September 23, 2011

This Week at *Adventist Today* Online

**In the News**

*Keeping Our Kids in the Church* - Martin Weber

Dr. Martin Weber examines the experience of more than 100 ministerial families and their children in this article based on his recent doctoral dissertation, concluding at one stage, "There is no greater cause of attrition than to attempt to shield children from knowledge of, or resisting discussion about, church or denominational conflict," he writes. This and more—much more...

*American Congregations Decline in Overall Health in Past Decade* - AT News Team

A ten-year study of randomly sampled congregations of many faiths in North America concludes that organized religion has taken a beating this past decade. But there are bright spots, in churches that have developed a more contemporary style of worship, and Adventism's stellar success in reaching immigrant populations. Summary article and linked abstract of the study...

*Where To? The Adventist Search for Direction* - David Newman

The long-awaited book about the current status and future of Adventism is now available through atoday online store. Editor J. David Newman looks frankly at the failings and achievements of Adventism and projects its future with startling but respectful candor...
A Sophisticated Adventist Apologetic for Young Life Creationism: Part II:

In his review of the book Creation, Evolution and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation, by Fernando Luis Canale, Ervin Taylor finds a book of extreme sophistication and noteworthy erudition. But does the book possess the intellectual horsepower to launch traditional Adventist positions back into the unassailable orbit they once enjoyed as guardian spirits to the Great Controversy narrative? Yes, and no, says Taylor, whose analysis will be followed by a response from the author himself…

The Good WHAT? – Mark Gutman

In Luke 10:25, a lawyer asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” and ended up answering his own question: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart...and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus told him, “Good answer.” The lawyer, though, wanted more specifics, or a narrower specific. “Who is my neighbor?” In answer, Jesus told a story about what we usually refer to as “the good Samaritan.”

Pardon v. Parole

"Paroled, how I love to proclaim it, paroled by the blood of the Lamb. Paroled through His infinite mercy.... Preston Fletcher wonders if we're singing the wrong words to the right tune. "Saved" means "pardoned," not "paroled." Yet many fear that preaching full pardon and salvation, in the here-and-now, will lead to an ignominious wallow in cheap grace...

Adventist Church Responds to La Sierra Employee Lawsuit - AToday News Team

Prospective Presidencies - Stephen Foster

Good Done by the Paradise Valley Hospital Money - AToday News Team

The Problem of Progressive Adventists - Ron Corson

Noah's Flood - A Lynchpin for the Creation Story - Chris Barrett

Adventism Keeps to Itself, Despite Others' Openness - AToday News Team
Keeping Our Kids in the Church

Submitted Sep 20, 2011
By Martin Weber

The purpose of technology and social media in the church is to facilitate outreach and nurture - winning new souls to Christ while helping existing disciples grow in grace, as individuals and as a church family. Unfortunately, many members are abandoning the church - most painfully, many of our own children. Even pastors' kids (PKs) are leaving us.

To find out why, I devoted my Doctor of Ministry project to the tragic topic of attrition of adult PKs in the Mid-America Union. I mailed an 111-point questionnaire to each of 222 active and retired clergy in our nine-state territory who have adult children (as of 2008). My research question was: "What influences from Seventh-day Adventist clergy parents in Mid-America may affect whether their children experience attrition from that denomination upon becoming adults?"

Data collected from the 113 questionnaires returned by clergy parents identified 40 attrition factors, yielding these conclusions:

Parental conservatism regarding lifestyle standards is not statistically significant in attrition.

Legalism regarding gospel doctrine (soteriology) is a moderately significant cause of attrition.

Legalism regarding practicing the principles of the gospel is a major cause of attrition.

For clergy parents to hold their own children to a higher behavioral standard is one of the highest causes of attrition.

Lack of relationality in the pastoral family is the most serious cause of PK attrition. Pastors with the highest retention rate of adult children are those who managed to provide the most positive and 'fun' family experience in the parsonage and were close enough to talk about anything in an atmosphere of freedom that allowed children and teens latitude in developing their own faith experience.

The greatest predictor of future faithfulness as an adult is whether the PK during growing up years takes initiative to approach the clergy parent to discuss spiritual matters.

Closely associated with family relationality is the freedom and trust expressed in discussing controversial issues. There is no greater cause of attrition than to attempt to shield children from knowledge of, or resisting discussion about, church or denominational conflict.

Congregational criticism of pastoral family members portends future attrition of adult children.

There is definite correlation between the experience of entering the pastorate during one's 30s and the future attrition of one's children.

Having a clergy grandparent is a stabilizing factor in the spiritual life of a PK.

To summarize: The most significant factors in avoiding attrition are 1) being able to discuss church
problems in the parsonage while also 2) managing to sustain joy and togetherness in the family circle and 3) giving teens freedom to develop their own faith experience without the expectation of being super saints because they live in a parsonage.

The final section proposed remedial recommendations based on the thesis: "The parsonage parent's best defense against attrition is to foster the positive elements of joyous relationality and intrinsic spirituality in the family while avoiding negative factors such as suppression, rigidity and legalism; Seventh-day Adventists can pursue this in practical terms by interpreting fundamental denominational beliefs in the context of the gospel and living them out in a missional community of shalom."

What that means, simply stated, is that there is nothing in the 28 fundamental beliefs of Adventists that would cause our children to leave the church. It is the abuse of our doctrines that causes attrition. Each Adventist belief is a channel through which we can experience Jesus. When taught and lived in the context of a fruitful and joyous relationship with Christ, church doctrine is a positive factor in keeping our kids spiritually safe for time and eternity.

Reprinted by permission. First published in Mid-America Outlook, Sep 2011.

Martin Weber is currently editor of Mid-America Outlook and director of communication for the Mid-America Union of Seventh-day Adventists. He has served many years as a pastor, most recently in suburban Sacramento, California.

Among books authored are his own story of abuse survival, My Tortured Conscience, and “book of the year” Hurt, Healing and Happy Again, with stories of people wounded in life before experiencing emotional and spiritual healing in Jesus. His most recent book, God Was There: True Stories of a Police Chaplain, was just released by Pacific Press. Weber has shared God’s message of healing love on five continents. He recently completed a Doctor of Ministry project regarding troubled adult children of clergy families.

For another summary of Martin Weber's research, click here:
for health and trust. Too much Bible study without resorting to SDA "proof texts" on which one is taught and heard as a child, do not stand up well to investigation. The only possible conclusion to maintain integrity was to become an ex-SDA.

Elaine Nelson
5 days ago

As an 86-yr-old PK I can testify that it was nothing in my parental training that caused me to leave the church. It is the anti-intellectual positions and doctrines that are too suffocating for thinking, educated people. Reading and studying how the church doctrines were formed and the paucity of analysis, but reliance on "proof texts" is a real turn-off to those who want to dig deeper.

Eventually, to maintain integrity, I no longer wanted to identified as an SDA. This problem will continue as young people are continuing to be better educated, critically thinking adults.

Horace Butler
5 days ago

So, those of us who believe the doctrines of the SDA church have no integrity? Are not well educated? And are unable to think critically? Funny, I've never felt "suffocated" by the doctrines, but maybe I'm not that well educated and lack the capacity to think. I guess a college degree wasn't enough for me to grasp the mythology inherent in Scripture.

The "paucity of analysis" by our pioneers included all night sessions in prayer and Bible study before arriving at many of our doctrines. But I guess that wasn't good enough.

Well, they said Jesus was possessed by the devil, and they said Paul was mad. So we're in good company. Interesting how some of us study the Bible and become more convinced that the SDA Church is on the right track, and others go the other direction. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." II Thess. 2:11.

Horace Butler
5 days ago

Back on topic. I think it goes beyond abuse of our doctrines. There are a variety of factors, of course. We need to analyze our methodology from cradle roll to youth. I see a dumbing down of our doctrines in the early years in some cases. That hurts the kids. They need to learn the basics as soon as they are able to grasp them. They aren't stupid. Children's church is a big mistake. When will they learn to be adult church members if they don't participate in adult worship until college age? Get them involved at a young age. Older kids can help younger kids in Sabbath School. In our church some of the teens have come up to the adult classes--and had meaningful contributions.

And the myth that they need "contemporary" music to keep the interested needs to be abandoned. That method backfires. It only gives them what they can get out in the world, and provides no incentive to stay in church. Church should provide something better and higher than the world offers. If we give them the devil's music with religious words we've accomplished nothing.
Elaine Nelson  5 days ago

I didn't say that SDA doctrines had no integrity. A careful reader would have seen that I referred to my integrity would have been compromised if I claimed to be something I could not. It's usually called hypocritical. Personal integrity is not the same as institutional integrity. That is a subject for another thread with many possibilities.

Trevor Hammond  5 days ago

Juvenile delinquency amongst PK's has always been a major factor causing them to eventually leave the church. I was one of them. A rebel so to speak. Mrs. Nelson's assumption that education led her to 'leave' may have been more of an excuse rather than actual fact. I left without educational influences. Just downright sinful living and textbook wordliness: by succumbing to temptation and bad influence of peers. I find the same thinking pattern with those who brag about been 'progresives'. They say they left traditional Adventism due to their glorified educational enlightenment. This can't be true as so many others have left without educational influence at all: just bad old fashioned sinfulness and worldliness. Talk about progressive regressives OR regressive progressives! Take your pick. So what's the deal? Adult delinquency is also a reality we must face. The uncontrolled, rash, renegade behaviour concerning spiritual matters is a telltale sign of weak delinquent Christianity which ultimately is just common rebellion against God. Living in a state of denial is unnecessary and worsens the rebellion. The more the education the more the rebellion. This is where education plays a major part: in the rebellion stage. Ultimately this leads one to accept darkness as light and encourages disobedience to God. Satan plays a major role in attacking the faith of PK's, even to the extent I would suggest, in some cases, of demon possesion which is often overlooked by many.

Then there is the other much overlooked factor. The regular nitpicking of PK's by some horrid nasties in the congregations their parents serve. Criticising the PK's is a way of getting back at Pastors who cross the wires of some crazy pew-warmer who 'pay' tithes (and also many who don't return tithes) just to have a go at the Pastor who 'works for them' - the 'hired help' if you please - who isn't bowing down to their every whim and fancy at their every beck and call. Darn Office Bullies! These devils agents take swipes at the PK's too.

T

Elaine Nelson  5 days ago

Each individual's experience is her own and cannot be compared to another's. What may influence one may have no difference on another. This is how we experience life.

JIMS Seven  5 days ago

Hey friends, I've read the issue on PKs somewhere quite long and that was very good (sorry can't
recall but I guess it either was in SOTT or Ministry).

Mr. Hammond:

'They say they left traditional Adventism due to their glorified educational enlightenment. This can't be true as so many others have left without educational influence at all'

Yes there are many in my country who bear testimony to that fact. I became little serious reading your comment, Sir. Thanks.

Trevor Hammond
5 days ago

By the way the Bible reveals in Psalm 100 that 'we are the sheep of His pasture'. So what does that make us all? Pastor's Kids too! Yeah - Cool! Except, (Hallelujah!) God is our Pastor. He is the Good Shepherd who was willing to lay down His life for His people, the sheep of His Pasture... Praise God! Thank you Jesus!
T

Kevin Riley
4 days ago

New research in America indicates that religion is associated with education, not lack thereof. In Australia, the majority of Christians who attend church are middle class, often with a university degree. In Europe historically it was often the peasants who were lost first in some cases. It is the upper and lower 1/3 that are usually missing from church. There is a correlation between higher education and liberal views, and most committed atheists are highly educated. Most of the working class tends to believe there is 'something out there', but they neither know nor care what it is.

There was an interesting piece of research done a couple of decades ago in Malaysia, which has a two stream education system. Those students who attended a science based high school had a strong tendency to be fundamentalists, those who attended a humanities based high school tended to be more liberal. The suggestion was that science tends to work with laws and mathematical formulae, those in the humanities with trends and possibilities. Neither, from memory, was better than the other at keeping people religious. Nor can we argue that one group was more intelligent than the other.

Perhaps we keep people better when the answers we give match the form and depth of the questions. Therefore it isn't education or lack thereof that determines who goes and who stays, but whether the church answers the questions the person is asking in a form that makes sense to them. And before anyone jumps to conclusions, I have worked in non-Western countries and found that people there are as intelligent - and, unfortunately in some cases, as dumb - as people in Western countries. We have not cornered the market on intelligence or stupidity.
Elaine Nelson 4 days ago

The title: "Keeping our Kids in Church" implies that one can "keep" an adult in a belief system simply because he might have been raised in an particular religious environment.

Did it ever occur that some have been inoculated against a religion in their early years? And many have adopted their parents' religion. Individuals must grow and discover their beliefs on their journey and it is impossible to assure that even two siblings in the same environment will chose the same path. We as parents must learn to love our children unconditionally and not let them feel that because they have chosen a different path than ours that they are less loved and appreciated.

This goes for the children of others in our church. Children are extremely sensitive to small things that adults often don't feel or see. Remember: all the founders of Adventism were either disfellowshipped or rejected their previous church membership.

The most we as parents should want is that our children our compassionate, loving, and productive members of society and that regardless of their beliefs, they will always be loved.

Gailon Arthur Joy 3 days ago

The reason anyone leaves his roots is because he has no Faith in those roots. When a church has lost it's faith, most vividly described as Laodicean, its membership has little basis to exist. It can be poetically described by a Faithful lifelong believer now deceased: "We are dead, but we ain't buried!!!

The Bible refers to it as being as dry as the bones on the hills of Gilboah.

God will manifest His Spirit in due time and Faith will be fully developed by a life of complete surrender to the will of God. Those who were grounded in the Faith will return to that Faith when recognized. Those without Faith will move the other direction and the real Remnant will do their work of the "Loud Cry".

Some will listen and swell those ranks and others will be forever lost in the maelstrom of Jacob's Trouble. The defining difference will forever be "FAITH". You must build that Faith or fall off the path to eternal life.

If we are to grasp our children from a very worn out world looking for pleasure and money, then we must offer real FAITH and Faith invokes action and both seem very rare indeed in today's Church.

Very few humans relish walking with the dead but yearn for life with all it's glitter. Even Moses had to spend forty years in Midian before he found his God Given destiny by building a life of Faith. And even then had to practically drag the Hebrews out of bondage.

If we diligently search for our Faith, we will find a reason for our Children to stay and get back to our destiny, but be prepared to face adversity designed to build your Faith...accept the adversity
and lean on God for the solutions and Faith will be fully restored and our children will learn to walk in that same Faith.

Ron Corson
2 days ago

Gailon Joy wrote:
"The Bible refers to it as being as dry as the bones on the hills of Gilboa."

That is an interesting statement coming in this article thread. Would a statement like that cause a child to question or think of leaving their church. After all the Bible no where says that but it may well be believed by numerous Adventists that the Bible says something to that effect. When they find that it doesn't what will happen? That is just one example of many possible errant statements. What would be the effect on the PK's if they saw their father making errant statements from the pulpet? I don't think questionaires are really going to provide the answers to something that can have so many different causes and effects.

Here is the total mentions of Gilboa in the Bible:

gilboa (KJV)

1 Sam 28:4
4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. (KJV)

1 Sam 31:1
1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. (KJV)

1 Sam 31:8
8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. (KJV)

2 Sam 1:6
6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. (KJV)

2 Sam 1:21
21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. (KJV)
2 Sam 21:12
12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa:  (KJV)

1 Chr 10:1
1    Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.  (KJV)

1 Chr 10:8
8    And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.  (KJV)

Elaine Nelson 2 days ago
"The Bible refers to it as being as dry as the bones on the hills of Gilboah."

Do us the favor of giving the location of such a text.  Ron has shown each place in the Bible where Gilboah is mentioned, and none appear even related to the comment.  Is it like the statement "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" that many attribute to the Bible also?

Kevin Riley 13 hours ago
Ellen White mentions being as 'dry as the hills of Gilboah', but I don't think she mentioned the bones.  Her reference was in relation to the SDA church preaching law rather than grace.  I believe she took the reference from 2 Sam 1:21.
American Congregations Decline in Overall Health in Past Decade

Submitted Sep 22, 2011
By AT News Team

According to a report released Wednesday (September 21) to Adventist Today and other media by David A. Roozen for Faith Communities Today 2010 (FACT2010), a study of more than 28,000 randomly sampled North American congregations of many faiths has found the overall health of American churches has seriously declined in the past 10 years.

Not only is attendance down, financial difficulties are far worse than in the past, and spiritual vitality as measured by the poll appears to have seriously eroded. The poll also measured ‘conflict’ in the congregations and discovered that nearly two in three congregations have experienced noticeable conflict in the past 10 years, half of those ‘serious conflicts.’ The level of conflict was associated by the pollsters with the decline in spiritual vitality.

There were bright spots, however, with clear evidence that ‘mission-oriented’ congregations tend to hold their own better than others, and that growth is indeed occurring in churches that take the time and effort to try to make their services culturally relevant to contemporary adults and young people. He also noted the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in particular, is excelling in the conversion and retention of members of ethnic groups.

The contemporary-style churches which emerged from California and have spread across America have now permeated all denominations, and once staid-and-stolid old-fashioned services in old-line churches are now being replaced by the newer format. The format is still better known on the West Coast than in the rest of the country, but during the past 10 years has caught on in the East, the last section of the country to accept the newer styles of worship.

The report also found spiritual vitality appeared to crest at the extremes (among very conservatives and very liberals), while those in the mainstream, or moderate middle in terms of their beliefs, tended to be less committed to their churches.

In a question-and-answer session following the official release of the report, an Adventist Today reporter asked Roozen if in his opinion a ‘conservative’ church is more likely to grow than a moderate or liberal church. Roozen replied that those on either edge of the left-right continuum seem to benefit numerically, while those in the moderate middle seem less able to move forward. “In this study, a church at either extreme of the spectrum seemed more prone to growth than those in the middle,” he said.

He noted that Adventism continues to be one of the most successful denominations in the United States in terms of its evangelization of ethnic minorities, and he sees growth continuing among immigrants, especially in Adventism.

Roozen also noted congregations with less than one-third of their membership under the age of 65 appear to be significantly stronger overall, compared with congregations where more than one-third is retirement age.
Earlier this month FACT2010 released a report (available on atoday.org) that studied the level of interfaith activity among American denominations. This report noted a strong inverse correlation between a denomination's perception of self as ‘conservative’ and its willingness to coordinate with other faiths in ministry. The survey found that 65 percent of Adventists interviewed saw their church as conservative, compared with members of the Unitarian Universalist Association who saw themselves as containing 0 percent conservative (the lowest of all denominations) and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who viewed their church as 90 percent conservative (the most conservative).

Roozen said that FACT2010 is preparing to release a third report this year, identifying the prime factors for growth among American congregations. “We still have been unable to quantify what makes a successful pastor,” he admitted. “We just don’t have the tools to do that, but we’re trying.”


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**Gailon Arthur Joy**  
3 days ago

Wow...this is real news? Have we not known we are "Laodicean"? And personal development is the answer?? That is just another name for secular humanism in the church and no answer to true Spiritual Growth best defined as a daily walk with God.

The answer is in studying the inspired word and adopting a Remnant response...we must inspire Faith and Share our Faith. That will rebuild the health of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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**Horace Butler**  
3 days ago

Does the parable of the 10 virgins who went to sleep ring any bells? Even the good guys snoozed off. That doesn't justify it, but it may help explain the stagnation that seems to be so widespread, and the foolishness that sometimes prevails, as leaders attempt to liven things up a bit.

