

# Creation, The Foundation of Salvation (CFS)

## INFORMATION & CORRESPONDENCE

### \* Purpose & Background

To make clergy, laity and church members at large aware of the incursion of the theory of evolution into the church, especially through the endorsement of a movement called "The Clergy Letter Project." For some background you can read about the movement by going to their web site <http://www.butler.edu/clergyproject/Christian> or by reading some excerpts below.

### THE CLERGY LETTER PROJECT

#### The Clergy Letter - from American Christian clergy – An Open Letter Concerning Religion and Science

"Within the community of Christian believers there are areas of dispute and disagreement, including the proper way to interpret Holy Scripture. While virtually all Christians take the Bible seriously and hold it to be authoritative in matters of faith and practice, the overwhelming majority do not read the Bible literally, as they would a science textbook. Many of the beloved stories found in the Bible – the Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark – convey timeless truths about God, human beings, and the proper relationship between Creator and creation expressed in the only form capable of transmitting these truths from generation to generation. Religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth. Its purpose is not to convey scientific information but to transform hearts.

We the undersigned, Christian clergy from many different traditions, believe that the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist. We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as "one theory among others" is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children. We believe that among God's good gifts are human minds capable of critical thought and that the failure to fully employ this gift is a rejection of the will of our Creator. To argue that God's loving plan of salvation for humanity precludes the full employment of the God-given faculty of reason is to attempt to limit God, an act of hubris. We urge school board members to preserve the integrity of the science curriculum by affirming the teaching of the theory of evolution as a core component of human knowledge. We ask that science remain science and that religion remain religion, two very different, but complementary, forms of truth."

#### Background...

For too long, the misperception that science and religion are inevitably in conflict has created unnecessary division and confusion, especially concerning the teaching of evolution. I wanted to let the public know that numerous clergy from most denominations have tremendous respect for evolutionary theory and have embraced it as a core component of human knowledge, fully harmonious with religious faith.

In the fall of 2004, I worked with clergy throughout Wisconsin to prepare a statement in support of teaching evolution. We were called to action by a series of anti-evolution policies passed by the school board in Grantsburg, WI. The response was overwhelming. In a few weeks, nearly 200 clergy signed the statement, which we sent to the Grantsburg school board on December 16, 2004. Additionally, groups of educators and scientists sent letters to the Grantsburg School Board and to the Superintendent of Schools protesting these policies. In response to all of this attention, as well as the efforts of others, the Grantsburg School Board retracted their policies.

The outpouring of support from clergy around the country encouraged me to make this a nationwide project. If you want to read more about it or join us in sharing this important perspective, click [here](#). Encourage your clergy to consider signing the statement and please feel free to link to these web pages. And, while the current focus is on Christian clergy, please let me know if you are willing to write and/or host a statement from other religions.

The Clergy Letter Project has also sponsored annual Evolution Sunday events. These events provide an opportunity for congregations around the world to come together, in the way each feels most comfortable, to discuss the compatibility of religion and science. By doing so, we are educating thousands and elevating the worldwide discussion of this important topic. If your congregation would like to participate in an Evolution Sunday event, please contact me.

Most recently, The Clergy Letter Project has created a database of scientists interested in working with clergy members to answer questions about all aspects of evolution. To view this growing list, click here (If you are a scientist and would like to be added to our data base, please send me a note.)

Sincerely,  
Michael Zimmerman  
Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Butler University  
Send your comments to me at [mz@butler.edu](mailto:mz@butler.edu)

## \* Information:

### a. Example of how to submit resolution/position statement as a congregation

#### **AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE FROM A CHURCH**

One Church responded by adopting the following document as the first step in preparing legislative petitions to be submitted to their Annual and General Conferences rejecting evolution and The Clergy Letter Project.

#### **On Evolution and Intelligent Design**

**Where as** The Clergy Letter project states that "We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as one theory among others is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children."

**Where as** the 2008 General Conference adopted the Clergy Letter Project in **Resolution 80990** Stating "The United Methodist Church endorses the Clergy Letter Project and its reconciliatory programs between religion and science and urges United Methodist clergy participation."

**Where as** General Conference **Resolution 80839** resolves that the General Conference "go on record as opposing the introduction of any faith based theories such as creationism or intelligent design into the science curriculum of our public schools."

**Where as** these rulings are not in accordance with a biblical worldview and dismiss the presence and action of God in the creative process.

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Trinity United Methodist Church by the action of its Church Council and its charge conference rejects these rulings and affirms both creationism and intelligent design as Biblical and truthful. The church rejects the notion that evolution is a proven theory and affirms the Bible in declaring that God is both initiator and the power in the creation process. Furthermore, we call the United Methodist Church to refrain from teaching and endorsing a worldview that is in fundamental disagreement with Scripture.

**Trinity United Methodist Church, Erie PA.**

*[Unanimously approved by Trinity UMC Council October 28, 2008]*

Although this is an example for this particular congregation, the wording is well put. Their case is accurately presented, their resolve is clearly understood and they have gone on record stating their disagreement with their General Conference. Perhaps it can be used as a basic format for others to put forth something similar.

## **b. Offer Local or Tri-State Conferences/Seminars**

If you do not agree with endorsements of "The Clergy Letter Project" and would like more information on how to go about preparing your response, perhaps we can help.

### **CREATION, THE FOUNDATION OF SALVATION CONFERENCE**

We are in the midst of planning a local or tri-state conference/seminar for those interested. Some of our goals will be as follows:

**Purpose:** *To make clergy and laity aware of the incursion of the theory of evolution into the Church in general. Once informed, and if requested, assist in providing a Biblically based response in the most compassionate way possible, respecting Church policies and leadership.*

**Speakers will address the issue of the church adopting an evolutionary outlook from the standpoint of:**

- 1. Spiritual implications**
- 2. Social implications**
- 3. Scientific implications**

*\* There can be general "Strategy Sessions" setup if requested.*

*\* In particular, for the United Methodist Church members, the Trinity United Methodist Church of Erie, PA - is looking for other congregations to adopt similar resolutions and/or co-sponsor legislation. The need for recruiting Lay Equalizing Delegates, regional networking, countering The Clergy Letter Project and Evolution Weekends, educational resources etc, will be discussed.*

### **\* HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO THIS INFORMATION?**

- First, we should assume the majority of our fellow Christians in our congregations including most of our Clergy members have no idea that their leaders have signed the Clergy Letter Project.
- Second, make no hasty decisions like leaving your Church or calling down the thunder on your Pastor, elders or lay leaders. Be in prayer, Scripture study and keep the love of Christ present in your conversation. Be sure you "personally" understand the Scriptural foundation of your position on creation vs. evolution.
- Third, Seek help from those who are balanced wanting to build up the Church in truth rather than tear it down.

### **\* Contact Information**

For more information or if you have any questions contact our Coordinator

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