

## I MUST CHANGE WHAT I THINK.

That sentence describes the necessarily tentative nature of a scientist's view of nature. It also specifies the source of scientific knowledge.

The particular way in which scientists learn things is all that defines science. For example, how do you know that:

1. ... the moon is spherical? (You've never seen the far side. Does it have a far side?)
2. ... air consists of invisible molecules? (You've never seen one.)
3. ... your particular age and lifestyle reasonably predict your risk of colon cancer? (The prediction is sufficiently accurate that an insurance company will quote you a specific premium rate.)

Because not everybody learns this way and because only some questions can be answered this way, we disagree about some of the things we think are true.

Here are some things we seem to disagree about:

- The Endangered Species Act. Should species threatened with extinction enjoy special protection?
- Candid sex education programs for school children. How shall we deal with dangerous, sexually transmitted diseases and unfortunate pregnancies?
- Needle exchange programs. How shall we deal with dangerous, blood-borne pathogens?
- Agricultural use of forests. How much logging, cattle grazing, or fishing can a habitat support?
- Off-road vehicle recreation in the desert. What are the bounds of my personal liberty, and at what cost?
- The great age of the universe. The Biblical narrative, literally interpreted, does not agree.
- Species arise, they change, they are extinguished. The Biblical narrative, literally interpreted, does not agree.
- Genetically modified organisms. Is their use safe for people, and for the environment?
- What others come to your mind?