

Scientists update book on evolution and faith in time for elections: Addresses the role of faith in human knowledge

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A top panel of U.S. scientists has published a new book asserting that religious faith and belief in the theory of evolution “can be fully compatible” and that creationism has no place in science classes.

The 88-page *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*, produced by the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine, is an updated version of two previous books supporting evolution scholarship.

The 2008 version is different, according to the 15-person committee that designed it, because it is aimed at clergy and school board members and discusses the role of faith in human knowledge.

“Science and religion address separate aspects of human experience,” the book says. “Many scientists have written eloquently about how their scientific studies of biological evolution have enhanced rather than lessened their religious faith. And many religious people and denominations accept scientific evidence for evolution.”

Many Americans, however, don’t accept that evidence, including Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee.

University of Michigan professor Gilbert Omenn, one of the book’s authors, said he would “worry that a president who didn’t believe in evolution arguments” would also, for instance, disregard evidence that smoking cigarettes is unhealthy. “This is a way of leading our country to ruin,” Omenn told reporters recently.

Believers in intelligent design, or its predecessor, creationism, assert that the world’s complex forms of life are inexplicable without reference to a divine author.

But evidence for evolution and natural selection abounds, with sources from DNA research to fossil records, the scientists contend in the new book. "Scientists no longer question the basic facts of evolution as a process," the book says.

The book is available online at www.nas.edu. -*Religion News Service*