



BBC News 24 October 5th 2007

On creationism in the science classroom

Interview with Professor Richard Joyner ex-Chair of CaSE Executive Committee

Interviewer: Hasn't Michael Reiss got a point, there should be no subject that is taboo in the classroom.

RJ: Absolutely, there should indeed be no subject that is taboo.

Interviewer: So what's your view of this, do you think it is a credible piece of guidance for teachers?

RJ: I think this is a very credible piece of guidance and it agrees very much with the guidance that's given to teachers in schools by the Department for Schools that what should be taught is evolution, but if creationism is brought up the views of the pupils should be treated with respect and treated seriously. It should be pointed out to them that what science tends to be about is looking for evidence so they should be asked and challenged for what the evidence is for the view that they take.

Interviewer: What would you say to those critics who would suggest that this is going back in time and that students shouldn't be taught theories that in their view are clearly disreputable?

RJ: I don't think it's a question of disreputable. It's a question of saying that science takes the view that there is not sufficient evidence to believe that the earth was created in 6 or 7 days. Rather the evidence is that it was created over and that life developed over a much longer time period.

Interviewer: Do you think it would be fair to argue that creationist ideas should be actually be taught within a religious arena rather than within a school?

RJ: I think that's entirely proper. That it should be taught as one example of religious views that are held by particular practitioners of Christianity.

Interviewer: So who do you think should be allowed to teach creationism within schools and maybe answer some of the challenging questions raised by children?

RJ: I think if children raise questions with the science teachers then it's entirely sensible that they do that and they do that, as Professor Reiss says, in a way that respects their views and respects the pupil and their questions.