

Evolution: of Directionless Change through Time, or Creation: of Directed Intelligent Design: Are there alternatives to this either/or Way of thinking?

Might science and reason, religion and faith be seen as twin guideposts serving the advancement of knowledge, discernment, wisdom and spiritual understanding?

Dear friends: It is through much thought and ever-evolving meditation I write this.

"Evolution and natural Order could simply be a part of an ongoing Creative Process wherein possibly, even Directed by some ever hidden inscrutable predestined Design factor, pre-existent probability possibilities are continually rendered by energized motion into actual outcomes and happenings." (see P 5, paragraph 7 to P6 below.)

Note: This subject of evolution vs. creation, leading to so much controversy and contention, appears to be symptomatic of a much larger deeper malady afflicting the wellbeing of mankind as a whole. Unless we can, somehow, get away from the mode of, "self righteous exclusive favored-by-god inerrant text-truth rigid literal dogmatic-based-assumption thinking," the enlightened state of worldwide universal amity through spiritual unity, a heaven on earth, can never be realized. The divisive sectarianism of nationalism, racism, religious intolerance and dogmatic judgment will remain, becoming ever more virulent, as media and the internet catapult us daily into increasingly intimate awareness of global tensions, conflicts, fanaticisms and varied socially deemed "correct" pathways towards the Divine. As worldwide communication advances, we must spiritually grow; learning to utilize and apply our new God given knowledge in a lovingly responsible productive yet humble sustainable way, conducive to ever advancing and uniting all people everywhere.

Evolution, and how this theory of science stacks up against the Holy Bible, has remained a central point of contention among many. Lectures, seminars, writings and blogs abound as believers seek to resolve modern thought with teachings held as authoritative for ages. A 2009 Gallup Poll, (see P 15) shows well less than half the US general population believes in Evolution, with only 55% having a basic understanding of, the Theory.

Religion, as a whole, seems to encourage unquestioning unwavering certainty through a personal subjective faith. Obedience and belief provides Joy, comfort, solace and foundation in our lives. Many find a deep abiding personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Seekers invite Divinity into their heart and, if it is valid in the eyes of God, they are indeed transformed and "born again".

The Scientific Method of discovery depends on open, doubting, questioning, ever searching objective critical experiment. This includes observation, discovery, sharing, hypothesizing and theorizing. Science based reasoning fosters growth and fuels an ever advancing shared knowledge base. Observed phenomena is recorded, hypothesis are

published and theories are gradually formulated. Products testifying to the validity of applying scientific reason abound in the technological modern lifestyle surrounding us.

Evolution is also a long term tested hypothesized formulated theory. It proposes all forms of life have evolved and changed over vast stretches of time as seen and verified in the fossil record. This concept is also directly observable in microcosm through Darwin's Finches and present day domestic bred strains of livestock.

Much anti-evolution argument seems to revolve around whether humanity is animal or a spiritual being, a "man or a monkey". Evolution, as seen by many Christians, is often brought up as an either/or proposition. Either God created the heavens and the earth and man, as he is today, or the cosmos is more of a godless chaos where a blind directionless trial and error governs an existence so full of beauty, bestowal and seeming significance! From a faith based spiritually centered viewpoint, Evolution must be categorically presumed wrong if it implies we are nothing more than an animal.

Texts of sacred books, long held as revealing Divine Truth, proclaim "the reality of humanity is fundamentally different than that of the animal". We are extolled as a being of more worth than simply that of an over-intelligent hominid ape. We are blessed with a light of being, endless in its fruits, divine in its nature and reality.

Teachings found in the great Masters and Founders of world faiths have given us awareness of this divine reality within ourselves. It is our destiny and calling to rise unto the fullness of being, as ordained by a Supreme Reality above the mortal minds of men to grasp, and seek the pearls of wisdom hidden deep within the ocean of enlightened knowledge and salvation.

Conversely, the working methods of science, observation, postulates and theory are devoted to questions, experiments and findings which can be verified, tested and retested in a controlled environment. Nothing is ever deemed as inerrant absolute truth. Any scientific discovery or explanation is subject to continual updating or modification. A theory may be found in error at any time. In fact, much scientific testing is deliberately designed to retest and expose possible flaws in current thinking and interpretation. In this way, knowledge and understanding is allowed to move forward.