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**Ella M.**  
3 days ago

Gallon Arthur Joy

I am wondering where you are writing from. Perhaps it is your culture, but you come across as using stereotyping a good bit in your posts. My question: Isn't it possible for someone to be both "liberal" (the word means different things to different people),and still have a daily walk with God? Can only conservatives deeply study the Word, pray throughout the day, and have their prayers answered? Can a "progressive" be spiritual and live in Christ? What do you think?

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist

Total cost of $26.95 which includes $5.00 for shipping.

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better understand Genesis and its proper relationship to science—and to speak intelligently on the current controversy about the place of evolution in Adventist colleges' curricula. Shipping applies to this item. Click here for shipping details.

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**Who Watches? Who Cares?**

Total cost of $24.95 which includes $5.00 for shipping.

Author - Douglas Hackleman. A 2007 compilation of meticulously researched chapters about some of the major financial calamities faced by the church in the past 30 years. Instructive and useful as a foundational text for helping protect the church from such mismanagement and opportunism in the future. Published by Members for Church Accountability. Shipping applies to this item. Click here for shipping details.
Part I of this blog presented a summary of a 2005 book entitled *Creation, Evolution and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation*. The author of this book is Dr. Fernando Luis Canale, professor of theology and philosophy at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Part II will be my commentary on this book. As noted in Part I, this summary and commentary has been previously published in the Andrew University Seminary Studies.

Part I noted this book was a detailed philosophical and theological defense of traditional Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church understandings of the opening chapters of Genesis. In contrast to the apologetic agenda of the SDA General Conference-sponsored Geoscience Research Institute (GRI), this work does not affirm young-life creationism by using a form of 'scientific creationism,' which disputes the interpretation of the empirical data supporting the standard scientific understanding of earth history, geochronology, and evolutionary biology. Rather, the book questions the conventional understanding of the scientific evidence, primarily by focusing what he argues is a postmodern approach to knowledge formation.

**COMMENTARY**

This volume constitutes a comprehensive treatise that defends with complex philosophical and theological language the traditional and officially-sanctioned SDA young life creationism — where ‘young’ is generally defined as <10,000 years — understanding of earth history (geology and paleontology) and evolutionary biology. To defend this understanding, it posits as a primary assumption the classic Adventist theological system — the Sanctuary, the Three Angels Messages, the Sabbath is a, “complete system of theology and philosophy. It would appear Dr. Canale believes that to reject or modify any part of this package would cause the collapse of what he views as essential contemporary Adventism.

The purpose of this volume has a long history in the Adventist subculture — that of apologetics defending what is viewed as one or more critical components of conventional or orthodox Adventism. Its uniqueness is in the extended, philosophically complex, set of arguments it employs. As far as this reviewer is aware, there is nothing like it in Adventist literature. To understand the author’s approach requires a close and careful reading. Unpacking the arguments, at least to this reader, took close attention to detail. One has to read carefully, both the text and footnotes, to even begin to understand the basis on which the author argues his points.

Despite the dense nature of the prose, the book is a fascinating read as an outstanding exemplar of what a sophisticated apologetic should look like. Effective apologists, both ancient and modern, not only know the beliefs that must be supported and which ones must be questioned and undermined, but also they understand very clearly the end point at which they must arrive. Their task is to devise the most effective manner of demonstrating to others that what they personally believe to be true — and/or what the institution or ideology to which they owe allegiance, teaches is true or can be logically supported.
As noted earlier, this apologetic does not offer alternative or contrary interpretations of the massive corpus of scientific data indicating the earth has sustained life for multiple hundreds of millions of years. It also does not attempt to enter directly into disputes as to how one should interpret the Genesis texts. Rather, it approaches its task of defending conventional SDA theological understandings of Genesis from almost entirely a philosophical perspective, with a focus on epistemology — how one knows what one says he/she knows.

I am informed by those most familiar with this literature that, with one glaring exception, Dr. Canale does a reasonable job of unpacking the contemporary dialogue and debate between modernist and postmodernist historians and philosophers of science as to the nature of how modern science approaches its task of understanding how the world works and how it has come to its present state. He has read widely in the philosophical literature, particularly that which deals with the scientific enterprise.

However, there is a serious problem bearing on the consistency of his approach where he has been selective in his use of postmodern concepts. It is well known that postmodernists of almost every persuasion reject the meaningfulness and relevance of any grand metanarrative, whereas the core point of Dr. Canale's apologetic is explicitly focused on a defense of the validity of Ellen White’s *Great Controversy* metanarrative.

In addition, it appears the author’s understanding of how science is actually pursued by practicing scientists comes only from reading and is not informed at all by any direct experience in a scientific environment. This might account for Dr. Canale’s confusion concerning the nature of the modern scientific impulse. For example, he insists scientists “dismiss supernatural revelation as an invalid source of information on which to build their views,” or that scientific methodology, “disregards the existence of God and his revelation in Scripture as fantasy” (p. 22). In point of fact, for the vast majority of scientists of whom this author is aware by personal contact or reading of their writings, it is not a matter at all of ‘dismissing’ supernatural revelation as fantasy or ‘disregarding’ the existence of God or his revelation.

The core of the scientific impulse in Western scientific thought, almost from its inception, sought to express no opinion on the subject of the supernatural — it neither rejected nor accepted the existence of God. A ‘scientific approach’ to a given topic is characterized by a set of methodological understandings — one of which is that naturalist causes are the only agents to be employed in any scientific argument. The ‘supernatural’ was defined as outside of its purview. That Dr. Canale is not aware of this simple consensus understanding suggests he either may have not read very deeply in the history of science or perhaps finds it difficult to understand this approach.

Dr. Canale is also profoundly misinformed concerning the relationship between evolutionary biology and geochronology. While it is correct that biologists utilize the geochronological framework in their efforts to understand rates of evolutionary change, the contemporary geological time scale does not depend on any assumptions about biological evolution. The core data that geochronology depends upon derives primarily from research in such diverse fields as biochemistry, geochemistry, geophysics, and above all, nuclear physics and nuclear chemistry. None of the critical data derives from evolutionary biology. It is simply totally and factually incorrect to state, as Dr. Canale does, that geochronology is structured, “by assuming biological evolution” (p. 68).
Finally, although there are some scientists who do indeed argue that, “real things are only those that can be ascertained through sensory perception and/or technological enhancement” (p. 21), the core constituencies of the mainline modern scientific community express no views about the ontological nature of reality. This is a domain of philosophy and theology. Scientists in their personal lives can and do hold and express a whole range of views — from an absolute ontological atheism, to membership and active participation in very traditional faith communities including traditional Christian faith traditions.

In my view, the most glaring and serious problematic aspect of this volume is the author’s assumption that his interpretation of the data received from his reading of the Bible comes directly from God. Creationist perspective, which a reader would assume means his view, he argues, “springs from divine revelation, God’s summary account of his handiwork…Theological data originates from divine revelation and inspiration.” It appears it is on this highly questionable foundation that Dr. Canale builds the core of his complex arguments. It would appear Dr. Canale assumes that theologians who agree with him obtain their information directly from God and thus can be trusted to provide entirely accurate information about how the world and life upon it came to be. Theologians who disagree with him, and almost all scientists, obviously do not receive their information from God and thus cannot be trusted to provide the correct answers to these questions. I will leave it to the reader to evaluate that position.

In addition, it has been pointed out to this reviewer that Dr. Canale is either not aware of or disagrees with the clear and unambiguous views of Ellen White that the “Bible…is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented…The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech” (E.G.White, Selected Messages, vol. 1, pp. 21 (1890), 22 (1891).

It should be emphasized, the conceptual framework outlined in the pages of this volume belies the popular imagery of fundamentalists — including SDA fundamentalists — as uninformed, uneducated, or intellectually challenged. This densely-argued work of scholarship should lay that myth to its final rest. If any further evidence is required on this point, consulting many of the articles appearing in the Journal of the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) should provide conclusive confirmation.

Like most of the chapters in The Fundamentals (the work which became the symbol of the modern American conservative Protestant Fundamentalist movement in the early decades of the 20th Century) Dr. Canale’s work and the other scholarly works contributed by members of the ATS represent a strong intellectualist counter movement to the progressive trends in Adventist theological scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s. The late 20th to early 21st century Adventist ‘Counter Reformation’ mounted by the ATS and its allies is well served by Dr. Canale’s volume. In some respects, it represents an exemplar of an ATS apologetic scholastic treatise. One suspects the late Dr. Gerhard Hasel, the architect of the ATS ‘Counter Reformation,’ would have been very proud of this volume.

From the perspective of this reviewer, the conclusions of the author are profoundly problematic and, for Adventism, reactionary and retrogressive. Its creative and heroic arguments, expressed in complex philosophical language, are employed to defend what are viewed by some as critical elements of the Adventist master theological narrative, a narrative created within, and whose expressive symbols are rooted in, conservative 19th Century American cultural values. Dr. Canale’s
arguments are conceptually complex but, at their core, they advance an essentially fundamentalist approach to Scripture and employ that approach to endorse retrogressive arguments about how 21st Century Adventist Christians should understand the Genesis creation narratives. A number of other Adventist theologians have already pointed out that a positive appreciation of the role of the Biblical Sabbath in an Adventist Christian context does not depend on or require interpretations that the Genesis Creation narratives be understood as representing actual or literal history.

Despite its philosophical sophistication, Dr. Canale’s treatise is an exemplar of an Adventist approach to a theological topic which is fatally trapped by its wholesale commitment to a historically- and culturally-particularistic American 19th century conceptual package. The Adventism of the 21st Century in North America may have a meaningful future if it can reappropriate and renew the commitment to ‘present truth’ that was exhibited in the 19th Century, when its original conceptions were formulated.

However, the general difficulty established faith communities have in reevaluating the validity and relevance of their original ‘present truth’ messages do not give us much hope this process can occur. The tragic results of the SDA Faith and Science conferences, held several years ago, provide vivid testimony of how difficult it is for religious traditions once solidified and institutionalized to come to terms with reality.

Part III of this blog will be a response from Dr. Canale to my review and commentary on his book.

David Read 3 days ago

Ervin, how is "naturalist [sic] causes are the only agents to be employed in any scientific argument" different from "dismiss[ing] supernatural revelation as an invalid source of information on which to build their [scientific] views"? You assert the former, yet you criticize Dr. Canale for asserting the latter.

Obviously, if only natural or material causes can be employed in scientific reasoning, then the revelation that some things have a supernatural origin, i.e., were created, cannot be used as an assumption to interpret the data of nature. Seriously, how is this not obvious to you? Yet you criticize Dr. Canale for pointing out the obvious.

There is at least a workable difference between methodological and philosophical naturalism where it concerns the observable, repeatable phenomena of everyday science, i.e., the observation of contemporary phenomena. That difference essentially ceases to exist, however, when it comes to origins. If your scientific methodology requires you to posit that God, if He exists, never created and never intervened in the creation, that position simply cannot be meaningfully distinguished from philosophical naturalism or atheism.

If you believe that God never created--and not only believe it but insist that science and all other branches of learning conduct their inquiries accordingly--you're effectively an atheist, because your God can never be the God of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or any other significant religious tradition. So how is your so called "methodological naturalism" effectively any different form
philosophical naturalism or atheism?

Ervin Taylor  1 day ago

I don't recall ever stating that "God never created." If Mr. Read can find such a quotation, I would certainly like to know. And I don't ever recall reading that comment from the pen of Elaine. So pray tell, who are you talking about? I would suggest that the distinction between "methodological naturalism" and "ontological naturalism" is an elementary distinction which is widely known and cited. If you have difficulty in understanding the difference, that certainly would be a problem.

David Read  3 days ago

I would add that Dr. Canale is not significantly mistaken concerning the relationship between fossils and the dating of strata. The strata are dated by their index fossils. This method of dating was established some 70 years before radiometric dating was ever attempted, and continues to be considered the most reliable method of dating. There have been many radiometric results that conflicted with index fossil dating, but never, ever, has the radiometric result been preferred over the index fossil dating. Not ever. Not once.

For that reason, radiometric dating was, is, and will continue to be, an essentially superfluous add-on to the index fossil dating method.

Bryan Bissell  2 days ago

I would to challenge people to think a bit on the dating issue. We have ~100 methods pointing to a young age for earth and life and ~40 methods pointing to an old age. Does 40 beat 100 or 100 beat 40? Science is supposed to follow the weight of evidence and creation science has it in spades in most areas and easily beats universal common descent. But, the evolution and atheist establishments consistently refuse to follow the weight of evidence. They follow naturalism assertions instead and apriori rule out and actively hide and suppress much evidence that points to God and Bible truth being accurate. This violates even Darwin's own principle which I agree with:

"A fair result can be obtained only by fully stating and balancing the facts and arguments on both sides of each question" Charles Darwin, 1859, Introduction to Origin of Species, p. 2

Another fact is that even many of the 40 methods pointing to an old earth have recently been debunked by by many cases of soft tissue that have been found in dinosaurs. Even evolutionists agree that all science that we know shows that soft tissue can at max by 15-100,000 years old. So, that means that many of the old age methods can not possibly be accurate. But, of course evolutionists now are choosing to discard science and prop up universal common descent as they have many times in the past and trying to say that there must be a way that soft tissue can last 60+ million years.

See videos 1-5 here..and the notes as well.
See these links:
a) A summary of 100+ methods for laymen pointing to a young age for
http://creation.com/age-of-the-earth

b) Techniques That Argue for an Old Earth Are Either Illogical or Based on Unreasonable
Assumptions.
http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/AstroPhysicalSciences24.html#wp3303729

c) Most Scientific Dating Techniques Indicate That the Earth, Solar System, and Universe Are
Young.
http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/AstroPhysicalSciences33.html#wp2534183

d) Many technical papers on dating methods that support a young earth are here (and I have
other sites as well, but most of the scientists here have degrees from secular universities and do
quite good work):
http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers/topic/radiometric-dating

e) Scientists on dating methods pointing to a young earth.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKbaHoINReA&feature=related

There's been a recent creation science conference with some VERY good and new insights on
many fronts. I HIGHLY recommend it.

See especially the video by Dr. Silvestru on evidence for a global flood called "Geology and
Deep Time"
Start at 36:00. From ~54:00 there's a very good section on catastrophic plate tectonics.

On naturalism and how science from the beginning didn't point to God or wasn't concerned
with God, that just isn't true on either point. Dr. Hannam has degrees in physics and history
from Oxford and London universities and a Ph.D. in the history of science from Cambridge
University and wrote “God’s Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of
Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution” This has been reviewed very positively by
major secular scientists and organizations:
“It is engaging, informative and I heartily recommend it.” says Ruth Francis, Head of Press for
/ruths_reviews_gods_philosopher_1.html.

Dr. Hannam also gave an overview of the above book in a presentation at the Royal Society (1st
scientific society in history which was started by a creationist Christian John Wilkins who also
published ideas on speciation in the 1600s, LONG before Darwin.) about how Christianity and
the creationist view of the world laid the foundations of modern science that no other culture
ever achieved (Dr. Hannam is a creationist at present, yet agrees that the creationist view was
fundamental to the development of modern science. This makes the claim even stronger since it is admitted by an evolutionist). Watch it here and a rough summary of it is after the review of the book belw:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-k24Q01vck or download it at: http://tinyurl.com/68s462b

Dr. Hannam isn't a creationist, but he documents some of how creation philosophy was directly responsible for laying the foundations of modern science. Creationists were responsible for inventing/pioneering the modern scientific method (and Daniel pioneered it first), the peer review method, occam's razor, falsification, the 1st scientific society, publishing ideas on speciation and natural selection and most of the branches of science. As time goes by, science again confirms science against the myths that skeptics believe as has happened countless times in the past.

Many more articles and videos of evidence are here:
See esp. www.creation.com and also
www.youtube.com/user/truthislife7 (playlists on creation science). This one is on the flood, which if true, would have distorted many of the radiometric dates assigned to rocks and fossils.

http://www.youtube.com/user/TruthIsLife7#g/c/14FDE276E5C97E24 (videos 2-9 are by Dr. Wise with a Ph.D. in geology from Harvard. He deal with plant order in the fossils, one of the supposedly best evidences for universal common descent, showing how creation science is better even here).

God bless,
Bryan

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Roscoe Fogg
2 days ago

Mr Bissell, Thanks for the comprehensive list of young earth literature. It will be a great comfort to many of my fellow church members. It's just what they want to hear.

Ervin Taylor
1 day ago

I too wish to thank Mr. Bissell for his long listing of young earth sources. I would encourage anyone interested in this topic to read them. They range from strangely interesting to pathetic. But that's just my opinion. The comment that there is ~100 methods that indicate a young earth and young life and ~40 that indicate a old earth and old life. I've read that from the pen of someone I now can't recall and looked at their list. I would encourage anyone interested in this topic to attempt to get the list and form their own opinion about the validity of the 100 vs. the 40.

Horace Butler
1 day ago
Another factor to be considered is the fact that Carbon-14 has a half life of a little over 5000 years. This means there should be no detectable Carbon-14 in dinosaur bones that are supposedly millions of years old. And yet the Carbon-14 is present.

Roscoe Fogg

1 day ago

Horace,
Is this your endorsement of the reliability of the Carbon-14 dating method?

Horace Butler

1 day ago

Hardly! I'm just pointing out that, based on current theory, the dinosaurs (and other creatures buried in the same strata) are so old that there should be no C-14 in the specimens. That fact that it is found in these fossils, should cause a honest scientist to re-examine the methods used to date these things.

Roscoe Fogg

23 hours ago

OK. I thought you were saying that since there is C-14 in these bones, they had to be relatively young, (That's a C-14 method result.) but since we know that the bones are very old, there must be a problem with the dating method. By the way, in your most recent post, you wrote that it was a fact that C-14 "is found in these fossils." C-14 is not found in fossils.

Horace Butler

20 hours ago

Then we are reading 2 different versions of this. What I have read indicates that C-14 is found in fossils. One of us has faulty information.

Roscoe Fogg

18 hours ago

OK. I'm probably wrong. There could be organic material trapped inside a fossil.

Roscoe Fogg

5 hours ago

Horace, Your right. Here's a very recent example of C-14 found in a fossil.

"Microspectroscopic Evidence of Cretaceous Bone Protein"

Reference: www.plosone.org/article
/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0019445

To be honest, the authors wrote "Likewise, the amount of finite carbon was exceedingly small, corresponding to 4.68%±0.1 of modern 14C activity
(yielding an age of 24 600 BP), and most likely reflect bacterial activity near the outer surface of the bone"

This will be an interesting story to follow over the next few years.

Gailon Arthur Joy 3 days ago

Just another example of intellectual arrogance...an atheistic macroevolutionist perpetuating the premise that only a human mind of progressive intellectual capacity can truly read rocks and undermine the established, biblically based theology that has for generations been built upon one divinely inspired text upon another to establish "THE TRUTH" from a document that clearly and precisely records human history. And is now even further enlightened by the prophetic gift of Ellen G. White, who wrote more in her lifetime to inspire humanity with the GLORIFICATION OF GOD than our pseudo intellectual can clearly comprehend.

