Creationism Fostered By Religious Beliefs

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — A Louisiana State University instructor, a student of scientific creationism, acknowledges that the theory is fostered by biblical beliefs.

"At the center of the universe is the supreme creator," Raymond Minchew, a biology teacher at LSU's lab school, told Louisiana's top education officials Monday.

Minchew was briefing state officials on a subject most of them know little about — a subject they will have to make part of the public school curriculum in 1982.

The Legislature recently passed a bill, signed into law by Gov. Dave Treen, that says creationism must be taught if a teacher gives instruction on the theory of evolution.

Sen. Bill Keith of Shreveport, a lay minister and author of the law, denied during debate that creationism as a subject is linked with religion.

Minchew's view was different but he stressed that "as a scientist, I find the facts for creation overwhelming."

He said he has been studying the subject 18 years, during which "I changed my mind several times."

Creationists believe that the earth and all living things were created in much their present form all at once and only several thousand years ago.

Darwin's theory of evolution is the belief that humans developed accidentally from lower life forms over millions of years.

Minchew said the key conflict between the two theories centers on evidence for a cataclysmic flood a few thousand years ago — an event that could have created in a matter of days effects that evolutionists claim would take hundreds of millions of years.

Creationists say earth's atmosphere was once surrounded by a layer of water vapor that created a worldwide warm climate, intense atmospheric pressure and other conditions far different from modern times.

Using an example of suddenness of it all, Minchew noted that mastadons, extinct elephants believed to have lived millions of years ago, have been found in arctic regions, many of their remains frozen solid in a walking or eating position.

In their stomachs and mouths were found tropical plants, he said, suggesting that they once lived in a warm climate but were suddenly frozen without warning.