Archeological findings, contextual observation and the ever expanding fossil record is continually bringing to light additional solid evidence showing transitional forms of life. Fossils substantiating links between "fish to amphibians" (see *Tiktaalik* below), a possible, but debated, "dinosaurs to birds" relationship and "upright walking hominids to mankind" all changing through time (also see below); clearly reveals a formative gradually unfolding proliferating tree of life. Also, new techniques used through understanding and application of micro and molecular biology, DNA and epigenetics, continually and consistently support the Theory of Evolution in increasingly greater detail.

A real prize in supporting a science based theory is a finding or observation originally predicted by theorists and later discovered and verified. Such a prize was found when archeologists set out to find a fossil that would show up as a transitional form between fish and amphibians. 375 million old rocks in the Canadian Arctic were excavated. After several fruitless attempts, fossils showing signs of both fish and amphibian-like properties have been discovered. This was a test for Evolution Theory and it passed.

* "*Tiktaalik* is a [genus](#) of extinct lobe-finned "fish from the late [Devonian](#) period, with many features akin to those of four-legged animals). It is an example of fish developing adaptations to the oxygen-poor shallow-water habitats of its time. Well-preserved fossils were found in 2004 on [Ellesmere Island](#) in [Nunavut, Canada](#) ." *(See Wikipedia)

In addition, corroboration Darwin could have never dreamed of, has recently been made evident. Understanding and manipulation of epigenetic-based molecular life physiology has given us insight on how seeming drastic changes in species morphology can take place. Experiments involving manipulation of "on" and "off" switches, through which chicken embryos can be made to grow rudimentary teeth, is one example of the ground breaking research being done in this new field of study.

One of the hallmarks that makes science stand out is openness to reevaluation and, if necessary, modifying theories to embrace new observations and findings. Within minutes, one can find copious amounts of internet material dealing with the evolutionary relationship between birds and dinosaurs. Are birds directly descended from dinosaurs or is there a parallel evolution going on?. Was there a divergence between the two main groups; if so, when? Is it accurate to call birds "living dinosaurs"?

This is the beauty of science. The methodology it uses does not rely on long held hereditary traditional values or "matters of faith" to provide answers. Instead, direct current observation and reason are utilized to arrive at working explanations describing a set of given phenomena. Scientific hypothesis and theories are never seen as unchangeable infallible truth, they can be altered or overturned at any time.

The popularized notion that humans are actually descended from apes or monkeys is shown, by fossil evidence on the evolutionary timescale, not to be true. We are not descended from modern apes, but rather, apes and human ancestral hominids diverged and went their separate ways as far back as 8 to 10 million years ago or even longer. Small brained upright walking hominid fossils up to 6 million years old have been found. The famous "Lucy", is thought to possibly be a human ancestor. This highly successful Australopithecine group, clearly showing both apelike (small-brained) and humanoid (upright postured pelvis) features, emerged roughly about 3.9 million years ago and lasted close to a million years themselves before becoming extinct 3 million years BC. Again, a wealth of information is readily available for the asking.

Science, medicine, the arts and literature; much creative thought and progress has been thwarted and sacrificed in the name of Church, Creed and Dogma. The struggle of Copernicus, using a sun centered solar system to explain the measured recorded motions

of the planets; Galileo, observing through his telescope, earth-like features on the Moon and also a different set of solid moons orbiting around a physical 3 dimensional Jupiter; observational findings that would seem to overthrow church teachings; was seen as heretical. During times of the Inquisition, ideas and discoveries contrary to an Earth-Christ-Church centered universe were dangerous. Such "godless dealings with the Devil" were done at risk to your own eternal salvation. In Medieval thinking, the church felt compelled to "save you" by forcing renunciation of heresy- even by death at the stake!