Ervin Taylor 3 days ago

As usual, Mr. Read totally misunderstands or misreads the geochronological literature. To state that "radiometric dating was, is, and will continue to be, an essentially superflous add-on to the index fossil dating method" is so misleading and incorrect that anyone with even a passing knowledge of the field must conclude that, if this represents the level of his knowledge, anything that Mr. Read says about this topic can be ignored. If his comments illustrate and represent the level of understanding that Young Life Creationists have of geochronology, no wonder they are totally ignored by the mainline scientific community.

David Read 3 days ago

I can't imagine anyone actually reading the "geochronological literature" other than for laughs. There's no science or logic to at all. It consists entirely of the confirmation of prior expectations, and when those expectations aren't confirmed--and despite everyone's best efforts they very frequently are not--then the excuse-making starts, and that's when it is good for laughs.

Ervin Taylor 3 days ago

Mr. Read's comments are just revealing more and more about his misunderstandings. Just as an exercise, I wonder if he could point to or quote anyone at the SDA Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) who agrees with him that "there is no science or logic ... to all" to the geochronological literature." This is going to be fun. (By the way, remember that the GRI is the official SDA General Conference organization filled with orthodox Adventist creationists).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horace Butler</td>
<td>3 days ago</td>
<td>The radiometric dating methods are notoriously flawed, but this fact is conveniently ignored by those who are afraid to be out of harmony with &quot;established&quot; scientific theories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ervin Taylor</td>
<td>3 days ago</td>
<td>I see that Mr. Read is not the only seriously misinformed individual. Mr. Butler also wishes to reveal his misunderstandings as well. Radiometric dating methods are &quot;notoriously flawed&quot; in the view only of those who do not like the implications of what the well-established results indicate about the age of this planet and of life upon it. Like Mr. Read, I would ask Mr. Butler to quote a current member of the GRI who would state that the science behind all radiometric dating methods is &quot;notoriously flawed.&quot; This should be very interesting.</td>
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<td>Horace Butler</td>
<td>3 days ago</td>
<td>As if the GRI was the final court of arbitration. The assumption that the rate of radioactive decay has remained constant is untenable. It can't be proved and there is plenty of evidence to show that it has not remained constant. This makes all the dating methods that rely on radiometric dating highly suspect. One example is lava flows that are less than 200 years old, but which have been dated by the potassium-argon method at up to 3,000,000,000 years old. Then there is the assumption that the original rocks (or fossils) contained only parent atoms in the beginning. That cannot be known. I won't cite references because they will be immediately discounted as spurious, given the pro-evolutionary biases of the majority on this supposed Adventist website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ervin Taylor</td>
<td>3 days ago</td>
<td>If Mr. Butler fears answers from the SDA GC GRI, who does he thinks will tell him the truth about the science behind geochronology?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscoe Fogg</td>
<td>3 days ago</td>
<td>Mr Butler, Measuring the age of a 200 year old lava flow using potasium-argon dating is like timing a 100 yard dash with a sundial. The method is inappropriate and useful results are not expected. As far as changing decay rates are concerned, here's an interesting observation. Supernova 1987a was 170,000 light years away. Nickel-56, was produced in the detonation. The nickel-56 decays away relatively quickly with a half-life of 6.1 days into cobalt-56, which in turn decays with a half-life of 77.1 days. The distinctive gamma rays given off in those decays were detected. The amount of those gamma rays died away with exactly the expected half-life. Looking out into space is looking back in time. The half-life of cobalt-56 was the same 170,000 years ago as it is today.</td>
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The skeptics always have an explanation, one that will deny the validity of Biblical chronology. So be it.

Not sure what your point is about the half life of cobalt-56. That's one example. I've read of other examples (can't remember off the top of my head) where decay rates have been shown to be variable. I have no problem with the age of the universe. It's the age of the earth that is in question here. Since God has always existed, one has to consider the possibility that parts of the universe are even much older than the age given by atheistic scientists.

Horace, I've been reading my Bible for about 60 years now, and somehow I've missed the dates in Bible texts? Does your version of Genesis come with dates? I've been under the impression that the Chronology of Bible events was a Victorian gentleman's hobby, based on assumptions and speculations. Now I enjoy assumptions and speculations, and appreciate a good argument in the parlor as much as anyone. But I think it is rather dangerous to mistake my guesses and opinions about Bible dates (chronology) with the same authority as the Bible text itself, don't you?

Therefore it often seems to me that defending any chronology of Bible events, short term or long term, is really defending my opinions or my speculations, or my deductions about the topic, which is different from defending the Bible.

I am prepared fight to the martyr's stake to defend, "In the beginning God created the sky and the land." But I am not ready to base my salvation on a date for "In the beginning" on an opinion first popularized by an Irish Bishop sitting in Dublin, 17 centuries after the Bible itself was completed! Do you get my point?

Maybe I should have been clearer in my presentation. No, the Bible obviously doesn't come with dates, but archaeological evidence doesn't permit a flood that is much more than about 4500 years ago. This is also in harmony with what Ellen White said. And contrary to the attitude of many here, I do not believe she was a "product of her times." She either wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or she did not. If she did, we best pay heed; if not, then we might as well join any church, since the SDA Church loses its uniqueness and becomes just another wrinkle in the fabric of Christianity--except for those who believe it's a cult, of course.

Not knowing what conditions prevailed before the flood, any suppositions based on today's radioactive decay rates (while knowing that they are not always constant) is fraught with uncertainties. But we remained entrenched in our positions. So be it. The truth will come out in the end.

The premise that the present is the key to the past is the underpinning of old earth
theories. I believe that when trying to date events that occurred so long ago, it is a
dubious premise, at best. It is the premise that leads to the belief that there was death
before sin, when Scripture clearly states the opposite. It would never envision a Garden
of Eden or an earth where rain never fell. We humans are reluctant to admit that there are
things about the earth that we cannot understand, no matter how much science we use in
our attempts.

Horace, could you tell more about these archaeological evidences you refer to?
According to wikipedia, the written record reaches approximately 1500 years further
into time, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recorded_history, and buildings that are even
older have been found. Parts of Jericho for instance are dated to 7825 BC. Therefore I
am wish to learn of the evidence you mentioned. http://en.wikipedia.org
/wiki/Wall_of_Jericho

Jack, your point is understood by all with an open mind. Sadly, an uncommon trait
amongst true believers.

Horace,
You said that you read of examples of decay rates that have been shown to be variable.
Let's be generous and say they may vary by 10%, then the age of a particular formation is
54 million years rather than 60 million years. Does that help?

Mr. Fogg's comment is spot on. Actually, I am told that, in fact, some decay rates have
been observed to be variable but, by at most, a few percent. But let's go with 10% I
would ask Mr. Butler the same question that Mr. Fogg did, does having a fossil bearing
layer be 54 million rather than 60 million years old help?

I keep missing some interesting comments of Mr. Butler: For example he said "The
Bible obviously doesn't come with dates, but archaeological evidence doesn't permit a
flood that is much more than about 4500 years ago" I'm curious as to what
"archaeological evidence" he could cite that does not permit a flood (what kind of
flood?) older than 4500 years ago?
Horace Butler 7 hours ago

You know very well which flood I was talking about. Maybe I should turn the question around and ask, where is the evidence for The Flood (you know, the one that covered the whole earth) having occurred longer ago than about 4500 years? It is paltry, at best, and based on assumptions that cannot be verified.

Ella M. 3 days ago

Irv or other: I am not a scientist though do some reading in the astro and quantum physics areas which seem very supernatural to me.

A question: The polar caps of planets tend to be cold; ours is covered with ice. Yet there are fossils there that show it was once tropical, I have read, some are fantastically perserved. How did the change occur from warm to ice? Even with the idea of an asteroid hitting earth and bringing on an ice age, I don't understand how a planet's polar regions could ever be warm (with current rotations in relation to the sun). I know this is getting off the subject, but can I get an answer?

Kevin Seidel 3 days ago

It isn't a single factor that causes the changes. Some of the factors are:

The positions of the continents preventing ocean currents from exchanging heat between the equator and the poles.
Levels of greenhouse gases.
Solar output.
Changes in earth's orbit.


Ervin Taylor 3 days ago

Although I'm not a geologist or paleontologist, I would be happy to respond to the reasonable question of Ella M. My understanding is that fossils of the types of animals which now live in warm zones have been recovered from polar regions. Studies of geomagnetism in rocks combined with geochronological data from several methods have concluded that over geological time measured in hundreds of millions of years, various continents have moved great distances on the earth's surface. Areas which were once in tropical regions where warm adapted animals lived and died have slowly moved into areas which are now polar zones. With regard to an asteroid impact on earth, there is evidence that there was a major impact some 69 million years ago which was responsible for major changes in flora and fauna including in the view of many scientists who have studied this, the extinction of the dinosaurs. Others dispute some of the conclusions and explain the extinction of the dinosaurs by other means. My geology and paleontology colleagues tell me that there is a large literature on all of this and the details are still being debated. I hope this very short explanation helps.
Ella,

Those points are spot on. Something I found really fascinating was regarding heat exchange between the poles and equator.

If you do a google search on "circumpolar currents", and then look at google earth and find Drakes Passage on the southern tip of South America you will get an amazing look at how the land forms are shaped by the current.

The theory is that this land tip was once joined to the south pole. At that time the currents could not circulate around the pole, but were forced up into warmer waters, when they made their way back "south" they came back warm, and changed the climate down "south".

When this gap that you will see on google earth opened up the circumpolar current began. It moves at about 4 kmh. and acts as a barrier to warm waters making their way south.

On g earth, zoom to the south pole and around, you will soon see the massive channel (700 kms wide) and swept pattern showing the current flow.

Actually just did a check...its more like 900 kms wide, and up to 4 kms deep. You will get your best view of it with a google earth altitude of 5000 kms!

I did research once how much water in km3 passed through there every hour...its phenomenal. Also, you will see the "wash" where land mass has been eroded as the current widened the gap. Continental drift is also a key player.

While I use the words "theory" above, such a view gives very compelling evidence that it was indeed once closed off. Probably until about 40 kyrs ago.

40 mya not 40 kyrs ago.

I think I agree with most what you say in your review Dr. Ervin, but with David, I find your thought that "The core of the scientific impulse in Western scientific thought, almost from its inception, sought to express no opinion on the subject of the supernatural — it neither rejected nor accepted the existence of God."

This is the standard boilerplate, and might be the ivory tower clinical truth, but not a historical
reality.
As George Gaylord Simpson, the leading neo-Darwinist a generation ago stated, "Man is the result of a purposeless and materialistic process that did not have him in mind. He was not planned." The Meaning of Evolution, pg. 344.

As the late Stephen Jay Gould, wrote: "Before Darwin, we thought that a benevolent God had created us," after Darwin, "biology took away our status as paragons created in the image of God." Ever Since Darwin, pg.33,147and 267.

As Kenneth Miller and Joseph Levine explained in the fourth edition of their popular textbook, Biology. They explain that evolution is "random and undirected" and occurs "without plan or purpose." Biology pg. 658 (these words were deleted in later editions)

As Douglas Futuyma’s biology test puts it: "By coupling undirected, purposeless variation to the blind, uncaring process of natural selection, Darwin made theological or spiritual explanations of the life processes superfluous." Evolutionary Biology, pg. 5.

The concept that evolutionary science carries with it a truly objective epistemology is completely false.

Elaine Nelson 2 days ago

If science considered supernatural events, how should that be done? How can a supernatural event be examined or studied? By it very essence, it is a one-time phenomenon and cannot be replicated.

Which religious concept should replace or override the scientific discoveries? Mormonism? Islam? Animists? We expect that, of course, it should be Christianity as the accepted explanation. Should that explanation then be taught in the schools? Would that not immediately conflict with the First Amendment?

The scientists that believe in God do not necessarily all hold the same explanations for creation and most have found that their scientific studies do not contradict their faith. It appears that it is Adventists who find such a view so troubling. If one believes that the story told in Genesis was never intended as a scientific explanation of Creation why must literal acceptance rather than metaphor be the only acceptable account? Why not the story in Genesis 2, which is quite different in the order of creation? Does that imply that unless it is the defined 6-day account it cannot be Creationist? Cannot one believe that God created this world without humans limiting the time and process?

If "evolutionairy science is completely false in claiming objectivity, is the Creationist's explanation the only objective explanation?"

Roscoe Fogg 2 days ago

Darrel, I think the quotes you gave to support your conclusion are statements that address questions that a philosoper of biology might ask, not a biological scientist. (Of course, the same person, e.g. Gould, may participate in both arenas of discourse.) I think it's important to make a distinision between the questions a scientist asks and the questions a philosopher of science asks? What do you think?
Darrel Lindensmith

Yes, I would say this is true Roscoe. But these and more are all biological scientist. And they are not asking questions but making statements--supposed empirical conclusions. And I don't fault them being made. I think they are logically consistent conclusions, given the complete naturalistic assumptions they are based on. I will take an honest Dawkins over an equivocating Dr. Whoever any time. Evolutionary philosophically might be an "undirected process," but the science itself is certainly not undirected; it is goal oriented.

David Read

The statements that Darrell has quoted are philosophical conclusions. They are not the end result of any scientific investigation. If one begins with an irrebuttable presumption that God did not create us, one can scarcely end with any other conclusion than that God didn't create us. But both statements are philosophical statements; science, understood as the investigation of external phenomena, was never involved. The statement that God did not create us is not in any sense a conclusion of science, if "science" is defined to mean a method of investigation of external phenomena. It is merely a philosophical statement.

Just to make clear how mainstream science conceives of the philosophical underpinnings of its enterprise, I give you this quote from Richard Lewontin's 1997 review of Sagan's "Demon Haunted World":

"It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Obviously, if you begin with a militant refusal to even consider non-material explanations, you're never going to reach supernatural conclusions, such as that God created.

Elaine Nelson

Obviously, if you rely on supernatural events to explain all of creation, then there will never be a need for scientific exploration. Supernatural needs no study as it can neither be explored, studied or explained, but merely believed. This makes all of scientific study worthless if one accepts the Bible as the last word of all science. Is there another possibility?
"If "evolutionary science is completely false in claiming objectivity, is the Creationist's explanation the only objective explanation?"

Elaine, I would say 'objectivity' is a myth. It is completely a left brain fairytale. We can not be completely objective, and if we think about it, we wouldn't want to be. Of course I am using the word "objective" as the Logical Positivist would use it. And I know that's not what you mean. But really, the whole reality of reality is far too complex for just the left brain to be able to grasp and so I believe God created us with two brains that can analyze things using different critiria. Psyche and Science are not totally separate domains.

But to answer your question, yes I believe it is far far more objective to believe the creator designed life on this planet. I would agree with Albert Einstein in "The World As I See It" that the harmony of natural law "Reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection."

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Yes, I understand there is no such thing as total objectivity. But we choose which of several theories which makes the most sense to us personally. And just as we have personal choices of our friends, spouse, vocation and many other areas of life, we must decide which meets the best theory in our minds; and the only way we can make any choice is through our thinking mind. Thank God, we don't all think alike and all have different requirements to satisfy our rational mind. Vive le diference!

The world is a far more interesting place simply because we all do have other ideas, and that allows us to grow and listen if we have never listened to and questioned new ideas, we remain stunted with no room to grow and develop. Children are inherently curious; should adults never be curious of new ideas? There is so much of the world to be discovered and to believe we have learned all that is necessary is to die a slow death, IMHO.

Amen!

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Now, does this being open to new ideas stuff apply to the atheist as well? Should an atheistic evolutionary scientist likewise be open the idea that there is a supernatural explanation for that which cannot be proven about the origin of life on earth as we now know it?

Is such openness necessary for them to grow, or avoid dying a slow death?
I cannot decipher if Darrell Lindensmith agrees with George Gaylord Simpson or Albert Einstein. Did they somehow agree with each other? Their statements certainly appear contradictory to me.

You are right Elaine, at least insofar as this Adventist is concerned; reconciling a belief in a benevolent, omniscient, Creator as described—and introduced—in the Bible, with a disbelief of the Biblical narrative of earth origins is problematic, if not impossible.

The “process,” or more germane, the six-day timing is integral to belief in the Biblical God. It doesn’t make sense to believe some things about the God of the Bible and not to believe others. Such is logically incongruous and intellectually incoherent. It is the mother of all copouts.

Elaine Nelson 1 day ago

Have scientists now all become "atheistic evolutionary scientists"? Do we now denigrate anyone who is a scientist or studies or teaches any subject in that very wide discipline?

How does one become a medical "scientist" without first spending a number of years in the prerequisite scientific studies? Do we want our physicians to be trained as they were 100 years ago, much like their first predecessors, barbers? Does scientific advancement automatically incur the label of "atheism"? Why such a tirade against scientists? Should we still rely on all the Bible's scientific theories that were widely propagated thousands of years ago? Why, or why not if the Bible is the last word on science? Do we not pick and choose which areas of science are "kosher" and which are rejected? Are Adventists very inconsistent in their subject evaluation of science?

David 14 hours ago

According to Erv, Dr Canale’s conclusions “are profoundly problematic… reactionary and retrogressive… which is fatally trapped to a historically American 19th century conceptual package”.

Erv the master of suggestions like: “may I”, “might” now he uses affirmatives like “is fatally”. I don’t know where is getting his statistics to show or predict the fatalistic future of the main stream SDA church in North America. As far is known the SDA in North America is growing more that any other traditional protestant church.

David 14 hours ago

Is Erv proposing a bright future for SDA Church only accepting the theory of evolution? Erv are you serious?
I am suggesting that if the kind of retrogressive Adventism as espoused and communicated by the current president of the General Conference of SDA continues for more than a couple of decades, Adventism will eventually stop growing in the First World. It is well known that it is currently growing in North America almost entirely due to the influx of members from Latin America. This process will take at least another generation to work itself out and then a decline will begin in the NAD. The prediction of those studying Adventist demographics is that by the end of this century Anglo Adventism membership will drop below 5%. At that point, the General Conference would probably be better off in moving its headquarters either to Latin America or Africa to be nearer to its primary constituent populations. It is impossible to predict how North American Adventism and specifically the current flagship educational and medical institutions will react. There probably will be a repeat of what has happened in other denominations when church authorities lost touch with and then lost control of their higher education institutions. I'm kind of sorry I will not be around to witness what will actually happen.

Stephen Foster 9 hours ago

Wow! Imagine the General Conference eventually moving its headquarters to Latin America or Africa to be nearer to its main constituent groups!

Somehow I get the impression—and correct me if I'm wrong—that you are implying that this trend of demographic change is an ominous sign of institutional weakness.

It appears that in the so-called First World, “Anglo Adventism” has been in numerical stagnation, if not decline, for some time. When I wrote a blog along these lines upon noticing this reality (“The Pink Elephant in the Room”), I was greeted with a “so, what’s new…where have you been?” reaction, that I did not anticipate.

So, the answer to this “problem,” and it is a challenge, is to embrace evolutionary science and not to take the Bible so seriously, and certainly not literally? The next thing you know, we’ll be asked to not believe the historical Adventist eschatological hype.

Let’s see now, if we abandoned the six-day creation, seventh-day rest model, and the imminent Second Advent model, we might need to change our name.

