

# Darwinism and Religion

Yesterday I talked about the charge that intelligent design is not science but religion. Today I would like to look at the other part of the debate. Does Darwinian evolution function as a sort of secular religion?

Nancy Pearcey writes in her book *Total Truth* that “Darwinism functions as the scientific support for an overarching naturalistic worldview.” Today scientists usually assume that scientific investigation requires naturalism. But that was not always the case.

When the scientific revolution began (and for the next three hundred years), science and Christianity were considered to be compatible with one another. In fact, most scientists had some form of Christian faith, and they perceived the world of diversity and complexity through a theistic framework. Nancy Pearcey points out that Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and others sought to understand the world and use their gifts to honor God and serve humanity.

By the nineteenth century, secular trends began to change their perspective. This culminated with the publication of *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin. His theory of evolution provided the needed foundation for naturalism to explain the world without God. From that point on, social commentators began to talk about the “war between science and religion.”

By the twentieth century, G.K. Chesterton was warning that Darwinian evolution and naturalism was becoming the dominant “creed” in education and the other public arenas of Western culture. He said it “began with Evolution and has ended in Eugenics.” Ultimately, it “is really our established Church.”

Secular evolutionists may not have church services, but it is easy to see that naturalism and Darwinism have become the main pillars of a secular view of the world. That may explain why most debates about origins quickly become so intense. Expect more and more controversy as scientists and commentators challenge the theory of evolution.