The Pope was overlord and representative of God's will on Earth. As such, church sovereign rule was fundamentally unquestioned. Under such dictatorship, openly supporting the advancement of science, learning, medicine, astronomy, the arts, music, etc: outside of church deemed correct "right way" thinking , was a perilous venture.

Even in this century, the debate between literal Bible enthusiasts and the Theory of Evolution is still hotly debated. To this day, much of the United States populace does not believe in Evolution. These modern day Christians think the Biblical Genesis account of "God created" is "it" and only "it". No room is left for continuing growth, wider understanding or deeper appreciation of the observable world around us. Adherents are seemingly stuck in a morass of fear of somehow "being led astray".

To those who take part in this long standing quarrel, I would advise, 'Surely the Doings of the Almighty Infinite Reality, housed in the Mansions of Eternity beyond realms of space and time, is, in turn, infinitely beyond the minds of men to grasp". Given this basic premise, may not "Creation" in the Hands of God imply actions in realms of timelessness? If this is so, then it stands to reason that Creation, involving realms of timelessness itself, cannot be considered in the same light as something humans fashion within their own limited temporal existence. In realms without beginning or end the whole concept of a singular point of a creative event ceases to have meaning. All happenings seen as having "beginnings" and "ends" by mere mortals are but manifestations of temporality.

Thus, from a religious perspective, as heard from many disciplines and teaching from around the world, it is taught that what we perceive through our five physical senses, and also discover through applied science, is only a fleeting phantasm of a far deeper Reality Infinite Beyond! In addition, the human spirit seems to crave wonder and relationship with that which is directly unobservable.

The human species is not satisfied by simply meeting biological demands of food, shelter, water comfort and propagation. We are creatures of art, worship, thought, discernment, science and discovery. We can postulate, theorize and come to degrees of understanding. We write great literature and compose symphonies. We find comfort, solace and deepest joy in faith, in dealing with the Divine and each other. We share a sense of beauty, justice and compassion.

Yet, this "limited cause-and-effect reality, brought to our senses as observed phenomena, indeed represents the enkindling cradle of our earthly biological existence. We live in a

world where survival by interaction with physical properties and identities is essential. We are composed of the common elements as fused in the stars. We are of matter and the all-surrounding universe within and without us.

Physically we were given, by the time proven process of evolution, a discerning intellect enabling us to probe and delve deep into mysteries previously hidden. This biological habitat, and the role we play in it, is of supreme importance. We need to rejoice in and wisely use these resources and discoveries, not condemn or abuse them.

After all is said, I must ask: By what authoritative standard then do we impose specific singular "God's way is exclusively our way" proselytizing? Why does mankind seem to gravitate towards this "I am right", "you are wrong" syndrome? Why are such divisive hate driven atrocities committed? Vocabulary usage containing such words as "heresy", "heathen", "infidel", "apostate", "lost," saved" and "damned" give ample testimony of what is inflicted, from the understandings of men, upon ourselves. What agenda governs our lives causing clear reason, open scientific inquiry and observation to be shunned by so many for generations?

Perhaps we all need to come to terms with a new way of thinking! We are all part and parcel of a universe created by a single God.

Can science and religion agree? Is it possible both views can be used as guidelines leading us down a path where spiritual and material, finite and infinite, are seen as twin beacons illuminating the Path to discernment and wisdom? Might we learn to resolve issues based on common enlightened vision rather than emphasizing disagreement? Does humanity, because of having an evolutionary kinship with apelike hominids, negate his innate spirituality and love of God, beauty, fairness and justice? Can we know and be so sure of and judge the hidden potential in all created things? What is the impact of "a myriad realms of being", of infinite spiritual realities beyond comprehension, upon modern scientific thought?

Perhaps, it is timely and wise to take a different tack; not with the idea of arguing pro or con, but rather seeing how delving into mysteries and concepts provided by both science and religion, as presented in their respective operational methodologies regarding valid approaches to discovery, can lead one to further understanding beyond what these strictly applied disciplines in themselves have to offer.

