

Wall of Separation

Creeping Creationism: La. School District Says Teachers May Use The Bible During Science Lessons

Jun 11, 2015 by [Simon Brown](#) in [Wall of Separation](#)

It's no surprise all of this is happening in Louisiana because it's exactly what Gov. Bobby Jindal wants. The creationist-in-chief works to promote religion in public schools whenever he is able.

A Louisiana school district that lets teachers use the Bible to teach creationism is doubling down on its sectarian instruction, claiming such lesson plans are permissible as long as the school does not provide that material.

Bossier Parrish schools are under fire thanks to some stellar investigative work by science education activist Zack Kopplin, an Americans United ally. Through an open records request, Kopplin obtained scores of emails proving that creationism runs rampant in Bossier Parrish's public schools. One such email, from Airline High School science teacher Shawna Creamer to her principal, was particularly eyebrow raising.

"We will read in Genesis and them [sic] some supplemental material debunking various aspects of evolution from which the students will present," Creamer wrote.

In response to Kopplin's investigation, a spokesperson for Bossier Parrish schools told the *Christian Post* that there is nothing to see here because the district doesn't endorse creationism – it's just something individual instructors are free to explore as part of "academic freedom."

"[The] district does not provide Creationist literature as supplements in our courses," but does permit "use [of] the Bible as supplementary material in presenting alternative viewpoints to evolution," the spokesperson said. "We support our teachers in engaging their students in dialogue regarding Creationism and evolution and allowing students to express their views."

That explanation isn't going to fly. Individual teachers do have the right to discuss creationism when teaching about the history of science, as they would any discredited idea. But they don't need to read from the Bible to do that. And while it's acceptable for public schools to use the Bible in certain classes, they may only do so if it is presented in an objective way – preferably as part of a larger lesson on world religions. That's clearly not what is happening here.

Unfortunately, it has become routine for Kopplin to uncover hives of creationism festering in schools throughout the Pelican State. A report he issued earlier this year detailed sectarian schemes by both teachers and school board members throughout the state. This included a letter signed by several teachers in Ouachita Parish who praised Louisiana's deceptive "Science Education Act," a 2008 law that offers cover for teachers who push creationism on their students.

One passage of the act is particularly troubling:

“A teacher shall teach the material presented in the standard textbook supplied by the school system and thereafter may use supplemental textbooks and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner, as permitted by the city, parish, or other local public school board,” the law states.

That may not sound so bad, but the reality is it gives teachers freedom to undermine evolution. And it clearly motivated teachers, like Creamer, to incorporate the Bible into her classroom in ways that are not kosher.

It’s no surprise all of this is happening in Louisiana because it’s exactly what Gov. Bobby Jindal wants. The creationist-in-chief pushed the “Science Education Act” and works to promote religion in public schools whenever he is able.

All of these likely conflict with a 1987 U.S. Supreme Court decision that declared creationism to be a religious concept unfit for public school classrooms. Naturally that case, *Edwards v. Aguillard*, concerned schools in Louisiana.

Given this precedent, Jindal’s scheme is on shaky legal ground. As Kopplin wrote in *Slate* recently, Jindal’s house of creationism could come crashing down at any time. “All it will take is for one Louisiana parent or student to sue the state for endorsing religion in public school,” Kopplin said.

Let’s hope someone will step up soon.

Tags:

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