

Who's Outraged? Not Me!

By *Jamie Buckingham*

Concerned that the government was trying to indoctrinate his son with anti-biblical beliefs, a Louisiana state senator, Bill Keith, got a law passed in 1981 requiring the state's public school teachers to tell students both sides of creation theory. That meant if the science lesson mentioned evolution the teacher was forced, by law, to teach "creation science" also.

What is "creation science"? It is the teaching that a supernatural being created not only this earth, but also created the species separately and that no living thing can change (evolve) from one form into another. Specifically, it teaches that human beings did not evolve from lower creatures but were created in the image of God.

Do I believe that? Of course. It's impossible to believe the Bible is true without believing God is the creator. I believed it long before I knew there was some kind of a movement called the "creationist movement." I believed it because it is true. Not only that, it makes sense.

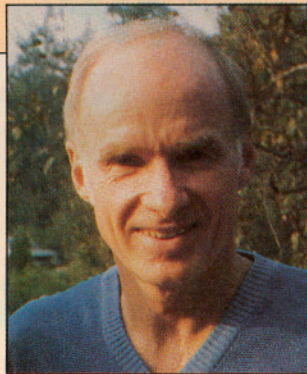
On June 19, however, the U.S. Supreme Court in a landmark decision struck down the law passed in 1981. The response was similar to that which takes place when a workman in the fireworks factory flips his cigarette into a box of cherry bombs.

Speaking from the far left, Steve Shapiro of the American Civil Liberties Union hailed the decision as "a legal end to the creationism movement."

On the other side, conservative presidential aspirant Pat Robertson said, "Everyone in America who believes he or she was created by God will be outraged. The Supreme Court has written into the Constitution a questionable scientific theory of the origin of life."

Who's right?

Not Mr. Shapiro. As long as men believe the Bible, they will believe God created this earth and the people who dwell on it. In fact, even in lands where there is no Bible, people believe God created this earth because God has done more than write a Bible—He also writes on the hearts of men. No U.S. Supreme



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Court ruling will change who created this earth, nor will it change what people believe.

Do I agree with Mr. Robertson? Usually, but not this time. His law degree should make him able to understand legal opinions. But these days having to say the right political thing often gets in the way of truth. Robertson and his conservatives surely realize the Court's ruling had nothing to do with whether God created this earth or not. God is capable of providing all the proof He needs for that. Nor did the Court declare "evolution" to be the American way. It simply said you cannot force a teacher to teach certain theories.

Although Keith's bill was carefully written to promote academic freedom without religious overtones, it was clearly a subterfuge to bring the Bible back to the classroom. As such it violated the Constitution's requirement of separation between government and religion.

The writers of the Constitution added the First Amendment to prevent the church from becoming oppressive as it had in England. There the queen, who was also head of the church, used a cruel government to force her theology on the people. Our founding fathers determined it should not happen here.

Therefore, I am not "outraged" at the Court's ruling. It was proper. The Court did not forbid teachers from telling children that God created the world and created each species separately. That's allowed. What's not allowed is a law that

demands it. The well-meaning people in Louisiana, who were trying to protect themselves from godless humanism, were using the wrong method.

In 1962 the Court ruled the state of New York was wrong in requiring all children to recite written prayers in the classrooms. However, despite what our president and others say about prayer being forbidden in the classrooms, Justice Hugo Black, in writing the majority opinion, stated: "Students have the right to practice prayer and read the Bible. But they do not have the right to the aid of the state in that exercise."

The following year, Madalyn Murray O'Hair was party to an auxiliary case when the Court ruled that governmentally-required religious devotionals violated the Constitution. Then, as now, church people became paranoid—not stopping to realize the government had not prohibited prayers in the classroom. The Court said enforced prayers—whether written by Hindus, satanists or Christians—were wrong. In fact, one year later a federal judge in New Jersey used that ruling to deny supporters of transcendental meditation from teaching their doctrine in the public schools.

The church is composed of people "called out" of the world. We do not depend on good laws for help, nor are we hampered by bad laws. We are part of a different kingdom. Why get uptight when our highest court rules on any law? If carnal parents and a lazy church depend upon public schools to teach our children that God created this earth, we've already departed from God's method. Rather than battle for new laws, why not elect Christians to the school boards and go to work evangelizing the nation's school teachers?

At no time did Jesus encourage His disciples to petition Rome. He told them to petition God. The one man who did petition Rome, Paul, got what Rome gives—death. Even if our government does become oppressive, God's power is best seen in a hostile environment.

Perhaps, rather than having us trust in Washington, He wants us to trust in Him. ■