I myself, can find no real need to argue the either/or validity of Creation or Evolution. The challenge is to attempt thinking beyond the human paradigm; beyond anthropomorphizing Creation of life, Earth and the universe, done in the same way as we would build a house or paint a picture. Of course, Creation of God is fundamentally different than what humans can accomplish. We only fashion and manipulate what has already been created. It is impossible to bring something into existence from nothingness.

look at it another way, Evolution and natural Order could simply be a part of an ongoing Creative Process wherein possibly, even Directed by some ever hidden inscrutable

predestined Design factor, pre-existent probability possibilities are continually rendered by energized motion into actual outcomes and happenings.

Remember, in realms of the infinite, "beginning" and "end", as we know it, has no meaning. Mysteries of Predestined destiny and Divine Directive Will lie forever beyond the minds of men to grasp. What Descends and Fashions, from the Mystic Mansions of Eternity, will forever remain hidden; even as the archetypal Design of BEING is brought forth; as Divine Operation; that" most Manifest of the Manifest; yet, the most Hidden of the Hidden; is fulfilled.

(Religious constructs of random occurrence and predestined Design ideologies are left to philosophers, students and theologians to discuss. Although the discussion may be used as tools to exercise, hone and sharpen intellectual prowess, there can never be a final outcome to these debates. Any attempts along these lines can only end in mere words as they begin in mere words.)

Social bias resulting from generations of programmed trained ingrained thought perception provides a compelling powerful pervasive influence on how we view life. Concepts involving what is "proper", "ugly," "beautiful", "attractive", "repulsive", "desirable" or not; good or evil, loved or hated; imparts a profound influence upon our total worldview perception.

Cultural diet habits are a prime example. There is little more intimate to our lifestyle than the food we eat. Australian Aborigines regard grubs dug from tree roots as a food delicacy. These witchetty grubs are traditionally eaten live and raw. The same dogs we revere as pets are traditionally eaten in Asia. Fresh blood gushing forth from a sacrificed cow is partaken by certain tribes, particularly the Maasai in East Africa, in hopes they will receive strength and wellbeing.

Would those, reared by Western tastes and customs, even think, or be capable, of enjoying these activities? Yet, those attending Christian churches, regularly symbolically drink the blood of their savior figure in ritualistic atonement for sins. They are washed clean by the sacrificial blood of Jesus! Are you upset by the forgoing passage? Good. That is the point. Indeed, the mind is a powerful thing!

As for the argument " I don't believe we descended from apes", or, "I am no monkey!" I would respond, 'By what reasoning, assumption or ethical judgment do you make that statement'?

Science, and the discipline it represents, is seen as a tool allowing us to question, explore and verify shared findings. Science gives us evermore reason to be humble in the Face of the Divine. The more discoveries we find, the more pathways of investigation are opened. Knowledge increases, as does awe of what wondrous mysteries are revealed unto the minds of men! The fruits of science include technologies, medicine, instruments for exploration and implementation unheard of a few centuries ago. The "information age" is upon us. An evolutionary revolutionary change is at hand.

Religion, gives us faith and direction. We are servants of God. Our capacity to build ever-advancing civilizations involving communication, the arts, education and spiritual values is testimony to the validity of the surrounding uplifting bounty of Divine Grace. Indeed, all of humanity's central purpose, as ordained by the Beyond; is to know and worship God; not necessarily through public programs of church, synagogue, mosque or temple but living a life, bearing fruits beneficial to all.

Of course, the above statements concern true science and true religion, followed and practiced, as given by original founders and scientists themselves. To often, religion and science can lose their original pure ideals. Politics, social needs and authoritarian constructs fueled by short sighted goals, go far in "abducting" science and religion and altering them for their own parochial oriented self serving ends.

True science relies on open complete sharing. There are no "sides" in pure applied science; no political agendas or doctrines of religious fervor to erode or taint the unfettered search for knowledge and understanding.

Of course, much the same applies to religion. If we were to truly understand and adhere to the teachings given by original major founders of faith, there would be little need for laws governing social conduct and morality. Humanity would live in a paradise of love and mutual nurturing respect. Doctrines of church, synagogue, mosque and temple would never be enacted. We would still be living, as Native Americans believe, in our original Garden of Eden.

