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ISTJ, Religion and Politics: An Editor's View

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ISTJ, Religion and Politics: An Editor's View

During the past year, the *Iowa Science Teachers Journal* has been criticised (and in one instance politically threatened) for not publishing sectarian interpretations of natural phenomena which conflict with widely accepted scientific theory. It is a policy of the journal not to publish sectarian or political views concerning natural phenomena. The purpose of this editorial is to provide clarification of the journal's role in reporting advances in science and science teaching to the public and parochial schools of the state.

One of the basic tenets of science is that the understanding of natural phenomena can most accurately be attained through reproducible sensory measurement and experimental manipulation. The validity of the ideas and principles secured by such processes is not measured by conformity to religious or political models but to usefulness in making predictions. When new scientific theories improve predictability, old scientific theories are rejected and discarded. Such an approach, with its limitations and strengths, has reduced, but not eliminated, mystical or erroneous interpretations in many areas of nature and has eventually improved man's understanding of them.

Science is a dynamic process practiced by people of many religious faiths. Science is also practiced by people of many different political affiliations. The journal is intended to serve the *scientific* interests of the public and parochial schools of Iowa and has an audience of varying political and religious convictions.

Such a view does not ignore or diminish the mysteries and wonders of the universe and the sense of awe and humility that they inspire. Neither does it imply that scientific theories are infallible nor does it discourage scientists and teachers from involving themselves in religious or political activities. It simply recognizes that sectarian and/or political interpretations of scientific theories and ideas are highly personal matters and are beyond the focus, scope and responsibility of this journal. For a broader perspective of the problem involved, read the lead article in this issue.

A.C. Haman
Editor

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"Once one recognizes that the creationism/evolution controversy is basically political, not scientific, one also realizes how difficult it is to deal with the matter."

John A. Moore
American Biology Teacher
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