Horace Butler 7 hours ago

Well said, Stephen. The arrogance of North American Adventists is astounding—as if they had the corner on understanding Scripture. This became quite transparent at the GC session in Utrecht, a number of years ago. The reasons for decline in the so-called "First World" are obvious, if Mr. Taylor would analyze them carefully. Does the term "Laodicea" mean anything to anyone? It describes the church in North America and Europe perfectly. In the so-called "Third World," where they recognize their poverty, nakedness, and wretchedness, they see their need of the gospel and the only solutions to life's problems. And their faith is simple enough to accept the Bible as it was written, not as it was interpreted by theologians who have more faith in science, so-called, then in Scripture.
David

4 hours ago

Erv you are referring to SDA church’s future with almost mathematical certainty. (hum…)

According to you the solution is accept the evolution to fill-up the churches with Anglo-American member…. really?
Just a quick look to see how successful are other Christian churches that adopted the evolution, not impressive, members are living them. You can have even the “pithecanthropus erectus” given be the sermon and the churches still be as they are now.
Ironically in NA the “Anglo “ Christians churches with more attendances are the ones who accept the literal 6 days creation. (go and see you live close to one of them “Grace to You” by John Mac Arthur) or just look the television of the so call Christian channels.

Roscoe Fogg

4 hours ago

The Church should not endorse, accept or reject any scientific theory. That's not its business and it's not good at it.

Horace Butler

2 hours ago

I would qualify that by saying that, while the church should not be in the business of endorsing scientific theory, it is certainly within its proper sphere when it rejects theories that are contrary to Scripture.

Roscoe Fogg

1 hour ago

Care should be taken to remember the long sad history of the Christian church rejecting scientific theories based on its interpretation of scripture. In the end, after centuries, the Church was forced by the weight of the evidence, to reinterpret scripture and apologize to the persecuted. We'll see.

Darrel Lindensmith

4 hours ago

Without reservation I believe God created all life on this planet. At one time I was a solid evolutionary theist, but more education into the details of biology, especially genetics, showed me the complexity of these systems, (especially now with the new field of 'epigenetics' being illucidated) leaves no room for any naturalistic union with God in a philosophy of science.

As Shaw stated: "Darwinism seems simple, because you do not at first realize all that it involves. But when its whole significance dawns on you, your heart sinks into a heap of sand within you. There is a hideous fatalism about it, a damnable reduction of beauty and intelligence, of
strength and purpose, of honor and aspiration."  George Bernard Shaw  Back to Methuselah 1921

I would say then as George Gaylord Simpson states, "Man is the result of a purposeless and materialistic process that did not have him in mind. He was not planned," evolution by definition is a destructive philosophy and as science progresses is becoming emperically falsified.

David  2 hours ago

If macroevolution was or is a reality or a fact, I'll believe it. What prohibits me to do so, is not my faith, is my mind, my rationality, my education. The fundamental corner stone of this theory (mutations makes us better) actually disproves macroevolution. The evidence of mutations been deleterious and lethal is overwhelming; every single day I see patients suffering, lives terminated before expectancy because of mutations. I saw thousands of parents crying because their babies had a disease produced by mutations. Until now never was has been demonstrated that a mutation makes us better. It will be so nice so said to mother your baby has this mutation therefore he will be more intelligent, stronger or live until he is 120 year old.

Elaine Nelson  2 hours ago

It has already been recognized that Adventism in first world countries is on the decline. If education is the cause, perhaps we should revert to the 19th century when an 8th grade education was usually the highest level achieved.

It will not be disastrous if Adventism moves southward to its larger base. That could be a wise decision. Although Adventism originated in the U.S. there is no right nor reason that it should remain here, particularly when it is dwindling compared to third world countries. The loser in this equation remains to be seen; however, I believe that the U.S. is still the largest financial supporter of the SDA institution at present. How such a move would affect this present situation is anyone's guess.

Ervin Taylor  1 hour ago

Elaine puts her finger on the reason that any GC probably will not initially wish to move out of the United States. It's quite simple actually--it's called money. With a large unfunded liability in pensions--it requires a predictable cash flow to operate. That currently can only happen in the United States. As soon as formally Third World countries such as Brazil can get their economies going and thus a predictable cash flow going for the local Adventist church with large membership, the economics will make sense. And where is the largest concentration of Adventists per capita in the world (outside of Pitcarn Island)--it is Brazil. It's all a matter of resources, i.e., money.
1. Elaine Adventism is not in decline in USA. To the contrary is increasing more than any other traditional protestant religion!
2. To blame to high education in the decline not only to Adventism but also to all Christianity is misleading; they are other more powerful factors. Like materialism, instant gratification, pleasures among others.
3. If you look were carefully you will notice that genuine Christianity grows where is adversity.
4. We are so distracted with some things that we do not practice the essence of Christianity, The day we do so Christianity will flourish again.
5. By the standards of the secular education I’m accomplished individual, but I was attracted to SDA message because a person lived such joyful and faithful live.

Brazil a third world country?  Brazil is not only soccer my friend! Brazil has stronger economy that Canada and Mexico put together. Is the larger producer of small and mid side airplanes. Is the only big country of the world that is self sufficiently in energy. They don’t talk of the national debt to the Chinese, or how they are going to pay it. If you go to the southern part of Brazil you will think you are in Germany.  So that is the country with more SDA. Travel is culture
A certain Adventist university teacher likes to start his religion classes by asking students to complete the sentence, “A Christian is one who...?” What verb(s) would you use? We like short, simple formulas for weight loss, exercise, investing, and happiness, so why not one for religion? Another version of that question is "what do you have to do to be ready when Jesus comes?" People have probably been asking questions along those lines for thousands of years.

In Luke 10:25, a lawyer asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” and ended up answering his own question: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart...and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus told him, “Good answer.” The lawyer, though, wanted more specifics, or a narrower specific. “Who is my neighbor?” In answer, Jesus told a story about what we usually refer to as “the good Samaritan.” A half-dead person was ignored by a priest and a Levite, only to be rescued by a Samaritan, who went out of his way to treat the injuries and take the poor fellow to a place where he could recover. The Samaritan even made arrangements for the financing of the future care. At the end of the story, Jesus asked the lawyer which of the three possible helpers was a neighbor to the injured man. The lawyer managed to refer to the Samaritan without mentioning his religion (or ethnicity), and Jesus advised the lawyer to follow the example of the Samaritan.

I submit that for many of us the story of the good Samaritan is like a bottle of soda pop that has been left in a glass too long. Much of the fizz, the punch, is gone. The word “Samaritan” does not anger or disgust us; in fact, we think of it as a rather positive term. Thanks to this story, Samaritan and good are inextricably linked for most of us, in the same way that Romeo and Juliet are paired. We even have Good Samaritan laws. But that’s not the way Jesus’ hearers thought of Samaritans.

Samaritans were looked at by Jews as pagan hybrids. They were descended from Israelites but had been mixed with foreigners. For religious beliefs, they had combined the Pentateuch with religious beliefs from non-Israelites, rejecting all other Israelite writings. Jews traveling between Galilee and Judea would cross the Jordan River to avoid having to go through Samaria. With a history of problems because of picking up the bad ways of non-Israelites, the Jews kept their distance from Samaritans whenever possible. So when Jesus told a story in which a Samaritan was the hero, it hit the lawyer’s prejudice. How could he pronounce the Samaritan as the good guy, the hero? That would be saying something positive about a heretic, someone who was theologically awful and should have known better.

How about if we update the story with words that would provide more punch, that would make us ask, “The good WHAT?” How about if a Baptist went by the fallen victim, and then an Adventist ignored the poor fellow, and then an atheist took him to a hospital and arranged to get him taken care of? “Which of these three ... was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” Would we use a roundabout answer so that we wouldn’t end up endorsing an atheist?
You can get a similar impact by substituting other words for Samaritan. What if a homosexual, an
evolutionist or a Muslim rescued him? Can we allow that? Those people believe things that are “wrong.” So
did the Samaritan. But Jesus described the Samaritan as a model to follow. In John 4:22, Jesus criticized the
Samaritan religion but he still put his stamp of approval on the Samaritan here. The Samaritan didn’t just
believe the wrong things; he also didn’t follow all the rules that the Jews did. But Jesus pointed to him as an
eexample.

Giving the correct answer to a theological question is often considered to be the ticket to heaven. In other
words, the logic for many is that God is not about to allow someone into heaven who doesn’t properly
understand the atonement. In that case, I suspect most members of the Adventist church (or any other
denomination) would be in trouble. The magic formula for some, though, is more concerned with practice
than theology: for instance, those making it to heaven will at least keep the correct day of the week as the
Sabbath, because so many Bible texts refer favorably to those who keep God’s commandments, and isn’t it
obvious that the main commandment that gets broken is the Sabbath one?

It seems that most of us agree that a good Baptist can get to heaven even if he misunderstands the Sabbath,
as long as he can plead not guilty because of ignorance. At least a Baptist is a Christian (never minding his
understanding of justification and sanctification). But I’ve read and heard less allowance for those who are
not members of a Christian denomination, apparently because of their theological deficiency. And believing
in evolution (well, macroevolution) is considered to put one into the same camp as serial murderers and
pathological liars – no hope. And practicing homosexuals are classed with evolutionists, regardless of how
well they understand justification and sanctification.

So we may not be leaving ourselves much room to replace “Samaritan” in Jesus’ story. Good Samaritan is a
safe term; it doesn’t challenge us the way it did Jesus’ hearers. But if we can’t find a word to substitute for
Samaritan that will give us a reason to examine our theology, maybe that in itself is a reason to examine our
theology. When Jesus talked about the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46), he described the sheep as
people who went about doing good – providing food and clothing and friendship for people who needed
such. If I smugly look down on my neighbors who are doing more to help people than I am (but who can’t
explain the atonement properly or worship on the right day or eat the right foods), might I benefit from a
change of focus? It might be enriching for me to spend more time reflecting on Jesus’ teachings (such as
Luke 10 and Matthew 25) and less time on some of the theological passages in say, Romans.

That doesn’t mean that beliefs and practices don’t matter. Doing what we know is wrong has consequences. But maybe some people
or groups that we are sure will end up in hell are people who are
more similar to us than we realize in struggling with bad habits and
conflicting beliefs. If Jesus were to tell that Luke 10 story to us
today without using the words “priest,” “Levite,” and “Samaritan,”
what might he use in their place? Priest and Levite are easier for us
to replace, but Samaritan? Maybe those people we’ve written off spiritually would replace the Samaritan, to
give us a bigger picture of what God is really looking for, of what a Christian really is.
pretend it is—you really need to study the Bible as a whole and go with the weight of the evidence and what it says about God's love. However, religious action and attitude is quite clear as that which reveals agape love.

This story says, to me at least, that a "nonbelievers" will be saved if they have the character of heaven. Christ came to reveal that character (what God is like) and is both an example and sacrifice.
Near the end of most American presidencies, comes a spate of pardons. The president, for reasons rational and not, grants pardons to several people. Most have been convicted of crimes; some are charged with a crime or are likely to be (see “Ford pardons Nixon, Richard M.”). Some of those who have been convicted have already paid the penalty for their crimes. Others are in the process of serving their time. Others may be out of jail, pending appeal. No matter. Once the pardon is granted, they are free, legally forgiven of their crime.

Everyday, convicts across the country are placed on parole, as a normal function of state and local judicial systems. These parolees are still “in the system,” but free to move within a designated jurisdiction, as long as they stay out of trouble and periodically report to their parole officer. They are not entirely free, but compared to jail, parole is a major upgrade.

The difference between pardon and parole occurred to me as I pressed to understand the working notion of grace among my Adventist friends. Many Adventists are aware of the most obvious benefit of grace (salvation), but they do not feel free or trust their freedom. They are very careful to qualify their freedom as not permitting sin (Romans 6:1-2, 15). Acting as their own attorneys, they define their freedom, not by what it is intended to produce, (the fruit of the Spirit) but by what is forbidden (the law).

Many of these Adventist friends think like parolees. Both the parolee and the pardoned are grateful for their new status (assuming they were guilty, of course). However, the parolee is less confident about his or her status, somewhat hyper-vigilant about what is allowed (John 9:16, John 5:10), and respectful, yet somewhat resentful of their parole officer (Luke 15:29-30). They operate under the assumption that one wrong move and they might, again, be held accountable for their former crimes. Their goals are to fulfill the expectations of the parole officer for as long as they remain in the system, and to avoid re-incarceration.

This should not be what drives our life in Christ.

It seems to me that the “good news” is that Christ paid the price for our sins at the Cross. If we claim Christ as our Savior and “confess our sins, He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9) -- and we are saved (Colossians 1:22). Christ’s death on the cross provides us with pardon (grace). Like those whom the president pardons (only more so), we should be so grateful for what has been forgiven that we have no desire to repeat the crime. Our gratitude, not the threat of the law, is the motivation to live free of past entanglements (John 1:17, John 8:32).

So, what is the source of this parolee mindset among believers?

From my observations (and personal experience), the lack of confidence in our salvation is due the fact that we have not truly accepted grace. Because we believe that 1) we are still in the system (under the law), and 2) our freedom is dependent on our works (Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 5:4, Galatians 3:16, Romans 3:28), we view Christ more as our parole officer rather than He who...
pardoned us -- our Savior. We work to maintain our freedom from a consciousness of penalty. We are not confident about our status and think that any, non-deliberate or careless infraction may land us back in jail (Hebrews 12:20). The consciousness of our guilt, combined a lack of faith (belief that the pardon is merely parole), leads to legalistic behavior (1 Timothy 1:7-9, Galatians 4:29), rather than freedom and full citizenship (Galatians 4:31).

Spiritual parolees often fear that those who have accepted pardon also believe they have, somehow, acquired diplomatic immunity -- freedom to sin without consequence (a.k.a. “cheap grace”). Although immunity was not stipulated in the pardon nor requested by the pardoned, somehow this claim works its way into virtually every conversation about grace. The parolee clings to the law, protecting it, believing it is the determinant of his freedom (Galatians 4:21).

The gospel is a writ of pardon (Isaiah 40:2, Romans 4:7-8). Christ, on the cross, paid the price for sin, making our pardon possible. If we accept the grace-given pardon, we are free to walk in the Spirit, not under the law (2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:18). Those acting as their own attorneys have misinterpreted the intentions of the Court (John 3:17).

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**Timo Onjukka** 1 week ago

Good concept! Having worked quite a few years for state Dept of Corrections, I can fully understand.

Another facet of this cultural environment is the parole officer. Some allow their role of power as such to be the defining issue in their relationship with the parolee; a church full of such "parole officers" tends to be a rather difficult place to sing about full pardon!

The parole officer who understands, under the law he too was a violator, but was granted same pardon, presents rather markedly different towards his parolees and his peers. As well his pardoner...

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**Elaine Nelson** 1 week ago

How true! A church full of parole officers is a most uncomfortable place to be, and that is what many churches are. The Perfectionist thread running through Adventism reinforces that mentality which is expressed frequently here and other SDA blogs. If one must attain a "sinless" state before one can be assured of salvation, then the parole officer is always right behind us checking our every behavior. This is the "peace that passes all understanding"?

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**Stephen Foster** 6 days ago

For Adventists, this is perhaps where the SDA concept of “probation” is most problematic. Probation is not applicable for those who have been pardoned; whereas it is certainly applicable for those on parole. That is why an understanding of the Investigative Judgment wherein, for those who have Jesus as their Advocate, this Judgment is effectively already decided—making the concept of Christian “probation” of no practical effect—is most persuasive.
If this is true, then the **Investigative Judgment** is only applicable for those who have not enlisted the advocacy services of Jesus Christ; thus, the same for **probation** (as the two go hand in hand).

The obvious question of importance then, at least for me, is “**is this true?**”

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**Trevor Hammond** 6 days ago

Two questions:
1] Does Grace cover and forgive sin or does it condone sin?
2] Is the overstated 'once saved always saved' a valid Biblical teaching?

Remember that is is the LAW and the LAW only that is the basis for our conviction as sinners. It points out SIN and we are convicted as sinners - guilty as hell and remain this way until we accept God's offer of Redemption and Forgiveness. Gal 2:20 sums up this new 'saved' experience quite well. The brother of the prodigal, to me, represents those 3rd, 4th, 5th generation Christians also who have not embraced the salvation offered by the Father even though they are right in the Father's house. Progressives form part of this group too. Most converted Christians come 'home' by way of the Cross as there is no other way. These AREN'T on parole: THEY ARE FREE...Hallelujah!

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**Preston Foster** 6 days ago

Trevor,

I can see no interpretation of grace that condones sin. My question is, how did grace ever get confused with doing so?

Likely, it is another deception by the Father of Lies to get believers to 1) be unsettled about their salvation, 2) believe that THEY can work their way to salvation, 3) minimize and distrust the miracle of grace, and 4) hold so tightly to the law that they never learn to walk in the Spirit.

I have always believed that the "once saved always saved" conversation was a diversion from the point. It is an "us vs. them" theological debate that diverts toward the "cheap grace" discussion. I have never, personally, met anyone who claimed they are free to sin without consequence. The notion that confidence in God's grace somehow translates into "diplomatic immunity" or permission to sin without consequence answers a question that grace doesn't ask. I believe that when one truly accepts Christ as their Lord and Savior and the grace that He provides, they ARE always saved. Not because they are free to sin, but because if they have accepted Christ as their Lord, they no longer have a desire for the things of the world, as Christ is working in them (Galatians 2:20). They are on the road of sanctification, and are granted His grace as they have put on the righteousness of Christ (Romans 13:14, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 3:10).

Indeed, Galatians 2:20 sums it up!
Thanks.

Trevor Hammond 6 days ago

RE: "Likely, it is another deception by the Father of Lies to get believers to 1) be unsettled about their salvation, 2) believe that THEY can work their way to salvation, 3) minimize and distrust the miracle of grace, and 4) hold so tightly to the law that they never learn to walk in the Spirit."

Yeah, I like these 3 points Brother Preston.

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RE: "I believe that when one truly accepts Christ as their Lord and Savior and the grace that He provides, they ARE always saved."

I like this statement too. Question is: "Is the 'ARE always saved' not also at risk of been used by some as part of the diplomatic immunity you so aptly mention?" I definately know this doesn't mean we presumptiously sin as you have pointed out.

T

Preston Foster 6 days ago

Brother Trevor,

Thanks very much.

I try not to worry so much about how some might "use" the wording (re: "always saved") to cleverly "win" debating points with me (or others). The debate is not with me, it is with Christ (Ephesians 6:12). If Christ is both our Lord and Savior, we will be saved, and remain so, and the power of the Spirit will enhance our influence with others. If they are trying to twist His words to justify their willingness to sin, there is no blood covering for them. If you let them speak long enough, they will identify themselves to all.

"By their fruit, ye shall know them" Matthew 7:15-20.

I rather like the confidence that is available in salvation in Christ as Lord and Savior that allows one to say, "I AM saved," rather than, "I'm TRYING to be saved." For me, TRYING to be saved can be as dangerous a trap as presuming to be saved regardless of my attitude toward sin. It can imply that I believe that I have salvific powers of my own or that I am not sure that, if I if I come to Christ as my Lord and Savior, he MAY save me. Certainly, Paul was confident of his salvation -- and of ours: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not only to me only, but to all them that also love his appearing" 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

The Cross has power that I can claim. I rather like knowing that if I accept Him as my Lord
and Savior, He WILL save me.