But it seems, the essential "sinning" nature of Man compels us to transform these spiritual teachings of nurturing love into platforms of violence.

Many continue to hang on to ancient millennium old beliefs and customs; from a time when celestial beings literally inhabited the sky and monsters were considered a danger from the deep. By what reason, by what assumption, authority or particular faith is this done? Is this a good thing; something ordained by God?

Note: Much can be found in libraries and the internet supporting controversial "studies" and "evidence" used as "proof" either for or against what is widely believed to be complete and accurate information on a given subject. Often, in the case of arguments against Evolution, a single finding will be represented, or misrepresented as reason to completely overthrow overwhelming accumulated substantial corroborative evidence.

Another claim states, 'what has been reported to the public is incomplete; that we are at the mercy of people who select, edit or fabricate only what they want the public to be aware of that will justify their own ends'. This "world conspiracy" type thinking seems to really signify desperation on the part of the writers to get their views across. One finding, such as a humanoid fossil billions of years old, or, dinosaur and human footprints found together, or a machine-like propeller drive in a bacterium; these single unrelated isolated claims cannot compare to libraries of corroborated well documented interdisciplinary findings and research which, independently and consistently, support Evolution.

Many believe it is evident a new energy is energizing our world. Many world religions do speak of a promised time of God's "Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven". These faiths, in their own way, declare a transformation in the minds of mankind; where all will reside in loving unity embraced within the spirit of the Lord. A New Millennium will come, as well as their returning Savior.

However you personally relate to these thoughts, perhaps one way to look at the twin pillars of science and religion, as guiding signposts for the advancement of all, is to think of a combustion engine automobile. Science and engineering would make possible the car and the tools to drive it while religion would plot and pilot the trip, setting the course and destination for the journey.

It is so evident: Science, without religion, can become a vehicle for monstrous destruction. Witness modern instruments of war and inhumane actions performed in the name of "science". Witness also what we are doing to the Earth in the name of technology, progress and profit!

Religion, without science, can slip into organized habitual superstition and vain imaginings. Witness the horror of Holy Inquisitions, the stifling of objective research and open unbiased understanding. Religion can cause the intellect to wither and die within the confines of oppressive orthodoxy, creed and dogma! Much ungodliness is done in the name of God!

It is so critical to seek discernment. The seeker after Truth must at all times be fully aware of the limiting fallibilities of the tools at hand. Logic, reason, sense perceptions, cognition; even matters of faith and emotionally sustaining spiritual awareness; Are these life experiences valid doorways leading to what is sought, or vain imaginings based on what you wished or believe from the recesses of your own mind? The self is a very subtle, yet very omnipresent influence.

A passage from the Baha'i Writings reads, " O Lord, make me a hollow reed from which the pith of self hath been blown, that I may become a clear channel through which Thy love may flow to others."

In a world where we imprison ourselves within a bondage sentenced by creed, racism, nationalism, and political self-centered fervor; in a world where we have categorized "others" as "alien", "strange" or "spiritually lost"; deceptively revealed as such only through the cold steel bars of our own imagined fears, perceptions and misconceptions; where mutual mistrust, hatred, riches and power rule the hearts of men: Let us break the shackles we have forged between ourselves and rise above what men have produced among themselves. Let us take off our habitually donned narrow-focused restrictive blinders, broaden our perspective, then soar upon wings of discovery from which to behold the magnificent vistas of Universal Cosmic Majesty spread before us.

The password is "open-minded Balance". Either/or thinking causes conflict, in which case, both sides are wrong.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12 (King James Bible)

Is it possibly categorically wrong to argue and confront in the first place? is the focus and elements of possible mutual divine insight buried under the emotional fervor of "inerrant bringing salvation" thinking"? Maybe it is best to uncover shared agreement points and not concentrate so much on a, "poor heathen, you need to be saved", based dialogue.

Here is a thought: The only really appropriate attitude for man to have about the big philosophical questions is; not the arrogant certitude, which often deteriorates into such a threatening hallmark of organized practiced religion; but doubt. Doubt reflects humility; and that is how man needs to be. History is full of instances where "beliefs", concepts and "guidance" deemed as "holy", inerrant and absolute have later been found to be completely wrong. Rigid unyielding practices lie at the core of much unbalanced behavior and stifling superstitious types of thinking.

