

THE CREATION-EVOLUTION DEBATE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MY  
PERSONAL MINISTRY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to describe my personal position regarding the doctrine of creation and its ongoing conflict with the theory of evolution and the implications this debate has for my pastoral ministry.

Second, while other hermeneutical principles are surely involved, I only want to highlight one that I desire neither to overlook nor overuse. This principle is the supernatural principle: the belief that almighty God has done, can do, and will do unique, totally inexplicable things. There is no scientific or hermeneutical principle to account for some enigmatic, mysterious events. Nevertheless, the supernatural principle is not intended as a "dumping-ground" or a "skirt" evangelicals retreat to when faced with seemingly insurmountable problems of explanation. However, I believe interpretation is best approached as both a human and a divine enterprise. Thus, the supernatural principle is an absolute must when discussing the doctrine of creation. At the same time, I wish I could claim an equal degree of inspiration with that of a Gospel writer, but

I cannot. So, instead, I will "unhitch my ego"<sup>1</sup> and venture ever so cautiously, and humbly, down the "positional" highway.

Third, in all the reading I have done on this subject and related topics (over the last ten-years I have read every listing featured in the bibliography at the end of this paper) I have concluded that evolution simply posits no acceptable answer as to where first life, or, for that matter, where the universe itself came from.

Fourth, any honest researcher will readily admit that proof is beyond the capability of science.<sup>2</sup> While science can investigate, collect data, establish working hypotheses and the like, proof is not a muscle it should be attempting to flex.

Fifth, I am decidedly apprehensive about radiometric dating methods<sup>3</sup> since they too are based on assumptions science cannot prove, particularly the necessary presupposed uniformity of the elements within the cosmos over time.<sup>4</sup> While carefully counting tree rings and scrutinizingly utilizing ancient ruins and documents, like lists of kings and pharaohs, are, in my opinion,

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<sup>1</sup>Del Ratzsch, *The Battle of Beginnings: Why Neither Side is Winning the Creation-Evolution Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, Press, 1996), 198.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Pitman, *Adam and Evolution* (London, England: Rider & Company, 1984), 234-7.

<sup>4</sup>Ratzsch, 71.

more trustworthy for setting general dates, I am obliged to conclude that time-tracking methods are most accurate when many different sources agree. And that agreement tends to become a bit shaky beyond 10,000 years or thereabouts. To say something is millions of years old is simple. To prove scientifically that something is millions of years old is an altogether different matter.

Sixth, I unhesitatingly affirm that mankind is defective in his capacity to know. Regardless of what man has "discovered," he knows nothing compared to what he might have known prior to the fall of Adam and Eve. How tainted is the ability of man to know anything? In fact, one might do well to acknowledge that an epistemological debate may necessarily supersede any dispute between creation and evolution. The real issue is not "knowing" but "believing," (Heb. 11:1). Nevertheless, it is wise, proof or no proof, to have sound reasons why we "believe" whatever it is we say we believe. Thus, Christians, like scientists, seek to establish degrees of probability, and are quite comfortable treading water here, knowing that faith is the response of man to the work of God. What need would there be for faith if all matters could be proven? I believe God intended it to be this way in a decisively purposeful ploy that has wedged mankind between belief and unbelief. I, for one, see a great deal more evidence arguing for belief rather than mitigating against it.

Seventh, as long as there is the reasonable possibility of interpreting data (biblical, scientific, etcetera) in a certain direction, that direction remains viable. I am well aware that this statement is loaded. What one believes and why one believes it may seem neither reasonable nor sound to someone on the other side of the fence. Admittedly, this leaves the door open for many different stances. But, at one and the same time, it also leaves the door open for my viewpoint as well. And if I have sensible explanations for what I "think," then what I suggest is equally feasible, whether others pitch their tent in my camp or not. The ability to persuade others is not a mark of truth. Nevertheless, I will try anyway!

## II. LITERATURE

It is my opinion that the opening chapters of Genesis are intended to give both a theological and a historical account of creation. I see very little if any poetry present and feel the text is meant to be taken as historical, descriptive prose. Although it certainly is not written in scientific language it appears to me to be a general account of events surrounding creation as disclosed to either Adam or one of his descendants. Perhaps it was written to explode the mythical cosmogonies of surrounding peoples. Perhaps it was not. If this were its aim, it failed miserably, for mythical cosmogonies are still legion. Moreover, I am inclined to think other peoples have taken this biblical account, be it oral or written, and mythologized it! To say that other accounts are "older" is simply to say they are extant. Again, we cannot know for sure which account came first. Utilizing the ancient KISS method (Keep It Simple Stupid), I simply believe God wanted mankind to know where things came from: him. Therefore, he gave a simple, non-scientific summary for the people of the day, something they did not need a slide rule and a calculator to decipher either!

