

WHY WAS THE ANTI-CREATIONISM MOVEMENT ABLE TO ARISE SO RAPIDLY FOLLOWING THE  
ARKANSAS CREATION TRIAL?      --by Daniel E. Wonderly

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ABSTRACT

During the 1970's, many public educators in the U. S. were seriously attempting to listen to the suggestions of creationist groups. This attentiveness was largely due to the frequent objection of parents that too much dogmatic teaching of evolution was being done in the schools. During the early years most of the educators were unaware that the creationism movement's representatives usually assumed the right to ignore all the vast amounts of scientific data which indicate that the earth is very old. During the Arkansas Creation Trial of 1981-1982 this and other violations of scientific principles by leaders of the creationist movement became openly known and widely publicized. As a result, large numbers of American scientists and educators were shocked to discover that many people throughout the U. S. and Canada were actually accepting and enthusiastically teaching the unscientific hypothesis that the earth and universe are only a few thousand years old. At this point many scientists and science teachers throughout our nation began to organize an active defense of the scientific method of research, and also of evolutionary theory. They soon decided that their strongest weapon in this defense would be the use of the newly-publicized fact that "creation science" regularly ignores all evidence which shows that the earth and universe are old. Much documentation is available in science and education publications of the early 1980's to demonstrate that the most effective method used for alerting the public to the inconsistencies of creation activists was the emphasizing of young-earth creationist rejections of data regarding age. Because young-earth creationists usually cite the Bible as their authority for doing this, many publications of the anti-creationism movement frequently disparage the Bible as a misleading book which opposes the use of scientific research--which it does not. The proponents of "creation science" have thus greatly enhanced the success of the anti-creationism movement, bringing about a condition in which creationists are now able to appreciably influence hardly anybody except evangelical Christians.