Perhaps, in the needed balance of thought, we might ask: could either faith or doubt be either a good or a bad thing? Doubt is often condemned by the faithful. Fruits of faith: certitude, strength, inner tranquility and radiant love are surely gifts given by the Holy Spirit of Truth. But doubt can also be a good thing if it leads to humility, community, flexibility, compromise and acceptance; which is also good for the human spirit. Balance; that elusive quality, serving outward acceptance and service while relying on inward steadfastness and reliance; is the standard.

Yet, is religion only a childhood type fantasy catering to immature juvenile needs of humanity? Or, is it, in its varied original pristine forms and teachings, as uttered by the original Founders, a necessary vehicle, evolving stage by stage, leading the development of a spiritually adolescent human race? Will religion be the cause of our material destruction or reveal itself as the ultimate Savior leading us down the path to a golden age of growth, maturity, enlightenment and salvation?

(So) "bitter is the conflict between sects and denominations. Christ was a divine Center of unity and love. Whenever discord prevails instead of unity, wherever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship, Antichrist reigns instead of Christ. Who is right in these controversies and hatreds between the sects? Did Christ command them to love or to hate each other? He loved even His enemies and prayed in the hour of His crucifixion for those who killed Him. Therefore, to be a Christian is not merely to bear the name of Christ and say, "I belong to a Christian government." To be a real Christian is to be a servant in His Cause and Kingdom, to go forth under His banner of peace and love toward all mankind, to be self-sacrificing and obedient, to become quickened by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, to be mirrors reflecting the radiance of the divinity of Christ, to be fruitful trees in the garden of His planting, to refresh the world

by the water of life of His teachings -- in all things to be like Him and filled with the spirit of His love. (Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 6)

Detach yourself from bias-based thinking. Do not habitually blindly follow dictates of men but rather, open your eyes to the uplifting presence of the Divine!

At times, there will be people that comment to me, " You don't believe in anything". Well, when it comes to the organized politics, philosophies, accepted organizations and mythologies of Man, there really is not much I find appealing. The Spirit of Truth, wonder and awe, as emancipated from formalities, is more in line with my thinking... But, at the same time, if one looks at major positive advancing historical revolutionary milestones as paralleling fundamental evolutionary worldwide faith happenings, might the case for a very real Divine Connection in human events be evident?

Does the appearance of a religious "Savior Figure" such as Moses, Abraham, Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, Buddha, Deganawida etc. have an impact on world history? ? What went on in history during and following the lives of the above mentioned "Saviors"?

How did medicine, mathematics and learning in Muslim Andalusia compare with Christian Catholic medieval Europe? Did the "Articles" of the Iroquois Confederacy, as set down by Deganawida, help inspire the United States Constitution?

For millennia mankind watched the flight of birds in wonder; yet, he remained earthbound. Then suddenly, within a span of sixty six years (1903-1969); not only was powered flight itself achieved but our species had landed on the Moon! Information and technology is continuing to explode. Is something else going on in our time? What is driving our present worldwide revolution of scientific enlightenment?

Is a "new age" world awareness finding the old "wineskins" of ancient teachings and foundations of belief to be inadequate for our time? Is humanity changing? If so, Why? Does man's inhumanity toward his own species play a significant role in graphically illustrating our need to follow Divine Love and principle? Are both religion and science truly needed as fundamental elements for designing the chariot and giving us the road map to follow allowing us to build an ever-advancing world civilization?

It is Balance in science, religion, philosophy...Balance... and moderation in all things.

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**The argument of Evolution v. Biblical Creation in the United States is fueled by these statistics**

See Wikipedia online: **February 11, 2009**

**On Darwin's Birthday, Only 4 in 10 Believe in Evolution**

**Belief drops to 24% among frequent church attendees**

Gallup Pole results: by Frank Newport <http://www.gallup.com/poll/114544/darwin-birthday-believe-evolution.aspx>

PRINCETON, NJ -- On the eve of the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, a new Gallup Poll shows that only 39% of Americans say they "believe in the theory of evolution," while a quarter say they do not believe in the theory, and another 36% don't have an opinion either way. These attitudes are strongly related to education and, to an even greater degree, religiosity.

