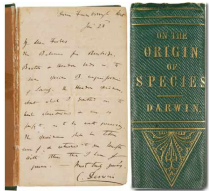


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By: Dan Talpalariu, Science Editor



First edition of "The Origin of Species"
FSU

[Religion and Evolution Theories Finally Make Peace](#)

Church of England apologizes to Darwin over his evolution theory

The same way Vatican did for Galileo Galilei in 1992, Church of England decided it was time to separate itself conceptually from its fundamentalist sisters into religion and apologize to Charles Darwin, the very one who issued the much-disputed theory of evolution. Both Galilei and Darwin shaped the modern science of today. In 1633, under the threat of torture, the catholic Inquisition forced Galilei to withdraw his theory about Earth orbiting the sun. "Eppur si muove (All the same, it moves)," said the great man though, after recanting his theory. Almost 360 years passed before Pope John Paul II finally admitted the obvious, that the scientist was right. In 1859, a book called "The Origin of Species" (although the original title, until 1872, was "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life") would shake the very foundations of science and religion by presenting the principles of natural selection. The theory stated that favorable heritable traits of an organism (phenotypes) would make it more likely to survive and reproduce than the unfavorable ones. In time, this would lead to physical adaptations for certain ecological environments and even to the emergence of new species. But the most controversial point the book made was that man was descending from apes. This creation vs. evolution topic is still debated today. Tomorrow, as a website dedicated to the scientist celebrates 200 years from his birth, senior church officials of the Church of England will post an apologizing article there. Written by reverend Dr. Malcolm Brown, director of mission and public affairs of the Archbishop's Council, the article reads: "Charles Darwin, 200 years from your birth [in 1809], the Church of England owes you an apology for misunderstanding you and, by getting our first reaction wrong, encouraging others to misunderstand you still. People, and institutions, make mistakes and Christian people and Churches are no exception. When a big new idea emerges that changes the way people look at the world, it's easy to feel that every old idea, every certainty, is under attack and then to do battle against the new insights. The Church made that mistake with Galileo's astronomy and has since realized its error." Obviously, opinions on this range from "ridiculous" to accepting, and even to "not again!" Even Darwin's descendants don't share the same view. Andrew Darwin, his great-great-grandson, states that he was "bemused" by the "pointless" attempt: "Why bother? When an apology is made after 200 years, it's not so much to right a wrong, but to make the person or organization making the apology feel better." 87-year-old Horace Barlow from Cambridge, Darwin's great-grandson, seems more understanding, though: "Darwin was very concerned about offending other people as his wife Emma was a committed Christian. So I think this apology would have pleased him." "They buried him in Westminster Abbey, which I suppose was an apology of sorts," Mr. Barlow added. On the side of the outraged, Ann Widdecombe, a former Conservative Minister who traded the Church of England for the Roman Catholic one stands as a vivid example: "It's absolutely ludicrous. Why don't we have the Italians apologizing for Pontius Pilate? We've already apologized for slavery and for the Crusades. When is it all going to stop? It's insane and makes the Church of England look ridiculous." Dr. Brown explained that in his view, there is no incompatibility between the concepts of the Christian religion and Charles Darwin's theories.