

Atheists vs. Creationists

Today there is growing hostility toward belief in a Creator.

Ken Ham says that when talk-show host Bill Maher traveled to the Creation Museum two years ago, the outspoken atheist used devious means to secure an interview.

Maher then used footage of his visit in his 2008 documentary *Religulous*-which mocks a variety of faiths and takes aim at Ham, founder of the Kentucky-based ministry Answers in Genesis.

The museum, located near Cincinnati, has attracted more than 600,000 people since it opened in 2007. And despite Maher's criticism, *Religulous* didn't stem the flow of visitors.

Religulous grossed \$12 million its first month. But the film generated less attention among Christians than *Expelled*, the documentary by Ben Stein that questions the truth of evolution.

Yet Ham doesn't expect harassment of his \$27 million museum to cease, especially with this year's anniversaries of Charles Darwin's birth and his book *The Origin of Species*.

There is growing hostility in our culture toward creationism. Secular humanists fought Ham's attempts to acquire property several years ago, and many universities host lectures on how to oppose creationist groups.

"That's the sort of thing we see happening with education groups and museums," Ham said. "As far as the media is concerned, the worst ... is the BBC and the British press. They have a real agenda to mock Christians and denigrate those who believe as we do."

Other creationist organizations have faced legal battles. Two examples:

¥ The Dallas-based Institute for Creation Research is appealing a 2008 decision by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to deny its application to grant masters of science degrees in the state. A lawsuit is possible if the appeal fails.

¥ In December of 2007, professor Nathaniel Abraham filed a federal lawsuit against the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, saying he was fired soon after telling a superior he didn't accept evolution as scientific fact. Though a court dismissed the suit, an appeal is pending.

Still, not all Christians agree with the young-earth views that Ham espouses. One example is British professor Denis Alexander, whose book *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* released in the U.S. in January.

The director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion at St. Edmund's College in Cambridge, Alexander says creationists hold less sway in England. There, he says, many Christians accept evolution as an explanation of God's creative process.

Although Alexander believes God created the world, the professor argues that early church fathers believed Genesis was written in metaphorical language rather than literal. For example, he points out the word "day" is used in three different contexts in Genesis 1-3.

"I think Genesis 1 is saying that God has carried out creation in an orderly way, and a way that is always good in bringing order out of disorder," Alexander says.

Ham doesn't agree, insisting the Bible is the starting point for explaining the earth's origins. "As soon as you believe in an old earth, you didn't get it from the Bible," Ham says. "An old earth comes from man's interpretation of the evidence."

—KEN WALKER