As the singer says, "... the world didn't give it to me, and the world can't take it away!"

Kevin Seidel  6 days ago

For me, the ah ha moment was realising that "legal pardon" was just one of many metaphores used to explain salvation. The teachings of Jesus use "the lost coin", "the lost sheep", "the podical son", and other parables. Paul also uses the metaphor of adoption. It seems to me that using the one metaphor of legal pardon with out the balance of the metaphores and parables leads to a distorted understanding. It was realising that there was more that legal pardon to salvation. The metaphor of adoption is good because it doesn't end. Pardon ends at the cross, then what do you do? Adoption begins at the cross, then you walk with God. You grow you make mistake, you learn from them all while being part of the family. For me being God's son is far more important than having a good lawyer to get me pardoned.

LaffAL  6 days ago

Kevin,

Pardon gives us the freedom to serve God out of a heart filled with gratitude, for such a love, that would make such a sacrifice, for such a one as me (us). Luke 1:68-75; John 8:32.36  The fear of death has been abolished. 2 Timothy 1:10  In exchange for condemnation we receive the gift of eternal life. John 5:24; 1 John 5:10-13  Even more so, God will never hold our sins against us. Romans 8:31-34; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 13:7  The only thing that can / will be held against us is the sin of unbelief, not accepting the pardon, rejecting Christ as the only means of salvation, which happens to be the unpardonable sin... There's no sacrifice for that. John 3:18,36; 1 John 5:12  So as you have received Christ, so walk ye in Him. Colossians 2:6

Praise God for being found while lost, being adopted while estranged, but just as much for pardoning a sinner / trangressor such as me (us).

Preston Foster  6 days ago

Kevin,

My fondest wish is that we all accept adoption into His family as children of the promise (Galatians 4:30-31).

The Bible's metaphors are most certainly superior to mine. I only wish to offer another point of view that may resonate with those who approach salvation from a legal point of view.

But you are right, the father did not accept the minimal deal offered by his returning prodigal
son. He accepted him, again, as an heir.

Preston Foster  
6 days ago

Stephen,

It seems to me that judgment (whatever its sequence) can only have adverse consequences for those whose sins are not covered by the blood of Christ. If our sins are forgiven (Hebrews 8:12, Romans 4:7-8), what is there to judge? For me, there is a plethora of scriptural reinforcement for believing, "Yes, this IS true."

Probation, in the Adventist prophetic terms, MAY, then apply to those who have not made their peace with God, thru Jesus, at sometime prior to His Second Coming. It seems to me that that is to whom Revelation 22:11 applies.

Elaine Nelson  
6 days ago

How many Adventist sermons have you heard on Gal. 2:21?

"I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

Could it be because Adventism has always focused on the law and its demands that must be obeyed?

Preston Foster  
6 days ago

Elaine,

I am not afraid to say that I believe some Adventists are literally afraid of grace -- and afraid to preach it.

Because grace contrasts the law (John 1:17, Galatians 5:4), in terms of covenants, some Adventists, sadly, think that grace discounts the Sabbath (and that, somehow, grace invites sin). The Sabbath preceded the law (originating at the close of creation, (Genesis 2: 2-3) and remains Christ's designated day of rest in the New Testament (Hebrews 4: 4, 6, 7, 9, 10). As some Adventist have anchored their observance of the Sabbath in the law only (Exodus 20: 8-11), they cling to the law, primarily for the sake of protecting the Sabbath.

Grace preaching is largely avoided, as many preachers fear that doing so will compromise their law-focused bona fides, creating political problems with the modern-day Pharisees. It is a well founded fear (they crucified Christ for doing so). Still, God hates a coward (Matthew 25:25-26, 30; Revelation 21:8).
I believe this dynamic (fearing to preach grace) hinders the latter rain and mutes the gospel.

Matt Britten 6 days ago

Good piece Preston. The analogy sent the message home. I was just discussing similar issues this morning with my wife and later read your article during lunch.

Here are a few of my perceptions: I gained status (citizenship of heaven) as a son by receiving and believing in Jesus (Jn 1:12). This was not accomplished by good works. Likewise, my status (as a son) cannot be altered because of bad works. His grace is the avenue for Him to accomplish His dreams (bring orphans into His Kingdom) and also the power for us to live like sons and daughters of God (hello prince! hello princess!)

Thanks be to God, we are no longer sinners, but rather saints (Col 1:2), a royal priesthood, called to proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9). This gospel is truly good news. Hard to believe, and maybe that is part of the problem. Maybe we need to start believing in our own conversion and the reality of who we are in Christ rather than focusing on the "old man".

The "old man" needs a parole officer. The "new man" (2 Cor 5:17) is lead by the Spirit and to paraphrase the apostle Paul: There is no more punishment for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1). We are unpunishable because He took our punishment!

Preston Foster 6 days ago

Thanks very much, Matt.

I think the Holy Spirit is whispering this message to many, so that the good news will ring in the ears of His children. I resonate with your perceptions. I believe our salvation is in the present tense.

Praise God!

Your point (re: "hard to believe . . .") is so very true. It is hard to believe because it is not based on our works (but on His), contrary to the teaching that many of us adopted. Works appeal to our natural, sinful narcissism. Grace points only to Him.

Elaine Nelson 6 days ago

Adventism has always had an uncomfortable relationship between law and grace. If the emphasis is on grace, then the law is secondary, and this will not do--solely because of the position taken on Sabbath, despite there was no law regarding sabbath until Sinai.

Paul is the finest exponent on grace and its relationship to law. Only by neglecting Paul are
Adventists able to emphasize the ultimate importance to salvation of sabbath. If observing sabbath is the ticket to salvation and avoidance of the mark of the beast, where is grace? Grace and law are antithetical: either there is grace for the sinner or there is law, and in Adventism it is law that has been preached.

As you state, Preston, how seldom does one hear an Adventist sermon on grace? Is there not a reason? If sabbath observance is absolutely necessary for salvation, of what need is grace? It is works. Paul never emphasized either the law or sabbath; in fact there was no longer any concern for the former annual feasts, new moons or sabbath days. Is this why some of his letters are not topics for sermons--too controversial?

Matt Britten 5 days ago

You hit some true and painful spots here Elaine. I guess the great challenge for Adventistism is deciding whether we are under law or under grace. According to Paul, you cannot be under both (Gal. 5:4). It leads to confusion and spiritual schizophrenia. Jesus was walking, talking, living, breathing Grace. Where ever He went, the atmosphere changed. People were able to walk into freedom because of His graceful words and graceful works. I hope that one day, we capture this Jesus for who He really is and the place He invites all into - Graceland (Mt 11:28).

Stephen Foster 5 days ago

Well (Elaine), there you go again. The Sabbath is perhaps a problem with you because you, or those who have gone before you (in your previous life as an Adventist) have misrepresented the Sabbath as relates to salvation.

Since we know that the Sabbath was sanctified before Sinai, and that an explicit command to remember something that had not yet existed, or been established, or identified (or even defined for that matter) is nonsensical on its face, and that salvation is the gift of the grace God and not a derivative of Sabbath observance, and that the primary reason for doctrinal attempts to disregard the Decalogue is the Sabbath, and that Paul regularly preached to Gentiles in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and that Jesus fully anticipated the Sabbath to be relevant for His followers after His death and resurrection, much of your assessments of the Sabbath is ripe for at least some "reevaluation."

On the other hand, it is certainly true that grace needs to be preached more because it invariably points out our absolute and complete reliance on the love and sacrificial death of Jesus for salvation.

William Noel 4 days ago

Elaine,

You don't hear sermons about grace because there are so few in the church who have really experienced it and even fewer who live in it each day. I hope you will try it. Each day, ask God to help you live in His grace. It is truly a wonderful and liberating experience.
Kevin Wells
5 days ago

Preston,
This is one of the best pieces of writing I've read anywhere which captures the Adventist struggle with understanding Grace. This is a brilliant piece! I appreciate your clarity and conciseness. The metaphor is solid.
I hope that Atoday is able to pass this piece along far and wide.
Blessings,
Kevin

Preston Foster
5 days ago

Kevin,

God be praised and magnified. Grace IS the gospel. It is the power of this simple, yet powerful message that resonates in our souls.

Thanks very much.

LaffAL
5 days ago

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10 ESV)

Nathan Schilt
5 days ago

This is indeed a fine column. We spend far too little time reveling in the grace of God's love - basking in His forgiveness. By His grace, I have never experienced the need of pardon or parole from earthly powers. But it seems to me, as a former prosecutor, that the problem you point to, Preston, may not be so much a product of feeling unpardoned as it is the result of having to face, after pardon, the question: "How now shall I live?"

Elaine Nelson's freedom seems to leave her preoccupied with hostility towards the perceived agents of her incarceration who indoctrinated her with a false conscience. Others return to former negative associates, lifestyle choices, and habits of mind which again put them under the condemnation of the law. Thus, the problem is often not the inability to accept the reality of pardon, so much as it is resentment and anger towards the "system" that gave rise to the need for pardon, which creates unpardoned mindsets.

So how do you differentiate between those who struggle with what seems to be a Biblically legitimate question for a community of faith - "How now shall we live as the redeemed?" - and
those who are haunted with the weight of past sins by which they still measure their worth in God's eyes?

LaffAL 5 days ago

Nathan,

How to differentiate between those struggle..."How now shall we live as the redeemed?" with those who are haunted with the weight of past sins by which they still measure their worth in God's eyes?

First of all, we are very poor in our understanding of the multifaceted function of God's grace. Grace as God's unmerited favor, which purchases our pardon, gives us the freedom from the condemnation of the law violated, is understood as a concept, but seems to be misunderstood in its scope / range in terms of our sins as a personal experience. I believe this affects both groups in your question.

Those that want to know "how shall I now live", need to understand the second phase of the grace of God... its power. As a former prosecutor you well know the terms of probatation / parole; you will obey all laws, along with the stipulated specifics. Does the legal system provide all of the necessary resources to ensure the success of the one who is released? Is the parolee confident that the system will do everything it can to assist him / her in their endeavors to no longer be a law breaker, muchless to return to prison? Or for the most part, are they left to themselves to work it out? How many of us understand that all heaven and its resources are available to ensure the success of living the redeemed life without fear and trepidation? Heaven understands our true weakness, but do we? Christ told Paul that His grace was sufficient, because His strength was made perfect in Paul's weakness. One of the questions the redeemed have to answer is, how weak am I? If our weakness is total, God grace / strength is total in terms of our needs.

The "haunted" are stuck with the notion that God views them based on their performance in terms of His law. God's grace is not realized, much less understood when it comes to its pardon / power. For whatever the reason, the idea that God would be willing to punish, condemn, execute His own Son for our transgressions misses its mark? Christ as the sin bearer is an unknown entity. They are under the delusion that God has left them to themselves to do what He expects them to do, that's it, that's all. They sit in their prison cell wishing to be free, while not realizing that if they just push on the gate, the door will open. Christ's death has unlocked the prison house doors for all who would be free from the effects of sin, and provides to power to keep them free.

The question for both groups is, do you believe? Jesus said all things are possible to him that believes.

Nathan Schilt 4 days ago

As a child, I listened over and over again to a Tex Ritter song - "Two Little Magic Words". "There are two little magic words that will open the door with ease. One little words is thanks, and the other little word is please." I listened for the lilting music, but I remember the words.
The phrase about doing what's right seems applicable here: "A lot of folks forget to remember t'be polite; they don't ree-a-lize how good they would feel if they did what's right." Folks in the Church who believe in right and wrong and want to create and preserve a community that is faithful to God's call as they perceive it aren't necessarily equivalent to parolees or parole officers.

My experience suggests that those who complain the most bitterly about an unforgiving, unpardoning church aren't interested in knowing what's right, much less doing it. They demand tolerance and permission, using euphemisms like pardon and forgiveness as Kryptonite against faith community boundaries and standards. They don't talk about repentance because they don't believe in sin. They reject the loving yoke of trust and obedience that comes with pardon and forgiveness. Christ's forgiveness is limitless, and His salvation most certainly does not depend on our efforts. But I believe that those He pardons will continue to angrily experience the guilt of the unpardoned as long as they look to Egypt for their meaning and sustenance.

We must be careful not to confuse the poor in spirit with the proud in spirit.

William Noel

Nathan,

So true!

Some years ago another church member and I were visiting a couple who were enduring many problems in their relationship, including an unwillingness to forgive. As our conversation continued I asked if there was something in her experience that was making her angry against God. There was. When she was a child her best friend's home had burned and she had been both disfigured and disabled by her injuries. "Why would a loving God do that to her?" she shouted at us through her tears. "How many times has God forgiven you?" I asked. Many times. She listed several. "Can you forgive God?" I asked. (It wasn't that I was implying that God needed forgiven. It was a step toward ultimate forgiveness that opened her mind to discovering the true, loving nature of God.) That question stopped her cold for a long time. "Yes," she finally whispered. Several days later her husband called to tell me how things were improving in their home and how happy she had become. Until then he had been just a marginal Christian. Now he wanted to know more about the power that had changed her so visibly.

Elaine Nelson

If Adventism accepts fully the concept of grace, why is there still, long after Adventism was founded, not a clear understanding of its relationship to law? Reading all the comments, and other SDA blogs, there seems to be little assurance of salvation until perfection is reached. Is this a false assumption?

William Noel

Adventist Today: Pardon v. Parole
Elaine,

That is not a false assumption, but an accurate observation of how many have not learned how to embrace God's love and transforming power.

Yesterday morning on the way to work I was listening to a radio talk show where a messianic Jewish rabbi was being interviewed. Though it is a comedy program, the hosts are unashamed to declare their belief in God. They are devout Sunday keepers, so the question arose about the relationship between the redeemed and the law. I thought the Rabbi's answer was great. On the drive to the studio he observed the law because of his respect for authority and in consideration of others. He was living in the freedom that comes from knowing the law was no threat to him. But had exceeded the limit and gotten a traffic ticket he would have come under the penalty of the law and faced the condemnation that disbedience brings. There is a huge difference between the two. God wants us to grow and learn to live in the freedom and blessings that He offers when we live in harmony with Him.

Ella M. 3 days ago

My SS teacher used this metaphor about a year ago, and it has stayed with me.

LaffAL 4 days ago

It is a false assumption. Our assurance is based on God so loving us that He gave us His Son. God will not condemn us for being sinners. Romans 8:32.22 Why? When God gave us His Son, He gave us eternal life. John 5:24; 1 John 5:10-13. And God did this for everybody. John 4:42; 1 Timothy 2:4; 4:10; 1 John 2:1.2 Those that will be lost at the end of the day are those who do have Christ as a personal Savior / representative past / present / future.

Historically, Adventists have been caught up in defending the relevance of God's law against those who have taught that grace trumps God's law. So in essence what we have are two opposing positions at odds with each other: those that teach law at the expense of grace, and those that teach grace at the expense of law. Adventists have fallen for the most part into the first group. But to be honest, there is truth and error on both sides. And the only way to reconcile the opposition is to rightly understand the relationship between law and grace.

For those who believe that perfection is achievable thru the grace of Christ can / will only experience it as a result of not only a proper understanding of the relationship of law and grace, but apply / follow that understanding to it's designed end, to witness the grace of Christ, never for the assurance of salvation.

Elaine Nelson 4 days ago

For whatever reason, it is surely most misunderstand by millions of Adventists. It must have been the way some taught it.
Ella M.

Elaine/others: This is certainly true. However, I don't think many Christians in general understand that Christ lived and died for ALL persons, Christian or not. It is only with rejection of Christ (agape love as described in the Good Samaritan story and Matt. 25), that one can be lost. (Of course, it is not a once lost, always lost concept. One can come back should they choose).

The doctrines must be filtered through agape love. A Sunday-keeping Christian who has Christ as his righteousness and rests in that, is more of a true Sabbathkeeper than those literal Sabbathkeepers who don't understand agape love.

This is why infants and children are saved, because Christ's sacrifice is for all until they come to the age of rejecting love. There are many Adventists who believe this inclusive concept of salvation, but it was rejected by a few men at the GC years ago and is not part of our "three angels message" and righteousness by faith as it should be. This is a story I would like to see Adventist Today tackle!

Preston Foster

Nathan,

Thanks for your kind words.

A few thoughts:

- I have found that some who claim freedom in Christ and from the law take a "works-based" approach to their freedom. It sometimes manifests itself in a kind of ironic "reverse judgmentalism," which they, in judgment, call-out others for being judgmental (in a traditional Adventist sense). Some former Adventists mirror and reflect what they hate most about the judgmental, law-based culture in living out their new interpretation of "freedom" -- in judgment (note: one never hates what they don't care about). The common denominator is works -- depending on our own power (either under law or grace) to achieve righteousness and judging others by what we do (or don't do).

- The key to understanding and operating under grace is to accept the leading of the Holy Spirit (see "What Holy Ghost?"http://www.atoday.org/article.php?id=797). This is, I believe, the most under-utilized resource in the universe -- and the only way to operate in Christ, without the law as you master. It is the answer to your question, "How now shall we live as the redeemed?"

  Because the answers are seemingly intangible, we often, in our frustration with a Spirit we are not intimate with (and in our habitual self-dependence), lose patience and act on our own (Psalm 27:14, Psalm 37:9) -- never hearing the leading of the Spirit. To Laffal's point, we move on our own because we do not believe. Our self-dependence has attenuated the voice of the Spirit. Still, He bids us (Joel 2:28).

- The problem, in my view, is not so much looking at board members as the strict parole officers (as much as some might relish that role), it is seeing Christ in that role. When our relationship
with Christ is misaligned, we have little hope of manifesting the fruits of the Spirit. Debates about sin, forgiveness, transformation, and restoration (within the faith community) are to be reconciled by aggressive exhibitions of love, joy, peace, and long-suffering. The fact that we too rarely witness this tells us something about the under-utilization of the Spirit in all of our lives.

Nathan Schilt 4 days ago

Terrific insight! I could not agree more. I like your observation regarding intimacy with the Holy Spirit. I treasure so many of the wonderful things my Adventist heritage has given me. But Holy Spirit intimacy is not one of them. I learned growing up that the purpose of Christ's presence in my life through the Holy Spirit is to give me the strength to follow the principles and precepts of righteousness (law), as understood by the "holy fathers". It has taken me some time to individuate within the Church. My Church worked hard to acquaint me with the principles and precepts to which the Holy Spirit had guided it, rather than teaching me to become intimate with the Spirit who seems to fall silent when confined within doctrinal boxes. It is not a reason to condemn the Church, but a reason to rediscover and rekindle the flame.

As you suggest, knock-down, drag-out fights to defend or destroy the theological and subcultural identifying marks of Adventism probably demonstrate an Adventist Stockholm Syndrome (Hey, that's a good title for a blog!). Sadly, the mindset of sin has bullied us into thinking that captivity is cool.

Preston Foster 3 days ago

This is a likely reason why, spiritually and culturally, our relationship with the Holy Spirit lacks intimacy:

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:2 KJV

William Noel 22 hours ago

Nathan,

Intimacy with the Holy Spirit is the relationship God wants to enjoy with us! If you want a really eye-opening Bible study, take your concordance and look for references to the Holy Spirit. He is the first revelation of God in Genesis and the last in Revelation. He is the most commonly-referenced member of the Trinity through the entire Bible. He does amazing things. He is the one Jesus told us to wait for and to seek after so we could be empowered to minister His love to a sin-filled world and be His witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.