### III. GOD

First, I firmly believe that one, and only one, God has always existed. I feel strongly that this one and only God is the Judeo-Christian God of the Bible (Gen. 1:1). He had no beginning and will have no end. He was, and is, and will continue to be. Further, I believe this God is triune, that is to say he is Father, Son, and Spirit, the three being equal in essence but not in office and co-existing as the triune Godhead. The only thing this God cannot do is that which lies outside his character and nature. Namely, he cannot sin.

Second, science is strictly limited to studying second causes, not this first cause<sup>5</sup> whom I call God. After all, how does one place God under a microscope or examine him through a telescope? What we can know about God is best derived from scripture, although nature itself wondrously testifies to order and purpose in creation, thus disclosing, at the very least, these attributes of his character.

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<sup>5</sup>J. I. Packer, "The Challenge of Biblical Interpretation: Creation," In *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Interpretation 1988* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 25.

Third, the choice between creation and evolution is beyond the range of science.<sup>6</sup> It is better understood as a theological or philosophical decision rather than a scientifically reached conclusion. The choice indeed comes down to one's world-view.

Fourth, basically speaking, there are two world-views or pictures of reality. One of these views is passionately oriented toward God and, as such, sees all things as ultimately dependent upon him, while the other view is one devotedly oriented toward nature and humans and, as such, sees all things as utterly independent of any deity and, rather, as products of purely natural processes.<sup>7</sup> This, in my opinion, is the heart of the matter.

Fifth, post-Darwinian biological evolution (Darwin wasn't even trained in biology<sup>8</sup>) is unashamedly carried forth by people whose faith rests in the "deity" of natural selection.<sup>9</sup> Indeed does deity make an appearance in everyone's world-view. Call him God, god, Nature or nature, everyone is unquestioningly placing faith in something and is, therefore, believing that particular something produced what is.

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<sup>6</sup>Ratzsch, 69.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>8</sup>Pitman, 9.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 27.

Sixth, evolution is, more than anything else, man's ambitious attempt to escape human responsibility toward God. This is where the issue begins to impact my ministry. If evolution is true and no God exists, then why minister? Why not simply be a social worker? No God, no heaven, no hell, no codified morality. Why not eat, sleep, and be merry, since we, tomorrow, will die and be done? Indeed, to admit creation is to admit the Creator. And to admit the Creator is to admit one's need for a savior, who, says Christianity, is the Creator who became the savior when he himself voluntarily chose to participate actively in the redemption of his groaning, travailing creation. Those wanting to dislodge belief in this responsibility vainly attempt to do so by positing a counter-theory that, ironically, requires belief far greater than faith the size of a mustard seed!

#### IV. HEAVENS AND EARTH

First, evolution simply cannot bridge the gap from nothing to something. In fact, I cannot say that I have ever even read an evolutionary attempt to do so. Evolution always starts with something: matter of some sort.

Second, matter is not eternal. Only the triune God is eternal. This means there was a time when nothing on earth, indeed, neither earth itself nor the universe as we know it, replete with planets, galaxies and the like, existed. When faced with the ludicrous question of deciding whether matter is eternal or God is eternal I am compelled to confess that God, not matter, is ageless.

Third, in the beginning, whenever that was, God created the basic materials of the cosmos (universe). Out of nothing God made the world, that is to say the "heavens and the earth." Not out of dirt, rock, dust, water or other planets, out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Furthermore, all attempts to explain how he did it are as fruitless as attempting to explain where he came from. Aside from speaking the word (Heb. 11:3) and the world coming into existence, we know absolutely nothing. Fiat creation of

this sort demands that principles other than presently observable ones were in operation during creation. Therefore, the First Law of Thermodynamics (which prohibits the creation or destruction of energy<sup>10</sup>) was not yet operational<sup>11</sup> (so much for uniformitarianism<sup>12</sup>).

Fourth, this primitive, formless earth was covered by water<sup>13</sup> and had the appearance of age<sup>14</sup> (how old did Adam appear to be when he was created?). No deception was intended regarding the appearance of age, nor did it take billions of light years for rays from afar to reach the earth, since each step of creation suggests complete functionality<sup>15</sup> at the moment any object was created. After all, it did not take Jesus a zillion light years to reach heaven after his ascension (which violates the Law of Gravity by the way), for we find him standing to receive Stephen at his stoning (Acts 7:56). Additionally, Paul wrote that to be absent from the body was to be present with the

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 230.