There is a strong relationship between education and belief in Darwin's theory, as might be expected, ranging from 21% of those with high-school educations or less to 74% of those with postgraduate degrees.

Before respondents in the current poll were asked about their belief in evolution, they were tested to see whether they could correctly associate evolution with Darwin. The results show that 55% of Americans can correctly name evolution (or another term closely associated with evolution, such as natural selection) when asked with which theory they associate Darwin. Correct identification zooms from only 31% among those with no more than a high school education all the way to 86% among those with postgraduate educations. Americans who seldom or never attend church are slightly, but not overwhelmingly, more likely to correctly identify Darwin with this theory than are those who attend more often.

More from Wikipedia: According to recent surveys, 83 percent of Americans claim to belong to a religious denomination, 40 percent claim to attend services nearly every week or more, and 58 percent claim to pray at least weekly.<sup>[1]</sup> A majority of Americans report that religion plays a "very important" role in their lives, a proportion unusual among [developed nations](#).

The majority of Americans (76%) identify themselves as [Christians](#), mostly within [Protestant](#) and [Catholic](#) denominations, accounting for 51% and 25% of the population respectively.<sup>[4]</sup> Non-Christian religions (including [Buddhism](#), [Hinduism](#), [Islam](#), and [Judaism](#)), collectively make up about 3.9% to 5.5% of the adult population.<sup>[4][5][6]</sup> Another 15% of the adult population identifies as having no religious belief or no religious affiliation. According to the American Religious Identification Survey, religious belief varies considerably across the country: 59% of Americans living in Western states (the "[Unchurched Belt](#)") report a belief in God, yet in the South (the "[Bible Belt](#)") the figure is as high as 86%.<sup>[4][7]</sup>

Obviously, the above deeply contributes too and influences much of how United States society views evolution and even science itself. Look below and see how little nearly half the general population of the United States seems to be aware, or even care, about learning, discovery or science based thinking. What do these statistics say about the overall health of our society and our role in the world theatre?

**Implications:** As Darwin is being lauded as one of the most important scientists in history on the 200th anniversary of his birth (on Feb. 12, 1809), it is perhaps dismaying

to scientists who study and respect his work to see that well less than half of Americans today say they believe in the theory of evolution, and that just 55% can associate the man with his theory.

Naturally, some of this is because of educational differences. Americans who have lower levels of formal education are significantly less likely than others to be able to identify Darwin with his theory, and to have an opinion on it either way. Still, the evidence is clear that even to this day, Americans' religious beliefs are a significant predictor of their attitudes toward Darwin's theory. Those who attend church most often are the least likely to believe in evolution, and most likely to say they do not believe in it.

**Scientific method:** The scientific method refers to a body of [techniques](#) for investigating [phenomena](#), acquiring new [knowledge](#), or correcting and integrating previous knowledge. To be termed scientific, a method of inquiry must be based on gathering [empirical](#) and [measurable](#) evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning. The [Oxford English Dictionary](#) says that scientific method is: "a method of procedure consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses."

Scientific researchers propose hypotheses as explanations of phenomena, and design [experimental](#) studies to test these hypotheses via predictions which can be derived from them. These steps must be repeatable, to guard against mistake or confusion in any particular experimenter. [Theories](#) that encompass wider domains of inquiry may bind many independently derived hypotheses together in a coherent, supportive structure. Theories, in turn, may help form new hypotheses or place groups of hypotheses into context.

Scientific inquiry is generally intended to be as [objective](#) as possible, to reduce biased interpretations of results. Another basic expectation is to document, [archive](#) and [share](#) all data and [methodology](#) so they are available for careful scrutiny by other scientists, giving them the opportunity to verify results by attempting to [reproduce](#) them. This practice, called *full disclosure*, also allows statistical measures of the [reliability](#) of these data to be established.