Getting to know the Holy Spirit required that I step outside the doctrinal "boxes" that I had grown up being taught were the way to know God and do his work. Today many of the doctrinal topics about which people like to argue are non-issues to me because God has focused me on a ministry where those topics simply do not matter and I have more important
things to do with my time.

Becoming intimate with the Holy Spirit is simple: ask God to reveal himself to you. That is one prayer He is eager to answer. Keep your eyes wide open because that revelation is likely to come in a way your past has taught you to not expect. Then hang on and enjoy the ride.

Elaine Nelson 21 hours ago

It was Philip Yancey who wrote that he had to go outside the church to find faith. Sometimes the church is obstructive to personal spirituality and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Nathan Schilt 16 minutes ago

Quite true, Elaine. But when the church is referred to as Christ's bride, is it merely the idealized church of your imagination that never has existed, and never will exist? When God calls people, He generally seems to call them into communities of faith where His Spirit moves with synergistic power. If the church I have found is an obstacle to the Holy Spirit and spiritual formation, I better search diligently to find a place where I can experience and be guided by the Spirit.

Have you not found such a church? If so, why not say, "Sometimes the church greatly enriches personal spirituality and helps us to receive the Holy Spirit."? If you have not, keep searching and ease up on those who believe they can and do find, in a 21st Century Adventist fellowship, such a church.
Adventist Church Responds to La Sierra Employee Lawsuit

Submitted Sep 14, 2011
By AT News Team

On September 13, 2011, Defendants La Sierra University, North American Division of Seventh-Day Adventists (sic), and Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists filed responses to the lawsuit filed by Dr. Kaatz, Dr. Beach, and Dr. Bradley. In those responses, instead of defending the case on the merits, La Sierra University and the now united Church Defendants take positions that are completely at odds with the position La Sierra University has taken with Western Association of Schools and Colleges (“WASC”), its faculty and staff, its students, the community, its mission, and its bylaws. Of note, the position taken by the Church Defendants include the following:

- La Sierra University is not a separate institution, and is, instead, part of a single unified church entity.
- La Sierra University is not a true University, but rather a “church operated college (emphasis added)”
- That the spiritual leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church know what is best for this Seventh-day Adventist university, implying that Church leaders should be making academic and curriculum decisions.
- That this controversy is a theological one. This position is in direct conflict with the previous express statement of La Sierra University administration to the faculty, WASC, and the community, claiming that the forced resignations had nothing to do with the “origins controversy.”

Read the full press release from McCuneWright:

Michelle Stevens

This "news" item seems that it would be more appropriate as a blog entry. Although in my college newswriting class I was told to anticipate biased/slanted reporting, it would be more helpful here to be as factual as possible rather than editorializing. There is ample opportunity for commentary in the comments section. My point is that even though I may totally agree with what was said by the AT News Team, I have a hard time reading this as "news."

Also, rather than base the news item solely on the press release of one side (plaintiff or defendant), it seems more prudent to refer readers to the source documents (e.g. complaints, demurrers, etc.). This brings me to my real question (maybe some of the lawyers on here will chime in): Is it typical for the two sides to respond by press releases in a case like this that is in litigation? I thought Gloria Allred was the exception, but may be I am wrong.

M
Michelle is right. This should be headlined, "Plaintiffs' Counsel Blasts LSU and Church Response to Lawsuit".

I'm going to make an educated guess, not knowing anything about the "response", and suggest that the "response" is a demurrer. A demurrer, by definition, does not respond to the merits of the lawsuit, but takes the plaintiffs' claims at face value. The demurrer argues that, based on the plaintiffs' allegations alone, even if true, one or more of the causes of action fails as a matter of law.

One of the theories pled by the plaintiffs, as I recall reading the complaint, was that the General conference, the Pacific Union Conference and La Sierra were all tied together, both de jure and de facto in requesting the resignations. So in reality, what plaintiffs' counsel accuses the defendants of asserting - violating the sacrosanct wall of separation between church and education - is really only an adoption, for purposes of argument, of what plaintiffs' counsel claims in his complaint. The defendants, I suspect, are taking that allegation and saying, "Look, if that's true, then the plaintiffs' claim is self-defeating because the First Amendment gives considerable autonomy to religious institutions when it comes to matters of employment related to the church's religious mission."

In fact, while it makes nice press for the plaintiffs to take on the church, a lot of attorneys would raise their eyebrows at the seemingly unnecessary inclusion of the Church entities as defendants. It simply plays into the hands of the defense position that La Sierra is indeed a Church institution, and as such, enjoys the privileges and immunities extended to religious organizations under the Constitution. In other words, the plaintiffs' have made their job a lot tougher by first pointing out in their complaint the intertwining action between LSU and the Church. I would be interested in hearing from an experienced attorney what strategic advantage was gained by naming Church entities other than LSU as defendants in the lawsuit.

The propaganda from plaintiffs' counsel is certainly newsworthy. But the statement is the story - not the truth of the statement. Even if the defendants did not demur, but answered the complaint, the defense that LSU is Church owned and operated is one that any competent attorney would allege. Any attorney who failed to assert such a defense would be guilty of malpractice. An answer to a complaint is not a jury argument, where one has to be careful not to argue inconsistent theories. It is simply a piece of paper that frames the issues that might be raised as the litigation proceeds.

A responsive pleading to a complaint is NEVER as defense on the merits, nor is it intended to be such. To suggest otherwise is dishonest demagoguery, and indicates that the purveyor is more interested in using the lawsuit to create public pressure than to obtain whatever legal remedies the alleged wrongdoing may permit. No Michelle, it is not typical for two sides to try their lawsuit in the press. Gloria Allred is indeed the exception. When only one side does it, as seems to be the case here, it suggests desperation - not a particularly good sign if you are a plaintiff who simply seeks vindication of your legal rights.
Kevin Seidel

A better link is:
http://www.mccunewright.com/lasierra.php
They have a link to a pdf of the filed NAD response.

Nathan Schilt

Thank you for pointing out this link, Kevin. My hunch was spot on. The demurrers are finely crafted legal documents. The plaintiffs and those who support the lawsuit seem to be suffering from a bit of schizophrenia. On the one hand they indignantly wave the flag of legal rights and due process. On the other hand, when the defendants say, "Okay, we are willing to defend ourselves in the legal arena where you have chosen to wage battle," the political supporters of the plaintiffs protest that the Church and LSU are cowardly hiding behind legal technicalities. You can't choose the forum, and then object when your opponents elect to play by the rules of that forum.

Kevin Riley

Doesn't it raise some problems for not only LSU but all our universities if we claim that they are not 'real' universities but church operated colleges. Whether or not it is true, won't it look like we have been at least attempting to deceive a number of publics if we were granted university status from academic bodies while all the time we had no intention of being a university? Were we also attempting to deceive students and their parents into believing they were gaining an education at a university while all along it was really simply a 'church operated college'. It seems this move could conceivably undo a lot of work done over the years by our education departments.

Nathan Schilt

Kevin, you need to read the pleadings and have a litigation lawyer explain it to you. Legal pleadings are not legal evidence of the matters stated therein. A demurrer, by its nature, accepts the factual assertions of the complaint. While I haven't studied the pleadings, I suspect if I did, I would find that plaintiffs' counsel alleged in his complaint that LSU was not a real university, but a Church-run college. The defendants' demurrers don't and can't argue over the truthfulness of those allegations, but simply contend that if plaintiffs' allegations are true, the actions which are the subject of the lawsuit cannot be decided by the civil courts.

Any reasonably objective onlooker must appreciate that the plaintiffs are waging a P.R. war. The complaint itself looks more like a manifesto than a form pleading. Had the plaintiffs avoided such polemical detail in their complaint, they would not have invited the demurrers. The plaintiffs want to position this case so that even if the Church and LSU win the lawsuit on the merits, it will be a pyrrhic victory. Whether the Church and LSU yield to political pressure or continue to focus on the legal issues remains to be seen.
Kevin Seidel
1 week ago

I read a little about what a demurrer is. Basically it is arguing that even if the facts the plaintiff says happened are true there still isn't a law against it. It isn't really surprising that they argue that separation of church and state basically lets them do what they want. This would be a strong argument for direct church employees. However these are not church employees, they are university employees. I don't think the court is likely to accept the argument because that would tend to open the door to things like the church of Wal-Mart. These demurrers are a relatively low cost and put in the record some arguments that they may want to use later even if they aren't the best arguments. This seems like the defense are being thorough and maybe hope to narrow the scope some if they are lucky. I don't expect these demurrers will affect accreditation, because I don't think they will have much affect on the out come of the case. I believe the out come of the case will affect accreditation, but it will be the points on which the case is decided and I don't think seperation of church and state will be one of them.

Nathan Schilt
1 week ago

Kevin, civil courts have regularly recognized that education can be a part of the religious mission of a Church. They have also not had a particularly difficult time distinguishing between "good faith" religions and pre-fab "bongo-pipe" churches or "Wal-Mart" churches. A passing knowledge of the case law in this field would lead you to recognize that LSU and the Church are deadly serious in arguing for the application of the First Amendment to the actions surrounding these resignations. The slippery slope is not opening the door to Wal-Mart churches, but opening the door to civil courts imposing their moral preferences on church institutions to trump matters that are of good faith "mission" concern to the church.

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago

As the Merikay Silver case should have demonstrated, pleading the First Amendment will not stand. The present G.C. President's father tried to use this to circumvent the church's obedience to civil laws and it did not succeed. This will also be true in the upcoming suit. One cannot plead First Amendment when disregarding formal contracts wherever they are in force. This is NOT a First Amendment case.

Kevin Riley
1 week ago

I would still worry that it establishes a precedent for the church to claim in other contexts that our universities are not really univerisities. As there are members of the church - some in relatively high postitions - who believe they never should have been universities, it could be (re)opening a can of worms better left shut.
Anonymous

That an entity might successfully technically defend itself and its actions within the legal arena of redress permitted does not in any way exonerate them for their treatment of "truth" (and their attendant seeming distrust in examining "truth"), the apparent untoward actions against any plaintiffs, the subsequent corporate arrogance with its consequent further blinding (and polarization).

Even if it were as simple that LSU in fact blatantly challenged the church and taught origins in diametric opposition to literal interpretation of Genesis, no excuse can I find for its failure on approaching that issue honestly and directly. (AAA found no basis for such claim against LSU. Seems some wished to keep LSU on the pyre).

Are we so afraid of truth? Are we so afraid of ourselves we prefer to fashion scapegoats to avoid having to answer for ourselves?

Horace Butler

These Christian gentlemen, employees of a Christian entity, are apparently unaware (or have chosen to ignore) Paul's counsel about it being better suffer wrong than take other Christians to court. Ah, but maybe Paul's counselors are "living documents," and must be reinterpreted for our "enlightened" times. This lawsuit is about pride and sour grapes, nothing more.

Anonymous

Ahhh, but Horace, what if this Christian entity itself, to which these men ascribe, has/is not maintaining fidelity to greater principle, which is certainly claimed? If the entity needed to take lawful action...why these machinations? Why tolerate the "Arrogate Truth" vendetta (whose progenitors just might have successfully soured the grapes)? Why not make transparent the real nature of the controversy? Why reverse the entity's own accreditation findings? Posturing, polarization, sepulchre polishing? Seems the desire is to nullify both AAA, and WASC accreditations, with force, and without due process.

This may be much more than sour grapes of 4 individuals. The whole cask itself just might turn to wormwood, and bitter wine.... an honest press at the beginning, even now, might forestall what I sense is coming.

Pope Leo X himself in 1517 could not "un-nail" the theses from the University at Wittenburg...anymore than such today.

Gailon Arthur Joy

It is about time the church and its administration took a proper stand with regards to LSU and its administration in rebellion.
The entire "University" called La Sierra should be shut down and rebuilt from the top to bottom. Non-Seventh-day Adventists should be summarily dismissed and new faculty and administration established that is consistent with the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Kevin Riley 1 week ago

If this were done, would we still have a university, and would students still want to attend?

Timo Onjukka 1 week ago

Perhaps God has stayed his hand from wiping humanity from the scarred face of his creation... despite we all need restructuring on the right foundation. Perhaps he has been so agrieved to even consider wiping all of man away.... Yet, he gives total free choice, and bankrupted heaven to redeem even me.

Oh am I glad my God is not such as this.... how does this position mirrored by many (as Gailon posits) reflect God's character?

Horace Butler 1 week ago

Maybe those involved with this dispute and all that it entails (not just the lawsuit) should cast their eyes eastward and observe the fate of AUC. If La Sierra continues on its present course, it may
well end up closing, but probably not voluntarily. If I'm not mistaken, the little lady whom so many here like to denigrate or ignore, predicted that we would lose some of our schools. It has started. Where will it end?

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

Comparing the fate of AUC to the probability of the same at LSU cannot be done. The reasons for AUC closing may have nothing to do with the current problems at LSU.

Nathan Schilt 1 week ago

By the same token, Elaine, the principles upon which the Merikay Silver case turned may have nothing to do with this case. Perhaps I should be deferring here to your vast reserves of legal acumen (LOL), but somehow I don't think think gender discrimination will work real well for the plaintiffs in this case. There is abundant legal authority circumscribing the power of the courts to intervene in employment disputes involving those who carry out the educational ministry of a church. Your dogmatic assertion that "this is NOT a First Amendment case" demonstrates that, while you can resign from the Church, the fundamentalist SDA mindset is not so easily eradicated. You can take the girl out of Adventism, but you can't take Adventism out of the girl.

For those who insist on seeing this as a case about accreditation and evolution in the classroom, may I remind you that three of the four individuals who resigned had nothing to do with the biology department. Those who have read the transcripts of the conversations that led to the resignation requests know full well that the requests had nothing to do with biology curriculum. Assuming the plaintiffs can clear the First Amendment hurdle and get to the merits, this case will really turn on whether the resignations were coerced by false and misleading statements which rendered them in effect involuntary. Best case scenario for the plaintiffs - the resignations will be overturned and the matter will be remanded with orders for the Board to follow procedures. Since the Board has already ratified the actions of its chairman in requesting the resignations, I wouldn't be overly confident of prevailing on the merits if I were the plaintiffs.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

The Merikay Silver was not mentioned because of gender, but because the SDA church had claimed "First Amendment" rights. In that case, the president, Neal Wilson, claimed that the church did not have to abide by the civil laws on employment because it was protected by the First Amendment. If you remember, their plea was lost, and Merikay won.

"Fundamentalist mindset" means nothing in court. The case will be judged on its merits, and the ignoring of academic freedom, academic tenure, due process, and that the church can not unilaterally dictate to the faculty who will or will not be hired or fired. In order to have university status there are specific requirements that must be followed in all its daily operation.

We will soon know how this case will continue.
Nathan Schilt 1 week ago

I understand why you mentioned the Merikay Silver case. However, the fact that the Church invoked the First Amendment unsuccessfully in one case does not mean that it might not be properly applied in another case. There are many very significant differences between the two cases, not the least of which was that the Church had an overt policy of gender discrimination, which was not part of any body of belief or doctrine. In the instant case the plaintiffs do not belong to a constitutionally protected class, so the issues will play out quite differently.

You can ignore the differences if you want to, because you have a tenacious emotional attachment to the outcome. But if you were able to separate your feelings from matters which you really do not understand (legal principles and their application), you would be a bit more reticent about how this will play out. You obviously have not studied the applicable law so as to have even a superficial understanding of how this case differs from the Merikay Silver case. Unfortunately, like most true believers, you will always claim to be on the side of Truth, even if you wrong.

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

Viva La Sierra! Viva!
T

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

From the press release:

"La Sierra University contends that its faculty and staff cannot depend on the protection of procedural and due process safeguards or California law." McCune notes that the logic of the denomination's position implies "that any action taken by the Board of Trustees and the administration is spiritual and religious in nature, and thus protected against government interference by the First Amendment." He adds that this theological move to skirt employment and privacy law is reflected in the move to have only one law firm (and a non-Adventist attorney) defend both church administrators and the academic institution of La Sierra University."

This use of the First Amendment was the same applied, unsuccessfully in the Merikay case. There are many more cases other than gender discrimination for which this may be pleaded. The courts will decide, not by emotions, which I well understand. To reject all other positions as "emotional involvement" neglects the real legalities in such pleadings.

Nathan Schilt 1 week ago

McCune's argument is just that - argument. He wishes that LSU had taken the position he
accuses it of taking. The notion that LSU is nefariously using the Constitution to skirt employment and privacy law is roughly akin to arguing that churches engage in tax evasion when they claim non-profit exemptions from tax laws. **The Constitution is part of the law.** To claim its protections is hardly an ignominious skirting of the law. The fundamental legal issue that will remain, regardless of the outcome of the demurrer, is whether the individuals who resigned were expected to advance the religious mission of LSU. **I can't wait to see plaintiffs' counsel argue that neither faculty nor top level administrators at a religious university are among those with roles of advancing the religious mission of LSU.** This is, after all, precisely what he will have to argue. How do you think that will fly with mainstream Adventists?

Let's look for a minute at the law in which you seem to be so well versed, Elaine. Federal courts have held that a Salvation Army officer who manages a thrift shop is a minister withing the meaning of the law because he is expected to use his sales position as an opportunity to witness hope and faith to patrons of the thrift store. of course that has no applicability here, does it, Elaine? The last thing in the world anyone would expect a non-religion faculty member or administrator at an SDA university to do is witness faith and hope. We need to keep matters of faith quarantined in the religion classrooms.

The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals has held that a communications director of a church, though not manifestly a ministerial employee, fills an essentially ministerial function because he is responsible for the integrity of the church's communications, which are part of its mission. The Supreme Court has held that the separation of function from faith creates an impermissible risk that a secular court will inform a religious institution that its minister is not really a minister. This "church autonomy" doctrine is rooted not only in the First Amendment, but in the Magna Carta, which guaranteed freedom for the English Church, with undiminished rights and liberties.

The federal courts have held that a university is a religious organization for purposes of federal labor laws where it "holds itself out to students, faculty and community as a Catholic School." Knowledge of the employee, the openly religious nature of the employer, and the organization's non-profit status, in the words of Justice Stephen Breyer (darling of progressive SDAs), all but exhaust an appropriate inquiry into the sincerity of a religious organization's self-understanding of its ministerial offices. "Federal court entanglement in matters as fundamental as a religious institution's selection or dismissal of its spiritual leaders risks an unconstitutional trespass on the most spiritually intimate grounds of a religious community's existence."

This is but a smattering of relevant legal precedents. **So tell me again, Barrister Nelson - sometimes I'm a bit dense - just what are the legal realities I am overlooking that make First Amendment issues irrelevant to this case?**

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**Elaine Nelson**

1 week ago

There are two conflicting issues: One, the rights under the First Amendment under which a religious institution operates.

The second issue: The administration and faculty of a university also have allegiance to the departments and school for which they were hired. The biology faculty were hired by the
university, not PUC or NAD, to teach biology, not SDA theology (there is a separate department for that). Had they failed in teaching biology, they could have rightly been dismissed; however, in the teaching of their subjects, were they ever told they were not teaching proper biology? Did their contract call for them to teach SDA creationism, or biology?

