

## Survey Finds Support Is Strong For Teaching 2 Origin Theories

By JAMES GLANZ

An overwhelming majority of Americans think that creationism should be taught along with Darwin's theory of evolution in the public schools, according to a new national survey.

Some scientists characterized the seemingly contradictory findings as a quixotic effort by the public to accommodate incompatible world views. But in some ways, even as Americans continue to argue over what students should be taught about human origins, the poll offers encouragement to both sides in the debate.

The survey's results were released yesterday by the People for the American Way Foundation, the liberal civil rights group that commissioned the poll, which was conducted by DYG Inc., the polling and research firm in Danbury, Conn. The survey involved extensive interviews with 1,500 people drawn representatively from all segments of society across the country.

In results emphasized by the foundation, the survey found that 83 percent of Americans generally supported the teaching of evolution in public schools.

But the poll, which had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.6 percentage points, also found that 79 percent of Americans thought creationism had a place in the public school curriculum — though respondents often said the topic should be discussed as a belief rather than as a competing scientific theory.

As for evolution, almost half the respondents agreed that the theory "is far from being proven scientifically." And 68 percent said it was possible to believe in evolution while also believing that God created humans and guided their development.

"You can read the poll as half-empty or half-full," said Daniel Yankelovich, chairman of DYG.

He suggested that the public's sense that creationism and evolution are compatible "translates in

a pluralistic society and public to there being a place for both."

Or, he said, the poll's results might reflect a postmodern feeling that no single view can provide complete understanding of most issues — as Mr. Yankelovich put it, "the attitude, 'Well, you never know, hey.'"

People on all sides of the issue seemed to find something to like in the study.

Dr. David Haig, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard University, said that he was "cheered that the majority of people are happy for evolution to be taught in the schools," though he added that "it is logically inconsistent both to believe in the theory of evolution, that humans did descend from animals, and to believe the opposite, that they were created in their present form."

Dr. James B. Miller, a senior associate at the program of dialogue on science, ethics and religion at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said, "Part of what it shows is that there is broad public support for the teaching of evolution in the public school science classes, and that for many people, this does not represent any conflict with their religious views."

Dr. Duane T. Gish, a vice president of the Institute for Creation Research, a California group that supports the teaching of creationism, also said he was generally pleased with the results. Dr. Gish maintained, though, that creationism should be taught as a scientific alternative to evolution theory, a position that most poll respondents did not take.

The debate that was started 75 years ago in the Scopes trial and reignited last year when the Kansas school board voted to remove most references to evolution from state education standards, shows no sign of cooling.

Last month, a charter school in

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