Bill Nye the Science Guy says creationism not good for kids

Lily Kuo, Reuters

(Reuters) - Scientist and children's television personality Bill Nye, in a newly released online video, panned biblical creationism and implored American parents who reject the scientific theory of evolution not to teach their beliefs to their youngsters.

"I say to the grownups, 'If you want to deny evolution and live in your world that's completely inconsistent with everything we've observed in the universe that's fine. But don't make your kids do it,'" said Nye, best known as host of the educational TV series "Bill Nye the Science Guy."

The video, titled "Creationism Is Not Appropriate for Children," was posted on Thursday by the online knowledge forum Big Think to YouTube and had netted more than 1.3 million views as of Monday.

In it Nye said widespread public doubt in the scientific concept of evolution -- which holds that human beings and all other forms of life developed from a process of random genetic mutation and natural selection -- would hinder a country long renowned for its innovation, intellectual capital and a general grasp of science.

"When you have a portion of the population that doesn't believe in (evolution) it holds everybody back, really," he said.

According to a Gallup poll that surveyed 1,012 adults in May, 46 percent of Americans can be described as creationists for believing that God created humans in their present form at some point within the last 10,000 years.

Education advocates have argued for decades over what children should be taught in public schools in regard to the formation of the universe, life and humans.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1987 that requiring biblical creation to be taught in public schools alongside evolution was unconstitutional as a violation of the First Amendment separation between church and state.

In April, a law was passed that protects teachers in Tennessee who wish to critique or analyze what they view as the scientific weaknesses of evolution, making it the second state, after Louisiana, to enable teachers to more easily espouse alternatives to evolution in the classroom.

Nye said that while many adults may believe in creationism, children should be taught evolution in order to understand science. Absent a grasp of evolution, he said, "You're just not going to get the right answers." And he called evolution the

"fundamental idea in all of life science, in all of biology."

Teaching children the building blocks of science is essential for the country's future, he added, saying, "We need them. We need scientifically literate voters and taxpayers for the future."

Nye's popular show, produced by Disney's Buena Vista Television, aired from September 1993 to June 1998 on PBS and was also syndicated to local television stations.

(Editing by Lisa Shumaker)

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