This is the exact same problem, it appears, between the autonomy of the university and the proper role of the church. Should the NAD and PUC president have the ultimate decision on faculty and their duties? Should the president of LSU be set aside and defer to the PUC for hiring, firing and running the university?

Please explain how these separate entities should be administered.

Nathan Schilt
1 week ago

Is LSU a religious organization? Of course! As defined by the legal authorities I have referenced, did the individuals who resigned have a "ministerial" role? If not, why would LSU require that they even need to be Christian, let alone SDA? If the answer to those two questions is in the affirmative, your question, Elaine, about how legally separate, but missionally intertwined, church entities should be administered vis a vis one another, may be relevant to WASC, but it won't impact the lawsuit.

There is one itsy bitsy issue that you seem to assiduously overlook: These folks resigned! They were not fired. Neither you nor I know what measures, between waterboarding and threats of eternal damnation were employed to induce the resignations. Assuming, as I do, that the measures were not such as would shock the conscience or induce innocent folks to bow before the Inquisition, it wouldn't really matter if the Chairman of the Board, the department chair, the president of LSU, or their wives requested the resignations. A resignation, when tendered, is generally effective to terminate one's employment, and constitutes a waiver of the due process rights that otherwise might be available (cf, Anthony Wiener's resignation from Congress).

Elaine, I eagerly await your analysis of the applicable legal authorities.

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.

Prospective Presidencies

Submitted Sep 12, 2011
By Stephen Foster

Now that U.S. Congresswoman Michele Bachmann of Minnesota has won the Iowa Straw Poll and Texas Governor Rick Perry has officially entered the Republican nomination race, and according to Gallup, is suddenly the front runner, it is perhaps high time to consider the prospective implications of either a President Bachmann or a President Perry. This from the perspective of those who believe that overtly religious — yet politically ambitious — Americans are prophetically dangerous.

The adjective ‘dangerous’ in this context is admittedly provocative; but it is appropriate to describe these two politicians in provocative terms. Bachmann and Perry certainly have histories of making news in fashions that generate controversy.

This is not to say these two presidential candidates are unique in this regard. There are, and have been, any number of lightning rod political personalities about whom there is no middle ground of opinion. It is to say however, there are no muted ideological tones with either of these two, only bold pastel colors.

Again, some contextual perspective is in order. The prophetic danger we reference relates to an interpretation of Revelation 13, of America as being represented by the beast with lamblike horns; and that an image of the first beast (of that chapter) is formed as religious observance of a day of the week that is legislatively mandated. Some believe that in order for this to occur, the secular governmental authorities will at some point have to be under the effective control of religious individuals and institutions that have fostered such legislation.

Admittedly, this is a Seventh-day Adventist viewpoint; undeniably informed and/or reinforced in large measure by the eschatological exegesis of Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy*. Although this is an Adventist perspective and obviously subject to dispute, what is not in much dispute at all is her sweeping historical observation that, “Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines.”

So, what do these contenders, along with their fellow presidential competitors have to do with prophecy? Maybe nothing, then again, maybe a whole lot; let’s take a look.

Of course, few of us would regard prayer as anything other than the highest privilege afforded to created human beings. The opportunity, as my Dad is fond of saying, “to commune with the Creator of the universe, and address Him as our Father, is practically unimaginable,” yet we can do so whenever we want to, without an appointment, and in fact are welcomed to do so “without ceasing. However awesome prayer is in concept, the reality is, it is an activity that is unmistakably and unabashedly religious in nature. Atheists and agnostics may well consider it superstitious — one person’s faith is another person’s superstition.

No matter what faith tradition the majority of America’s founders may have been, we know that in the nation’s founding document they simultaneously provided for the free exercise of religion/superstition, and for separate spheres of civil law and religion/superstition. God is not
mentioned once in the U.S. Constitution and the name of Jesus is never invoked.

This was no unintentional oversight. The self-evident truth that, “Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines,” though not-yet-penned by the not-yet-born Ellen White. This was nonetheless understood by the majority of the founders as they wisely — if not providentially — enshrined protections against this syndrome in the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause.

The governor of Texas, as a then-prospective candidate for the presidency, and eventual-prospective front runner for his party’s nomination, co-hosted and led an Evangelical Christian, revival-style, mass prayer and fasting meeting in a stadium, under the auspices of his public office, called ‘The Response.’ This should at least get the attention of those who believe there is wisdom in separating the church from the state.

The potential public policy implications of having the chief executive of the government initiating, sponsoring, and leading a prayer and fasting meeting featuring a specific religion is noteworthy.

Likewise, fellow GOP presidential nomination contender Rep. Michele Bachmann has a history of religiously motivated activism and in fact got her political baptism in her role as an education advisor for the Minnesota Family Institute. This is a ‘pro-family organization’ whose officially stated mission is, “to strengthen the families of Minnesota by advancing biblical principles in the public arena.” The Family Institute holds a Statement of Principles where it outlines, “The Church has primary responsibility for the equipping of believers for their role in society, thus MFC [Minnesota Family Council] is committed to assisting churches in partnership with them to equip and mobilize Christians for Christ-centered political engagement.”

There is little doubt the American people, though heterogeneous, are largely a religious people. The U.S Religious Landscape Survey, conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life revealed that only 5% of American adults say they do not believe in God (or a universal supernatural spirit). Only a fourth of these individuals go so far as to describe themselves as atheist. So, the natural impulses of the American citizenry tend toward piety; and they are attracted to professions of piety by the political class.

These two members of the political class, have clearly not been reticent about the role of God and religion in their lives, which is understandable and even laudable to a degree. More to the point, neither have they been reticent about the role God and/or religion should play in the consideration, formulation and implementation of public policy, and this is the point of departure or, the rub.

This is not to say that others in the prospective presidential field are much different in this regard. Former Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) is proudly the so-called ‘values’ champion of moral and cultural issues. According to the Washington Post’s Chris Cillizza, “for social conservatives who is with them on every issue, he might well be the guy…” According to the Santorum campaign’s National Communications Director Hogan Gidley, “the former senator is the only [presidential] candidate who has a record on social moral and cultural issues…, among other things uniquely combining to qualify him among the current GOP presidential hopefuls to take on President Obama in 2012.”

In fairness, it should be noted however that Santorum helped introduce the Workplace Religious
Freedom Act in 2005 which “would require employers to make reasonable accommodation for an employee’s religious practice or observance, such as holy days (e.g. 7th-day Sabbath observances),” according to Wikipedia. It should also be noted in this context that this legislation was supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In an interview conducted for the Catholic News Agency with Kathryn Jean Lopez, Online editor-at-large with National Review, Mr. Santorum says, “Americans want our leaders to have a reliance on God…we want leaders who understand that faith is essential to the sustenance of democracy, that faith is an agent for good, that it protects the weak and defenseless, that it motives people to confront injustice;” which sounds almost…liberal. He has also said, “I am certainly compelled by my faith to help engage in making this a better country, supporting a culture of life, and confronting the enemies of freedom. Faith and freedom are dependent on one another, and our founders understood this. Freedom was meant for a virtuous people, and virtue is forged out of faith. Without faith, without religion as an active agent in our personal and public life, we will not be able to maintain the freedoms that we have been so uniquely blessed with. The two options to freedom rooted in faith are a spiraling into moral and cultural anarchy, or the replacement of internal restraint with external restraint, which is called totalitarianism.”

He went on to say, “An overwhelming percentage of Americans are religious, and religion matters to their daily lives. I am no different. I’m someone who needs and relies on God. I feel and see his work everywhere around me, every day. And I couldn’t imagine life without him.

I actually believe that Americans want our leaders to have a reliance on God. It shows that they are humble, and understand that they are under a higher authority. And we want leaders who respect religious conviction, not demean it. We want leaders who understand that faith is essential to the sustenance of democracy, that faith is an agent for good, that it protects the weak and defenseless, that it motives people to confront injustice.”

Santorum continued, “Look at all of the great social movements in America over the centuries; most were led by religious leaders. And importantly, it is not just generic faith in God, but the understanding of the world that my Catholicism gives me – the world as it should be, an understanding of human nature and the ordering of our common affairs – that is important to me as a public official. Being religious, and my being consciously Catholic, is something to be proud of.”

As the President does not take an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the culture, the term “cultural anarchy” is something that Mr. Santorum — or someone — should define. This is yet something else to consider for those who are concerned with what is next.

Ron Corson 2 weeks ago

"The potential public policy implications of having the chief executive of the government initiating, sponsoring, and leading a prayer and fasting meeting featuring a specific religion is noteworthy."

Perhaps not as note worthy as leading a prayer and fasting meeting without an specific religion. Not terribly note worthy in a country made up of predominately Christians however. Where
traditionally the President has presided over Prayer Breakfasts and the Congress has its own Chaplain which seems to me has been a Christian as well...have their been any that weren't Christian?

Elaine Nelson
2 weeks ago

Washington and Jefferson were Deists. How many were Christians is debatable, as what presidential candidate would admit to being either an agnostic or atheist?

potter
2 weeks ago

President George Washington was an Anglican and later an Episcopalian. Of Thomas Jefferson he was against Calvanism but in favor of Jesus. From a letter dated June 26, 1822 Jefferson writing to a Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse.

The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of man.
1. That there is one only God, and he all perfect.
2. That there is a future state of rewards and punishments.
3. That to love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself, is the sum of religion.

Elaine Nelson
2 weeks ago

As a Unitarian, Adams flatly denied the doctrine of eternal punishment believing all would eventually enter heaven. (Many Unitarians reject the Trinity and most accept all religions as valid expressions of faith.)

However, Adams is often quoted as saying, "This would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!" However, here's the complete quotation in an April 19, 1817, letter to Thomas Jefferson:

"Twenty times in the course of my late reading have I been on the point of breaking out, "This would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion at all!!!!."

Thomas Jefferson quotes:

“I have recently been examining all the known superstitions of the world, and do not find in our particular superstition (Christianity) one redeeming feature. They are all alike, founded upon fables and mythologies."

It is well known that Jefferson compiled his own New Testament by cutting out all the miracles and simply leaving Jesus' sayings.

George Washington, our founding Deist, attended church but refused Communion all his life. On his deathbed he requested no ritual and uttered no prayer. Had a Freemason funeral service. He wrote this:

:"
The United States of America should have a foundation free from the influence of clergy."
1) Why is this an issue? What is wrong with being a "Christian" as one runs for political office? Have they given an indication they plan to implement the mark of the beast or force their religion on YOU?

2) As for the end times-it will be BOTH sides working together to infringe on freedoms. Remember- we are warned that the unions will be involved in some way-shape-or form. (Which political party do they work through-Hmmm).

3) But the bigger point to raise here-since YOU PEOPLE on here like to tout that you arre SDA to the world, as you sow seeds of doubt within the church about everything from Genesis to Revelation, from CREATION to what the Mark of the Beast involves, we are advised in Testimonies for the Church not to talk politics with non-believers. This is on the WWW for anyone to stumble upon. Don't you think it is wise advice from sister White? Some non-church member could read this blog post of yours and get the impression all Adventists think like YOU on politics. If they disagree with YOU-then maybe they won't listen to the Church about what really matters-the EVERLASTING GOSPEL & the 3 Angels message as well as the "science of the cross of salvation."

Just a thought

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Ron Corson

I am always interested in the EGW comments about politics. This is a new one I have not heard before "Testimonies for the Church not to talk politics with non-believers" can you give us the reference?

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LaffAL

Ron,

Here's one:

There is a large vineyard to be cultivated; but while Christians are to work among unbelievers, they are not to appear like worldlings. They are not to spend their time talking politics or acting politics; for by so doing they give the enemy opportunity to come in and cause variance and discord. \{CCh 316.5\}

God's children are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers. Do not take part in political strife. Separate from the world, and refrain from bringing into the church or school ideas that will lead to contention and disorder. Dissension is the moral poison taken into the system by human beings who are selfish. \{CCh 316.6\}
Elaine Nelson  
2 weeks ago

When any comment addresses "You people" it's a dead give-away as to the intention: There are only two groups of people: "My people" and "You people," neatly separated.

Kevin Riley  
1 week ago

The more closely I look at American politics, the more I am inclined to ask "why?" So little of it makes sense to an outsider. Even when I read history and find out what happened, there is still the "why?" Most of the world still hasn't gotten past the "why" of electing GW Bush a second time. The "why?" of electing any of the Republican party candidates and maybe candidates is just too confusing. Not that Democrats are any less confusing in their own way. Obama is certainly not what most of us would expect of a 'socialist' president. Sometimes I think it may be best just to accept at face value that "Americans are different".

Trevor Hammond  
1 week ago

Politics in the US of A is very entertaining indeed and one big rollercoaster ride for some; but at the same time is a cesspool of dog eat dog politicians and their (banker/financier) puppeteers who sometimes act no better than organized gangs. I know, I know, its tough talk; but in mitigation of my strong statement, one has to consider that the decisions these buffoons make so often mess up the lives of the man on the street. Unemployment, bankruptcy, poverty, dodgy healthcare, economic recession, wars, etc, – And the list goes on, CAN also be a direct result of such politicking.

Take for instance that although there is a large Christian complement in the US, yet 'evolution' dominates their schools. They say no God in the Constitution but on the Dollar Bill is printed "in God we trust" (in this instance deists first come to mind). Then the whole political history from its inception is riddled with 'Freemasonry': even on the same dollar bill again is found the two piece pyramid with the ‘all seeing eye’. How is ‘ancient mysticism’ and the religion of Babylon and Egypt, now amalgamated into Rome, included in such a constitutionally secular state. The symbols are all over AND many politicians, bankers and capitalist beneficiaries are known practicing Freemasons. I don’t want to start off a conspiracy theory here as we already have to deal with evolution theory☺. Surely this, while ‘confusing’ as it may be, displays an odd irregular type of political spectrum.

Then, just the other day in New York State the Republicans in cahoots with Democrats voted the Gay Marriage Act (I think it was just before Hurricane Irene hit). Just yesterday on CNN I saw a bunch of Republicans on a stage ‘diss’ President Obama, and his ‘Obamacare’ policy and even going to the extent of saying that he is outdated and still putting coins in the old payphones whilst the Republicans bragged they are in the Smartphone era. They kept harping as though it was an insult that the US of A was been turned into a welfare state and if the people wanted it then taxes must be increased. WAIT A MINUTE! The US is a welfare state after the Capitalist bankers and their hedge-fund henchman ‘milked the economy’ which created the current disaster that was placed on President Obama’s table with of course the wars in the Middle East. So they want to now wrap the ‘black man’ who got caught in the ‘white house’ for all the mess: typical.
PS. Our WHOLE Planet is a welfare Planet which depends TOTALLY on the LIVING GOD, the Sovereign Ruler of Heaven and Earth. Can I call Him Jesus? He's an Independent and my votes with HIM! Viva!

☺ T

Ella M. 3 days ago

Stephen,

I know you make your political leanings obvious and base them on church teaching. Maybe you are right. I don't know; I stay out of politics but I can make some observations from the news and media in general that I think are factual. Most of the people in the country may be religious, but they are still watching immoral, violent, and biased television. This has to have an impact. Each day I note on-line that another women or child is missing. The grossest crimes are described.

Political divisions are the highest they have ever been. Fox News goes one way and the others another way with their biases.

Laughter and comedy may be good for the soul, but I can't find any comedy where the actors are not sleeping around and describing it. Immorality is the fodder for any comedian. Police programs of the grossest kinds are all one can find when they look for a little mystery. Atheism is promoted by the most popular talk shows and Christianity held up for ridicule (i.e. Maher). Therefore, Bachman and Perry are given bad press as are other Christians in politics. Every mistake they make brings humiliation. They are under the greatest scrutiny from the media.

Now you are telling me that the Christians running are the bad guys. I have a hard time with that as it sounds like you are buying into the urban group-think on one side that has a strangle-hold on our media. I would say the same to anyone actively promoting the other side and listening only to Fox News (though it gives us news that the other stations for some reason won't report). I try to listen to both when time allows.

My conclusion is that we can't really make decisions when it comes to political parties. The extremes on both sides can be potential monsters. One can only look at an individual's character, I believe, and what they have done in the past as leaders. (I find Perry's large number of executions frightening and cried over the execution of Davis this week, who seemed to be an innocent man.)

My ideal is to keep an open mind, and I would like to see that in my church leaders.

By the way, Elaine, were you aware that our early presidents had church services in the Capitol building? I believe in church and state separation, but I don't think the "founding fathers" had in mind what we are doing with this today. It seems clear to me that we need to empower all religions to be known and heard.

I would agree that religion has made a lot of trouble in the world, yet it has also done the most good. It's Lucifer's favorite instrument when it's members are not under God's rule and surrendered to Him. And the three largest religions all believe in God and the others recognize a deity they generally refer to as "God."

Elaine Nelson 3 days ago

Having church services is nothing unusual for a president. But there are many written statements from the early presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and another very influential, but not
presidential: Benjamin Franklin who were Deists. Jefferson even cut all the miracles from the Gospels as he thought the sayings of Jesus was what was important, and he did not believe in either the virgin birth or other miracles.

Elaine Nelson 3 days ago

It is impossible to recall a time when Adventists weren't concerned and even fearful about a new president who might enact Sunday laws, etc. Having lived since before FDR was president, it seems to be a recurrent theme every four or eight years when a new president may take office. This is in Adventism's blood with many trying to determine when that final Sunday law may take effect and seeing it in every event.

Actually, we should be more worried about the erosion of our First Amendment rights which has been attacked because of the fear of terrorists hiding under every rock. There is no law that can guarantee 100% safety. Fear of the unknown drives such fears. The chance of being the target of a terrorist is far, far less, than being hit by a drunk driver and yet we accept that as the cost of driving in the U.S.

Stephen Foster 3 days ago

Ella,

Remember my take on religion and, or in, politics and government is informed by the reality that “Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines.”

Therefore, although I generally agree that Christians are, or certainly should be, the good guys in this or any society, I will not duck from an acknowledgement of the above-referenced reality; nor can I ignore those overtly religious American personages and/or associated entities for whom the quest to acquire secular power for the purposes of promoting a religious agenda and worldview is apparent.

Preston Foster 3 days ago

Ella,

This quote is excerpted from an article ("Have We Lost Sight of Our Mission?"):

"The value of any forecast (or prophecy) depends on two things: accuracy and timeliness. In other words, a forecast of rain is useless if it is either wrong or late. The weather man can be right about the rain, but still useless if he tells you that it will definitely rain -- yesterday.

As the 'last day church,' our message is useful for the same reasons. An accurate interpretation of the Book of Revelation (augmented by books like The Great Controversy) is useless if we tell..."
people after the prophecies are fulfilled. It is not enough to 'have the truth.' The value of our message is a function of both truth and timing."

If we believe the (e.g., Revelation 13) prophecies (and adopt the TGC interpretations) we have been given, what are we to do with that information? Would it not be negligent to alert people to be vigilant and aware of the context of what is occurring? If not, what then, is the purpose of prophecy?

Preston Foster 3 days ago

Correction: The second sentence in the last paragraph (above) should read, "Would it not be negligent NOT to alert people . . . "

Sorry for any confusion.

Ella M. 2 days ago

Preston,

Do you then agree with the distribution of The Great Controversy to communities, especially those around the GC? I would think they would alienate more than inform. Why not another book?

