



“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie.” ([Romans 1:25 NIV](#)) On February 6, 2006, The Wall Street Journal published an article entitled: *“How Pygmy Ota Benga Ended Up in Bronx Zoo As Darwinism Dawned.”* **“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie.” ([Romans 1:25 NIV](#))** The story of Ota Benga is a sad and maddening example of the kinds of blunders that occurred at a time when the theory of Darwinism was rationalizing the evolution of humanity.

A scan of the newspaper page can be viewed below:

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By CYNTHIA CROSSEN

How Pygmy Ota Benga Ended Up in Bronx Zoo As Darwinism Dawned

FOR A FEW yards of cloth and some salt, Samuel Verner, an American missionary and explorer, bought a young man named Ota Benga in the Belgian Congo in 1903. Ota Benga was a Pygmy who had been enslaved by another tribe. Mr. Verner was working under a contract to the St. Louis World's Fair. He was supposed to bring several Pygmies to America for a living display of the stages of evolution, and then return them to Africa.

Three years later, with the World's Fair over and Mr. Verner in financial straits, Ota Benga was placed in a new home: the monkey house at the Bronx Zoo.



The story of Ota Benga is a sad and maddening example of the kinds of blunders that occurred at a time when the theory of Darwinism was rationalizing the evolution of humanity. To the thousands of spectators in St. Louis in the summer of 1904, the Department of Anthropology's exhibits of Pygmies, American Indians, Filipinos and Asians living in reconstructed huts and villages seemed to prove that man had indeed ascended from savages to masters of civilization.

The "guests," as the men, women and children on display were euphemistically called, probably weren't so impressed: The Americans had a penchant for stealing pieces of the exhibits, and they also threw lighted cigars and other unwanted items into the displays. When the chilly days of autumn arrived, the Pygmies weren't permitted to wear warm clothes because that wouldn't have been authentic.

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AT THE CONCLUSION of the World's Fair, Mr. Verner, as promised, returned the Pygmies to their African villages. But Ota Benga's home had been destroyed and his family was dead. He decided to throw in his lot with Mr. Verner, who was shipping a cargo of African collectibles—including chimpanzees, snakes, beetles and sculpted ivory—back to the U.S. for sale to museums and zoos.

Unable to make a quick deal, and in such financial difficulty that he began writing bad checks, Mr. Verner asked the American Museum of Natural History in New York to store his collection while he looked for a buyer. He also asked the museum to house Ota Benga, who was ill equipped to fend for himself in the U.S.

Ota Benga lived at the museum for a few weeks, but he soon became restless and tried to leave. No longer wanting the responsibility of overseeing him, museum officials offered Ota Benga to the Bronx Zoological Park, whose director, William Hornaday, recognized a unique business opportunity.

At first, Ota Benga was permitted to walk around the park's grounds freely. Soon, however, he was locked in a cage in the monkey house, often in the company of an orangutan named Dohong. Bones were scattered around the cage to make Ota Benga's sharpened teeth seem more savage. "To a generation raised on talk of that absentee star of evolution, the missing link, the point of Dohong and Ota disporting in the monkey house was obvious," wrote Mr. Verner's grandson, Phillips Verner Bradford, and Harvey Blume in their 1992 book, "Ota: The Pygmy in the Zoo."

THOUSANDS OF spectators flocked to the exhibit on the first weekend, and the New York Times reported that "the joint man-and-monkey exhibition was the most interesting in Bronx Park." While the spectacle provided plenty of laughs, the Times added, "it is probably a good thing that Benga doesn't think very deeply....If he did it isn't likely that he was very proud of himself when he woke in the morning and found himself under the same roof with the orangutans and monkeys."

The Colored Baptist Ministers' Conference, among others, quickly denounced the "degrading exhibition." "Our race is depressed enough," said the Rev. James Gordon, "without exhibiting one of us with apes. We think we are worthy of being considered human beings with souls." Gordon also objected to the exhibit as a demonstration of Darwinism. "The Darwinian theory is absolutely opposed to Christianity," he said.

Mr. Hornaday, the park's director, vehemently defended the exhibit. "We are taking excellent care of the little fellow," he said. "He has one of the best rooms in the primate house." And the Times opined, "It is absurd to moan over the imagined humiliation and degradation he is suffering....The idea that men are all much alike except as they have had or lacked opportunities for getting an education out of books is now far out of date."

But the controversy didn't die down, and Ota Benga, then in his mid-20s, soon decided to leave the zoo, spending the next few years at orphanages for black children in New York. In 1910, he moved to a Baptist seminary in Lynchburg, Va., where he did odd jobs as well as hunted and fished. His sharpened teeth were capped, and he changed his name to Otto Bingo.

Six years later, in March 1916, Ota Benga used a stolen revolver to kill himself.

In an article in the Lynchburg News, Mr. Hornaday was quoted as saying he wasn't surprised by Ota Benga's suicide. "Evidently," Mr. Hornaday said, "he felt that he would rather die than work for a living."

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The Wall Street Journal, Feb 6, 2006, Pg. B1 (Click to Enlarge)

“The wisdom of the world is foolish in God’s sight.” (1 Corinthians 3:19 NIV)

The lies and misunderstandings of Darwinism have produced some very ugly and horribly tragic results. This article highlights only one small example of this.

Darwinism’s supporters will countercharge that Christianity has also produced similar and worse results. But they miss one major difference: those perpetrating atrocities in the name of Christ are doing the opposite of what Jesus and the apostles taught. For example:

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37 NIV)

“In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7:12 NIV)

“Love your enemies.” (Matthew 5:44 NIV)

“Do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.” (Matthew 5:39 NIV)

“Never pay back evil with more evil.” (Romans 12:17 NLT)

“Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.” (Romans 12:18 NLT)

“Never take revenge.” (Romans 12:19 NLT)

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.” (Romans 12:20 NLT)

“Conquer evil by doing good.” (Romans 12:21 NLT)

Darwinism, on the other hand, has no morals. There is no God, so we are neither accountable to any higher power, nor is there any objective set of moral laws which govern humans. According to Darwinism, humans are just higher animals and the law of the jungle rules. Eat or be eaten. The strong survive. The weak die off. A hundred and more years ago the darker skinned humans were thought of lower on the evolutionary ladder than light skinned people. They were certainly not considered equal. This led to all sorts of injustices, and Darwinism justified it. The tragedy of Ota Benga is one such example of these injustices.

“No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel will prevail against the LORD.”
(Proverbs 21:30 HCSB)