

Abstract Submitted  
for the APR08 Meeting of  
The American Physical Society

**Evolution is only a theory?** MURRAY PESHKIN, Argonne National Laboratory\* — I have been speaking to diverse groups about science and religion in the context of the attacks on the teaching of biological evolution in public schools. My audiences have included church groups, classrooms, business clubs, and general public. In explaining why science does not threaten most people's religious beliefs and why belief in evolution is not really optional, I have learned that most people have never been told what a theory is and how we know when it's right, or what it means that our theories are always provisional but well-established theories are nevertheless reliable where they apply. It seems that we have taught students and the public about gravity and DNA, but never told them what science is all about. We need to do better. The people I have addressed have mostly appreciated hearing about these things and about why science, properly understood, does not deny most people's religious beliefs. I will discuss these and other lessons I have learned from the reactions to my talks. \*For identification. This work is not supported by Argonne Natl. Lab.

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Date submitted: 09 Jan 2008

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