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Creationism in Germany

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Abstract

Creationism in Germany

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The difference between biologists and creationists is that the former assess theories by how well they fit empirical data, whereas the latter (i.e. Biblical literalists) evaluate facts by how good they can be incorporated into their theistic ideology. The second way of thinking is the core principle of an influential creationist group in Germany, the evangelical “Studiengemeinschaft Wort und Wissen” (Study Community Word and Knowledge, W+W). Founded in 1979 by the theologian and engineer Horst W. Beck (1933 –2014), W+W expanded ever since, with a creationist textbook in its 7th. edition, a “scientific” journal (Studium Integrale Journal), two attractive web pages (www.wortundwissen.de, www.genesisnet.info), and a strong lobby among Christian academics throughout Germany. W+W promotes a kind of “theo-biology” that can be labeled as “Young Earth-Intelligent Design-Creationism”, with the Genesis-inspired “Basic Types of Life” as central dogma. In this presentation, I summarize the origin and evolution of W+W, with special reference to their flagship “Evolution – a critical textbook”, authored by Reinhard Junker and Sigfried Scherer (1986; 7th. ed. 2013). This colorful monograph is sponsored/distributed by the publisher Ulrich Weyel, a member of the “German Evangelical Alliance”. The “critical textbook” has been translated into several European languages and is used by biology teachers in ca. 100 “Bekenntnisschulen” (faith schools) that are supported by the German government. Finally, I will address the “open dialogue 2014” between W+W and the “Arbeitskreis (AK) Evolutionsbiologie” (Association of Evolutionary Biologists, www.evolutionsbiologen.de), which documents that these evangelical Anti-Darwinists adhere to a Bible-based pseudoscience, that has no place in biology classes.