<sup>11</sup>Ratzsch, 70.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 15. Ratzsch describes uniformitarianism as the idea that the same geological processes have operated at the same intensity and have thus characterized the earth's entire history and this history has exhibited a steady-state balance.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Lord (2 Cor. 5:5-8). How many light years will this trip take? Somehow, on day one, the earth was bathed in light (energy?), triggering all sorts of activity,<sup>16</sup> both supernatural and natural, thus, it would be foolishly inane not to incorporate the supernatural principle into one's understanding of the creation-evolution debate, the likes of which evolutionists would delight in quickly dismissing.

Fifth, deliberate design is noticeable in what is created. Moreover, there seems to be movement toward order, that is to say, molding and shaping activity designed to make the earth habitable for life. God was purposefully and meticulously crafting a luxurious place for his creatures to live.

Sixth, the fall of man led toward disorder and decay in the universe.<sup>17</sup> Eventually, a world-wide catastrophe, the flood, changed the faces (land, sea, and sky) of the earth. The water canopy surrounding the earth collapsed. Thus, the appearance of age was greatly exacerbated by the flood. More than Eden was off limits now and what had once been an ideal earth was sent into a devolving tailspin. A nose-dive not a little affected by man's own spiritual, moral and ecological bungling.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 71.

## V. DAY

It seems fundamentally apparent that evening to morning represents a cycle. Also, the word day (yom) is commonly understood as a general reference to an approximate twenty-four hour period. Moreover, the use of a numerical adjective with each successive day also leads me to understand this as a twenty-four hour period. Additionally, it is difficult to understand the concept of the Sabbath as a seventh "day," end of the week, time for rest if this is not a reference to a twenty-four hour period. I sure am glad we do not have to work through six geological ages before we get some time off! And, Jesus was not in the heart of the earth three geological-age days and three geological-age nights was he? I simply cannot imagine any person, antediluvian or post-diluvian, reading this any other way. After all, it is not exactly written in some untranslatable code! Is this really some literary device couched in poetic language that its original readers would have understood as "figuratively" alluding to many years? I think not. Further, neither can I accept that this account is cleverly designed in a literary framework and thus is not to be taken literally. I am

convinced the original readers would have accepted this information at its historical face value (remember the KISS method!).

## VI. ANIMALS

First, neo-Darwinism claims chemical evolution produced life from nonlife.<sup>18</sup> Yet, there are considerable discontinuities in nature between life and nonlife, reptiles and mammals, in addition to animals and humans that simply cannot be explained aside from requiring supernatural creative activity.<sup>19</sup> Spontaneous generation (abiogenesis) is a myth, as Pasteur demonstrated, and remains an impossibility.<sup>20</sup> Also, common ancestry is assumed in order to account for the similarities between things.<sup>21</sup> But, that similarity of design suggests origin in the mind of the same Creator, not derivation from the same root organism. In fact, I view organisms as related more in terms of their Generator rather than their genes and related in ancestral concepts instead of ancestral stock.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Pitman, 18.

<sup>19</sup>Ratzsch, 12.

<sup>20</sup>Pitman, 47.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 180.

Second, no direct evidence from paleontology (the science of studying fossil remains), biochemistry, or elsewhere exists to support the notion that fish became birds, bacteria became jellyfish, or reptiles became whales.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, within cells, there is very little, if anything, left to chance.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, it is the tendency of the earth not to produce proteins, DNA and other complex molecules but, rather, to destroy them.<sup>25</sup>

Third, mutations (sports) occur, but are rare, discordant events wherein a gene is occasionally garbled or a chromosome is damaged.<sup>26</sup> The presence of a mutation is no proof for a transformation from one species to an entirely different species. A gamma-rayed fruit fly with a thousand eyes on a wing is still a fruit fly, just a weird one!

Fourth, as to natural selection, to observe that nature selects the fittest specimens is far from explaining where the fittest specimens came from.<sup>27</sup> Usually, if the odds of an event occurring are one in a thousand, most scientists consider such an occurrence as statistically negligible. Yet, the odds against biological evolution producing life are billions of times

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 78.

greater, and should, as such, be regarded not merely as statistically negligible but mathematically impossible.<sup>28</sup> My beef, and the subsequent impact on my ministry, really is not even with the teaching of evolution. In fact, I am all for education but I am radically opposed to indoctrination. Even when I preach the gospel I encourage people to examine the Scriptures for themselves and not accept everything they hear as proven fact. The significant problem with indoctrination is that, by the time I get a chance to actually minister the word of God to one who has been indoctrinated, whether by evolution or some religion, I must spend an enormous amount of time and effort deprogramming him or her in order to get to a point where the planted Word even has a chance to sprout! Lord, send me little children or childlike adults, please! One anti-evolution biologist makes an extremely practical observation regarding indoctrination and evolution being presented as an empirically proven fact when he writes, "A man's gospel is his business: that he teaches evolution as holy writ in television series or in schools and colleges - with no alternatives properly considered - is a more serious matter."<sup>29</sup> Evolution ought not to be taught as a fact. Textbooks teaching that Fords are the best cars on the market ought not to be printed. Further, creation

