

Acceptance Of Evolution Has Become Mainstream

In reference to a letter of August 1998 entitled "Are you the scum of the earth?", I would like to point out that acceptance of evolution has become mainstream. For example, Pope John Paul issued a statement backing evolution at the annual meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in Rome in 1996. Contemporary Roman Catholic theologians and most Protestant theologians uphold mainstream evolutionary views. There is so much evidence for evolution that whether or not it occurs is no longer debated in the scientific community. In the numerous National Geographic articles that chronicle the ascent of humankind there is an evolutionary theme. One of their most recent articles (August 1998) shows skeletons of ex-

tinct hominid species that lived in Africa millions of years ago, skeletons strikingly similar to both our own and living apes. Anthropologists and biologists are certain that we share a common ancestor with monkeys; we do not say that we evolved from monkeys. It is awe-inspiring that all present and former life forms, from apples to antelope, mushrooms to mastodons, and zebra wood trees to zebu, share a common ancestor that lived some 3.5 billion years ago. It is not the teaching of evolution that contributes to the "modern decline of morality" that the author discusses, but many other complex social factors instead.

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