

# NMSR Challenges CSFNM to an Internet & Newsletter Debate!

by Dave Thomas : [nmsrdaveATswcp.com](mailto:nmsrdaveATswcp.com) (Help fight SPAM! Please replace the AT with an @ )

New Mexicans for Science and Reason (NMSR) hereby challenges the [Creation Science Fellowship of New Mexico \(CSFNM\)](#) to a reasoned, written debate on the topic of origins, to be printed in the newsletters and web sites of both groups.

The following conditions are proposed for consideration:

- Both NMSR and CSFNM will prepare essays on a mutually decided topic.
- The length of each essay will not exceed 1000 words.
- Upon mutual decision of an acceptable topic, both NMSR and CSFNM will prepare and transmit their essays electronically to the other's representative, with a time period of 2 to 4 weeks.
- By the end of the 2 to 4 week period, both NMSR and CSFNM will include both essays, verbatim and unaltered, in both the groups' websites, and will post the same for a period of at least 4 weeks.
- Both Essays will also be printed in the next available periodical newsletters of both groups.
- Consideration will be given to publishing of the Essays in independent media, such as the *Albuquerque Journal*.
- It is anticipated that several pairs of Essays may be the result, each written to mutually decided topics.
- Proposed changes to these rules will be considered, but these requests must be made in writing.

## Why a written debate?

Debates in a church or university setting can often degenerate into a circus. When emotions run high, the chances of learning real science dwindle to nothing. Impassioned appeals may be absolutely correct, or they may be completely wrong. Either way, they can still sway an audience that is overwhelmed with a barrage of words and images. The Written Word is a much calmer forum for the heated topic of **Origins**.

NMSR proposes a reasoned, reasonable, and civilized debate. Let both groups put forward their best thoughts and words; words they are *proud* to put down in writing, for anyone in the world to see, and examine, and ponder at their leisure. Let both groups put forward their best science, their best arguments, their most compelling observations. The essays can be written by any person or persons appointed by the corresponding group (NMSR or CSFNM). For example, Dr. Duane Gish and Paul Ackerman from the Institute for Creation Research are coming to Rio Rancho on March 4th. If they wanted to write the first essay for CSFNM, that is certainly acceptable to NMSR.

It should be understood that the proposed internet/newsletter debate format will not result in final resolution of any political or scientific controversies. It should also be understood that real scientific debate takes place in peer-reviewed Journals like *Nature* and *Science*.

Let the debates begin.

## ***NMSR'S PROPOSAL FOR THE FIRST DEBATE TOPIC***

***Resolved: Evolution, and not Creationism,  
should be taught in public school science classes.***

*For the resolution:* [New Mexicans for Science and Reason](#)

*Against the resolution:* [Creation Science Fellowship of New Mexico](#)

This challenge was communicated to CSFNM via [e-mail](#) on: **February 24th, 2000.**

This challenge was also sent to CSFNM via certified, return-receipt mail on: **February 25th, 2000.**

The letter was received and signed for by CSFNM on **February 26th, 2000.**

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On **March 8th, 2000**, we received this note from CSFNM:

*Dear Dave,*

*I wanted to let you know we received your challenge and we will be discussing this at our next board meeting. Thank you for offering the Debate Challenge.*

*May God Bless you and your organization,*

*Jerry Coryell*

*President, Creation Science Fellowship*

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## **Results of April 25th Negotiations**

Here is a list of the debate modifications agreed to at an April 25th meeting between Mark Burton, representing the Creation Science Fellowship of New Mexico (CSFNM), and Dave Thomas and Kim Johnson, representing New Mexicans for Science and Reason (NMSR).

(1) Each group (CSFNM and NMSR) will submit titles for three independent, separate debate topics. For example, NMSR's first topic might be "Resolved: Evolution, and not creationism, should be taught in public school science classes." A second NMSR topic might be "Resolved: the evidence for the great age of the earth is compelling and concordant." Each group will decide on its three topics, and communicate the same to the other group, by Wednesday, May 3, 2000. The groups will agree on the order of topics; a random coin toss will determine which group will choose the first topic, and the groups will alternate topics thereafter.

(2) The actual debate won't start until 4 weeks after the May 3rd deadline for topic titles, i.e. on the 1st Wednesday of June 2000, allowing time for the writing of the first submissions. These are to be posted on the websites of both groups simultaneously, on the first Wednesday of the month; each group will

place its essay on its own website, and each group shall provide a mutually-worded hyperlink to the other group's essay. The pair of essays are to be printed in the next available hardcopy edition of each group's newsletter as well, with a font size no smaller than 10 point.

(3) Each Debate Topic will be discussed for two months; in the first month, both groups will prepare and transmit 1000-words-or-less main essays, and in the second month, both groups shall prepare and transmit 500-words-or-less responses and/or followups to the previous month's discussion.

(4) With six topics (three from each group), and two months per topic (1000-word main and 500-word response), the debate is expected to last approximately one year.

(5) No plans to print the debate transcripts elsewhere, such as the Albuquerque Journal, are being pursued.

(6) A coin toss to be held on May 8th, 2000 will decide which group gets the first topic.

## THE TOPICS

### *NMSR proposed topics*

- 1. Creationism does not meet the requirements of a scientific theory.**
- 2. Current scientific dating methods are sufficient to establish the age of the earth as over four billion years.**
- 3. Biblical inconsistencies rule out a literal interpretation of the Genesis creation story.**

### *CSFNM proposed topics*

- 1. Evolution is not science.**
- 2. Genetics and biochemistry do not admit evolution as science.**
- 3. Information theory and Physics do not admit evolution as science.**

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## Results of May 8th Coin Toss

Mark Burton, Dave Thomas, and Kim Johnson met at noon on Monday, May 8, 2000, at the Applebee's parking lot, for the coin toss.

Kim flipped the coin, Mark called "heads," and it landed on the ground tails.

NMSR won the coin toss, and chose CSFNM to go first, with their topic "Evolution is not science."

Timing of posting the debate articles on the web was discussed, and it was agreed that both groups would post links to both group's articles as close to noon on **Wednesday, June 7th** as possible. In

general, debate articles will be posted at noon on the first Wednesday of the month. The wording of the mutually-worded links is not expected to be difficult, and will be finalized prior to June 7.

NMSR has already started sending CSFNM complimentary copies of the NMSR Newsletter ("NMSR Reports"), and it was agreed that CSFNM would begin sending NMSR copies of the CSFNM newsletter.

Both groups can begin writing immediately on the first topic, "Evolution is not science." CSFNM will take the affirmative position, NMSR the negative.