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 233-5.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 254.

certainly is not getting equal time on television, in classrooms, or in textbooks. Why not? Does an indoctrinational system fear that genuine education might take place? The ironic nature of the reasoning behind forbidding equal time itself betrays a warped sense of logic: namely, that the educational system fears that indoctrination will take place! By slyly classifying Creation as religion opponents are able to extrapolate back to constitutional wording referencing separation of church and state (and misinterpret it too) and are thus successful at maintaining their indoctrinational monopoly. Thank God for Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Church Training, and more. But even these are like comparing apples to oranges when set over against public schools. Specifically in that laws require parents to have their children in school somewhere. I have yet to know of anybody here being brought before a judge for missing Sunday School! This is a mismatch, is it not? Not necessarily, particularly if Christians recognize the influence, power, and presence of the supernatural principle: the Holy Spirit!

Fifth, neither chemical evolution nor macroevolution has ever occurred. Microevolution is the word used to describe change within kinds, perhaps even to the point of becoming new variants within kinds.<sup>30</sup> Macroevolution (transformism), on the

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 17.

other hand, is the word used to describe change across boundaries from kind to kind, and carries with it the notion that all living forms arose from a single source, which itself came from an inorganic form.<sup>31</sup> Talk of natural selection and chance developing new species simply does not square with biological laws now in operation in that the presence of genetic codes and codification represent the exact opposite of chance.<sup>32</sup> Also, to appeal to laws no longer in operation would undermine much of the evolutionists' uniformitarian hypothesis and perhaps even necessitate a Creator. Of course, they will have none of this. Further, I understand that Darwin did not espouse a linear development, but rather a branching family tree concept of the evolution of species. Nevertheless, if biological evolution is true, it is legitimate to expect fossil intermediates whenever a linear path of descent is present or, certainly from the point of departure.

Sixth, the Second Law of Thermodynamics teaches that in a closed system there is a tendency toward the decrease of order in the system rather than a tendency toward the increase of order.<sup>33</sup> In other words, things devolve, they do not evolve. They get worse not better. Any theory proposing an increase in order,

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 230.

as does macroevolution, is in direct conflict with this Law. Throw out this scientific Law and others are sure to follow. The macroevolutionary scientist is faced with an immense dilemma here insofar as he is toying with the foundational elements upon which he constructed his empirical house. We all know a house divided against itself cannot stand! Science is a fine servant but a terrible master. This is one good reason why biblical truth, faith, and the supernatural element of creation ought not to be overlooked.

## VII. MAN

First, let me assert that mankind is created in the image of God and it has been this way since God created him from the dust of the ground, and her from the rib of the man. These first human beings, Adam and Eve, like all other creatures, were capable of reproducing only their own kind. Moreover, insomuch as they were created in God's image, they were uniquely qualified to make ethical decisions and moral choices (unlike animals). Also, they had the capacity to respond to God, possessing an innate rational, intelligent, discerning nature, quite dissimilar from any animal, pre-historic or modern. Likewise, it is theologically necessary that the entire human race originate from the same parents. This solidarity is demanded in that in Adam all stand condemned, and in Christ, the second Adam, all may have the opportunity to be made righteous and put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15:40-50). Additionally, mankind stands responsible before God for decisions, behavior, and the like. Further, man was condemned due to sin and only those on the Ark of Noah survived this executorial gas chamber (H<sub>2</sub>O). Indeed, would not the population of the world be far greater had

man been around billions of years and there had been no universal deluge instead of being around thousands of years and all stemming from Noah and his sons? Evolution strikes out again when it comes to bridging the gap from something to life and from life to humanity. Paul was correct when he asserted there were differences between the flesh of man and beast, fish and fowl (1 Cor. 15:39), was he not?

Lastly, as to evil, it had to be a possibility too in order for genuine freedom of choice to be a potentiality. Man made some bad choices then and continues to do so today. That is why I am in the ministry: because I sensed God's call to get involved in pointing mankind back to the Creator and his noble purpose for creating humanity: his pleasure. Biological evolution challenges this Creator and theistic evolution challenges this Creator's word, therefore, both must be resisted.

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