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Here Come the Editorials — The Dover Case Hits the Opinion Pages

Thursday, December 22, 2005

As expected, the raft of editorials on the Pennsylvania Intelligent Design decision [[see below](#)] arrived right on time. The nation's leading papers are responding as predicted — and the editorials are worth a closer look.

From *The Washington Post*: *The separation of church and state does not tolerate the promulgation of religion in public schools. Case law has clarified that this restriction prevents jurisdictions both from prohibiting the teaching of evolution and from requiring the teaching of creationism as science alongside it. Judge Jones has taken an important additional step, holding that it also forbids the teaching of creationism masked in scientific lingo, even without overt references to God.*

Let's get this straight — *The Washington Post* fears that secularism is endangered even when Intelligent Design advances no “overt references to God.”

From *The New York Times*: *The intelligent design movement holds that life forms are too complex to have been formed by natural processes and must have been fashioned by a higher intelligence, which is never officially identified but which most adherents believe to be God. By injecting intelligent design into the science curriculum, the judge ruled, the board was unconstitutionally endorsing a religious viewpoint that advances “a particular version of Christianity.”*

A mere belief in an intelligence behind the universe advances “a particular version of Christianity?” What version? I suppose any version that believes in a Creator in any sense.

From *USA Today*: *Jones' decision should give fortitude to school boards across the USA under pressure from ID advocates who maintain that evolution vs. intelligent design is a matter of opinion and, as such, teaching both sides is only fair. The problem with comparing evolution with intelligent design is that ID is a matter of faith, not science. It can't be tested. Evolution, by contrast, is backed by overwhelming scientific evidence.*

In other words, these editors simply declare that, when the issue is evolutionary theory, there is only one side to the story. In their view, anyone who calls the theory into question just doesn't understand science. End of story.

From *The Dallas Morning News*: *Yesterday's ruling that the body of thought dubbed intelligent design should not be injected, by mandate, into science classrooms is correct. It is important to understand, however, what the ruling does not do. In drawing a line between science and other modes of thought, such as philosophy or religion, the judge did not elevate science above those other modes. Nor did the ruling suggest that any branch of science, including Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection, is fixed, immutable or immune to scrutiny.*

Yet, Judge Jones' decision effectively asserts that evolutionary theory is “immune to scrutiny” in its general form and shape. Presumably, only the details can be scrutinized.

From *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*: *In striking down a requirement in Dover, Pa., that biology students learn about the concept of intelligent design, Jones unequivocally stated that intelligent design is born of faith, not fact. Evolution stands on its scientific merit and can be verified through fossils, mutating viruses and molecular biology. The*

concept of intelligent design and an intelligent designer rests entirely on an individual's personal belief in a higher power. The U.S. Constitution guarantees Americans the freedom to believe in that higher power, but it explicitly bans them from imposing those beliefs on others. The First Amendment prohibits conforming public school teaching to any religious sect or dogma.

“Imposing those beliefs on others?” Did the editors actually read the statement adopted by the Dover school board designed to be read before high school classes on evolution? [\[see below\]](#) It merely offered Intelligent Design materials if the student asked for them. That’s “imposing those beliefs on others?”

More to come as editorials appear.

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