pushed aside the many proofs of Your skill in producing intricate beauty. At least occasionally, I have been a hypocrite. I've ignored and even hated You. I've refused to bow my proud heart before You, but I also consider that You have been long-suffering and patient toward me. You have favored me with many blessings. You even went to the cross for sinners like me. Please forgive me for my pride. Even Moses showed that bloody sacrifices were necessary for atonement. You, my Maker, came to this earth to be the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. Blood flowed from Your body when you hung on Calvary. I've never before yielded to the truth that You died and rose again for sinners. If I am indeed spiritually blind, please help me to see my blindness. If You really are the promised Messiah of God, come into my heart now and be my Savior. Thank You, Father, for sending Your only Son. In Jesus' Name I ask this. Amen."