Another question that I have had is this: If we teach that certain prophecies in the OT were conditional or that Christ should have come before now, why can't we speculate that maybe those last-day prophecies made by EGW could also have been conditional? Can atheism/human secularism be considered a religion that could take away religious freedoms?

There are countries where religious freedom has already been lost to state religions. Couldn't these be signs of the end-times as well? Why focus on the US?

I am not stating any personal beliefs here, just raising some questions on the issues of religion and state.

Stephen Foster 2 days ago

Ella,

If Seventh-day Adventists believe something to be biblical, no matter how controversial, and practically no one else is teaching or saying it, whatever it is, then would it not be not only almost criminally negligent of us to instead only give them the same thing that practically everyone else is saying, but also less informative?

The “conditional” Bible prophecies were of such that God would either reward obedience or punish disobedience. They were conditioned on the response of those to whom the prophecies were given; unlike the eschatological prophecies “which must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1).

Needless to say, we are free to disregard the prophecies or to disagree with the historical SDA
interpretations of them; but blessing is promised in Revelation 1:3 for reading, hearing, and keeping faith with these prophecies; “for the time is at hand.”

I am personally persuaded that the historical Adventist interpretations are essentially on the money.

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Preston Foster

Ellen,

Alienating and informing are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the most informative lecture I've ever heard was framed in alienation. Ronald Heifetz has a lecture titled, "The Futility of Martyrdom." The short version of it goes like this: Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King were leaders who knew that their assassinations were likely. Knowing this, they could have avoided it. In terms of their purpose, wouldn't their leadership have been more effective had they been less controversial and lived to fight another day?

Well, of course, in hearing this, I became unmoored. Jesus Christ and MLK (along with my dad) are my heroes. Their lives and deaths made mine possible. In fact, their deaths had even more effect than their lives. Jesus' purpose WAS to die for us. I protested vehemently. The premise was ridiculous.

Heifetz agreed. The lives and deaths of the three martyrs were, in fact, worth it. His point, as a professor of leadership, was that most of us are exercising leadership on issues that are far less vital than those of Christ, Gandhi, and King. Unless those issues are worth dying for (physically or metaphorically), it is, as a leader, better to survive and fight another day than to die a glorious, but unrecoverable death.

This lesson, though offensive, stuck with me. The fact that it was offensive, engaged me and made the real point of the lecture vivid and memorable (20 years later).

Perhaps a "cold" reading of TGC would have the same effect. It is a confrontational read. The subject-matter is non-trivial. Revelation leaves little room for nuance. But if this material (Revelation and TGC interpretation) is believed to be prophetically accurate, are we to seek the approval of men or God? And if we offend our sisters and brothers, yet provide them with information that can determine life and death choices, are not those "difficult conversations" worthwhile?
Elaine Nelson  

Does anyone's life or death depend on understanding the GC? How? If one dies tomorrow and has never heard of this exclusively SDA theme, are you saying that it will be his last chance for life?

Millions have died and continue to die who have never read or heard of G.C. Is this their only hope to be saved forever? How will knowing this interpretation of one book of the Bible determine their fate? Where is it written in the Bible that believing this is the only hope or be damned? Does "providing information" absolve us of showing love and compassion? Does this book reveal love and compassion or is it a threat of damnation and hell if they don't observe sabbath? Isn't this the sole purpose of distributing this book to hope they will see the sabbath's importance which is a requirement for belonging to the remnant?

Preston Foster  

Elaine,

I suppose drawing illogical inferences is entertaining, but it is not enlightening.

The materiel referred to is, as stated, from Revelation and TGC interpretation of last day events. The information in both books can provide context to those who, at the time of the end, are faced with the choice of receiving the mark of the beast -- or not. According to the Bible, doing so has, in fact, life or death repercussions (Revelation 14: 9-10, Revelation 20:4) for those who are faced with that choice.

How you get from that that those who die tomorrow and have not read The Great Controversy have forfeited their "last chance for life," or that providing this information to people "absolves us from showing love and compassion" (which no one but you implied, much less said) is lost on me.

If your objective is to derail a serious point, diversions can be effective, but they make it difficult to take you seriously.

Elaine Nelson  

If one's life or death is dependent on even reading Revelation or G.C. such a God I care not to worship. Jesus knew nothing of the visions of John, and most certainly did not place his stamp of approval on EGW's G.C.

Stephen Foster  

Elaine,

You are right in that there are millions (actually, billions) of people who have lived, and are now living, for whom some of the prophecies in the book of Revelation are practically without meaning.
You are also right that it’s all about love; for God and one another. This includes loyalty and obedience to God, and includes sharing that truth in love.

The point isn’t even that others of these prophecies are universally meaningful, which some are; but that whoever it is that reads, hears (correctly interprets?), and keeps faith with these prophecies has, therefore, a responsibility to share that which has been given.

**Preston Foster**

You miss the primary point, Elaine.

The discussion is about Adventists and our role in informing people about the coming of Christ and the events surrounding His return. If we, as Adventists, can inform people about what is prophesied in Revelation -- where the events surrounding Christ's second Advent are detailed, it seems we should risk momentary alienation to deliver vital information (Matthew 10:34). This is not to suggest that alienation is the purpose. It is not. Risking momentary alienation to deliver vital information is. Regarding the reference to EGW and TGC, I was responding to Ellen's question regarding possible reactions to its distribution.

Your choice about whom you worship is, of course, yours. I pray that the Holy Spirit reveal to you the whole message of Christ.

**Nathan Schilt**

You touch on a number of themes here, Preston. I agree that it behooves us as Christians and Seventh Day Adventists to cherish and take advantage of the opportunities provided to us by our Constitutional freedoms. It really doesn't matter whether it is a religious or secular authority that sacrifices principles of freedom to other compelling moral claims. Once that occurs, as Ella points out with her usual insightful moderation, the groundwork is in place for any despotic power to impose its will, be that a religious power or a secular power. And history demonstrates that secular statism is no more tolerant of religious freedom than religious statism. So it seems to me that SDA's should vigilantly guard against centralized government that reduces personal freedom in the name of moral agendas, rather than guard against aspiring politicians who believe freely expressed and exercised Christian convictions are a vital resource for civic moral authority.

I'm puzzled, Preston, that you seem to think Adventists are "safer" in a state that demands absolute loyalty to a secular authority than in a state which demands absolute loyalty to a religious authority. History suggests that the gods of secularism are no more tolerant towards the Truth claims of other gods than the God of Christianity when either is given political power.

It is unfortunate that you seem to use religious convictions to advance a political agenda by focusing your criticism on conservative politicians. I don't recall you ever being too concerned with the political religion of the Left. President Obama has said on multiple occasions, in speaking to religious groups, that "our individual salvation depends on our collective salvation." Nancy
Pelosi has said that she must pursue public policies "in keeping with the values" of Jesus Christ, "the word made flesh." She exhorted Catholic Church leaders as follows: "The people who oppose immigration reform are sitting in the pews, and you have to tell them that this is a manifestation of our living the gospels...I want you to speak about it from the pulpit." Jeremiah Wright, notorious for his radical politicized theology, was described by Obama, during the 2008 presidential campaign, as the most important spiritual mentor of Obama's life. And now Jim Wallis, equally radical, is Obama's advisor on matters of "faith". Doesn't this sound to you like people who want to legislate religious values?

Maybe I missed it. But I just don't remember the EGW passage you cited for the proposition that overtly religious, politically ambitious, Americans are prophetically dangerous. How does that assertion square with the example of Martin Luther King, Jr., a man who, perhaps more than any other man in American history, appealed to Scripture and Christian values to promote a moral political agenda?

The "lamblike" nation of which Ellen White spoke had no Constitutional "wall of separation" at its founding. That nation was considered lamblike in the Adventist metanarrative precisely because of its Christian character and values, which afforded great political freedom as well as freedom of individual conscience. The words of the Constitution state that Congress shall make no law establishing religion. It was not until the 1940's that the Supreme Court extended the non-establishment clause to the states and introduced the "Wall of Separation into our jurisprudential lexicon. Ellen White never suggested that her prophecy regarding a triumvirate of religious interests wielding political power should make us wary of devout Christians who believe that Judeo-Christian values are, and should be, deeply embedded in our civic life.

---

Preston Foster 1 hour ago

Nathan,

I believe it is STEPHEN whom you are referring to regarding the ideas framed in this blog ("you seem to think Adventists are 'safer' in a state that demands absolute loyalty to a secular authority than in a state which demands absolute loyalty to a religious authority").

Although I think he's a fine guy with insightful opinions (and terrific parents!), I'll let him speak for himself -- this time!

Cheers,

Preston

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Good Done By The Paradise Valley Hospital Money

Submitted Sep 11, 2011
By Atoday News Team

The following is an opinion piece on the initial purchase of Paradise Valley Hospital by Adventists and its sale, over 100 years later...Eds.

Posted: Sunday, September 11, 2011 10:00 am
By Dylan Mann

In 1888, Dr. Anna Potts built a long-term healthcare center on a hill in National City where recuperating tuberculosis patients could rest, eat healthy food, and enjoy the majestic ocean view and Southern California sunshine. The area's lack of rainfall and other sources of potable water forced her to shutter the Potts Sanitarium just two years later.

The facility sat idle until a devout Seventh Day Adventist named Ellen White purchased it in 1904, talking Dr. Potts down from the $20,000 asking price and taking the liability off her hands for a mere $4,000. White felt that God directed her actions and believe the hospital would be hydrated through divine intervention. Perhaps that is what happened when volunteers dug exploratory wells and unearthed a substantial artesian aquifer 80 feet below the hospital grounds. With that discovery, Paradise Valley Hospital was born.

Various parties from the Seventh Day Adventist Church operated Paradise Valley Hospital (PVH) as a nonprofit from 1904 to 2006. The Adventists ultimately fell on tough times, as the hospital recorded losses ranging between $2 million to $7 million annually from 2000 to 2006.

Read more...

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago

The new buyers have run afoul of the law with their "unusual" billing for very odd diseases: Kwashikoor and malnutrition among seniors, as well as "septicemia." Maybe that's why new Medicare billing will not be permitted for an infected patient returning to the same hospital within a week of discharge: lack of proper infection rules for prevention.

You do not have sufficient permissions to post a comment.
The Problem of Progressive Adventists

Submitted Sep 15, 2011
By Ron Corson

What does one think of when they hear or read the term Progressive Adventist? Do they think Progressive politics; gay marriage, pro choice (abortion), opens borders, socialism and social justice? Those are all political progressive ideas, however they are not part of what define Progressive Adventism. Progressive Adventism is defined by its beliefs related to the doctrinal beliefs inside the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

Ten years ago I wrote an article for Adventist Today on the differences between progressive Adventists and traditional Adventists entitled Progressive and Traditional Adventists Examined. (Nov.–Dec. 2002 Adventist Today PDF archive for those with subscriptions) The article on Wikipedia quotes the following on Progressive Adventism (quoted without their footnotes):

“Ron Corson identifies four common areas of progressive belief:

- Investigative judgment. A different view of the investigative judgment, or a denial of its biblical basis.
- Remnant. An inclusion of other Christians in the term remnant.
- Ellen White. A less rigid view of the Inspiration of Ellen White, from recognizing her fallibility to perhaps even denying her prophetic gift.
- Sabbath. An emphasis on the benefits of the Sabbath, but a denial that it is the ‘seal of God’ or that Sunday keeping will ever become the mark of the beast.

Inclusive

Progressives are inclusive of other types of Adventists, and believe different beliefs and types should be welcomed as part of the community. An example is Alden Thompson's 2009 book, Beyond Common Ground: Why Liberals and Conservatives Need Each Other.

Besides the definitions of Progressive Adventism in the article I have long used the quote from C.S. Lewis I felt expressed the reason behind progressive Adventism. The quote is as follows:

“We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turn, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man…There is nothing progressive about being pigheaded and refusing to admit a mistake.” C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1952), Book I, Chap. 5, p. 22.

While I still hold to the definitions, in the Adventist Today article times have changed and the term ‘Progressive’ has gained resurgence in use during the last ten years. Those on the political left have
begun referring to themselves as Progressive once again. As they attempt to move away from the
term liberal, sort of the reverse of the early years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century when the Progressives changed
their name to liberals after the excesses of Progressive Era.

We still however have the problem of what is a Progressive? If you are a political Progressive your
definition will sound quite enticing and benign. Such as this quote from John Halpin in his article
Progressivism in 2004: Transcending the Liberal-Conservative Divide

"At its core, progressivism is a non-ideological, pragmatic system of thought grounded
in solving problems and maintaining strong values within society. The original
progressive movement at the turn of the 20th century sought to improve American life
by encouraging personal and moral responsibility among citizens; by providing the
carrots and sticks to promote efficient and ethical business behavior; and by reforming
government to provide a level playing field for all citizens and groups."

If you are a conservative you will define Progressive more like this from The Heritage Foundation,
The First Conservatives: The Constitutional Challenge to Progressivism:

"Progressivism was an intellectual and political reform movement that aimed to alter the
American constitutional system. At the deepest level, as expressed especially in the
thought of Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Croly, Progressives aimed to refound America
based on the managerial – administrative political philosophy of the European state.
Consequently, Progressives typically rejected the foundational American principles of
natural rights and limited government for their own understanding of ‘progress,’ defined
as governmental experts management of social change toward an ever more just and
essentially socialist future."

What is in a name is not so much found in the word but the action of those who hold to particular
ideas. A proponent of something can usually make their position seem righteous; a critic can make
the other seem bad. Perhaps simplistically, a progressive is for change and a conservative is for
keeping everything as it has always been. But not every change is good and not all things that have
been should be changed. It is the details that matter not the grand rhetoric. In politics I am a
conservative, I want to maintain the founding principles and the American Constitution. But in
Adventism I am Progressive and want to change some of the traditions of Adventism and some of
the traditions of Christianity as well. But it is the details that matter, the rhetoric of change merely
serves to label me as one thing or the other, a shortcut when communicating with people but what
the label means is subjective, colored by the expectations and prejudices of the reader/listener.

Progressive Adventism has meaning in the details. There may be some Progressive Adventists who
are politically progressive and there may be some who are politically conservative or libertarian. The
mistaken linkage of Progressive Adventism as political progressive must be rejected or there will
cease to be a Progressive Adventist movement as the group becomes divided along political lines
instead of united on theology and ecclesiology.

As often happens, once politics is mentioned it will consume all other things; even when the equally
controversial subjects of religion and politics meet. If Progressive Adventism ever seeks to reform
the Adventist church it must stand united on the details that define it inside the denomination. One of those details is that of inclusiveness, which includes the often derided term pluralism. If it were true that we as a denomination had all the truth then pluralism could be justifiably considered a dirty word as some on the traditional Adventist side appear to believe. But as long as we don't have all the truth we need the consideration of a multiple ideas, letting the marketplace of ideas winnow out what can and cannot stand the test of truth.

Progressive Adventism stands for the freedom to think outside of a prescribed frame of reference.

- To be open to a wide variety of interpretative techniques and acknowledge the breadth of Biblical literature forms.
- To accept the natural world does not say what our religion may have previously claimed.
- To express the idea that science and religion can work together; that one does not have to be right and the other wrong, but to seek a unified theory.
- To recognize inspiration is not as simple as, “God said it and I believe it”.
- That salvation is in the hands of God and not found in what we think we know.

What do those who hear the term Progressive Adventists think when they hear the label? It most certainly stands in contradistinction from traditional Adventism. It points out the fictional standard of traditional Adventism since the history of the Adventist church has always been about moving forward and being willing to change their views, whether it was about Sabbath worship or their understanding of the Godhead or emphasis on health reform or the benefits of advanced education. The definition however, should be considered in the context of Adventist doctrines rather than political progressive themes.

---

Pat Travis 1 week ago

Ron,

I feel you make some good points but most important is that "labels" must be "specific in a given group to make any sense." Labels can be useful so that one doesn't have to remake the wheel with each comment.

I feel one at minimum needs to distinguish theological, political, and denominational "labels." The overlap and variety becomes meaningless, I suggest, unless one does.

For example, One could be considered a SDA conservative on doctrine yet a "theological liberal" for depending on external sources and exclusive interpretations of scripture such as EGW. One could be considered "liberal" in denominational terms if one disagreed with any of the 28, yet, they could be theologically conservative.

Theological "liberalism"/progressivism has usually had a "low" view of inspiration and the ability to take scripture as God's authoritative will for mankind. It always questions various aspects of the Bible to claim authority in thought, words, and transmission.
Political "liberalism" also changes meaning with time. It used to be associated with "limited government" in the US. As one can easily observe that meaning has changed for a present understanding of almost unlimited government activism.

So, I suggest for meaningful communication one must always make sure the terms are "specific to a particular topic or subject at hand with meanings understood by all the participants"...to do otherwise just makes for more confusion and muddy water lacking meaning and clarity.

regards,
pat

William Noel

Ron,

I agree. Productive communication requires clarity so there is little doubt about what we mean.

Labels are an easy way to condone condemnation by generalization instead of examining why a person holds a particular opinion. When we use the term "progressive" are we talking about someone who is questioning church doctrines? Or someone who is searching to resolve questions arising from their life experience and they haven't arrived at the same conclusion that we have? When we say someone is a "conservative" or "traditional" Adventist, what is the basis of that label? Are their viewpoints those that became commonly accepted 50 or 70 years, but were not embraced by church founders?

The label I prefer is "Child of God."

Carrol

To me, "Progressive Adventism" means people who are open to the Holy Spirit leading them into new truth; people whose minds are not closed and irrevocably "made up." It means people who don't just swallow what they are taught, but study to understand for themselves.

But I don't agree that this term only applies to distinctive Adventist doctrines. I believe progressive Adventists also are involved in biblical ideas that might be considered political, such as helping those who are in poverty, offering refuge to immigrants, and being inclusive of outcasts, such as homosexuals.

Stephen Foster

What is included (or qualifies for inclusion) in “the breadth of Biblical literature forms”?

Does being “open to a wide variety of interpretative techniques” mean that progressives are open
to a wide variety of interpretations?

If so, why would that make theoretical sense for the Bible, but not for the American constitution? In other words, who gets to decide which to be sacrosanct?

Kevin Riley 1 week ago

The American Constitution is irrelevant for 80+% of SDAs, the Bible is relevant for all of us. Perhaps it is wiser to categorise SDAs on something that relates to Adventism rather than politics which will vary from place to place. If we look at how SDAs relate to the Bible, SDA doctrines and SDA practice, that is sufficient to spend centuries arguing over without bringing in the politics of a single country.

Ron Corson 1 week ago

Carrol expresses the reason for this article. She rejects the idea that Progressive Adventists is not made up of open borders, sanctuary cities and gay marriage (or the more gentle sounding words which she used to make it seem non political). It is to a large degree the problem over on Spectrum online as well. The assumption that Progressive Adventists must include progressive politics. Rather then Progressive Adventists dealing with denominational beliefs and may include people who are politically progressive, conservative or libertarian. That is a big difference!

For Stephen:

Some examples of literature forms in the Bible: Didactic / Teaching Sections, Laws, Narratives, Parables, Prophecy, Hebrew Poetry; prose, song lyrics, wisdom, philosophy, love dialog

Lets see there are about 30,000 denominations and independent Christian churches. maybe the problem is people are a little too fixed on their interpretations for their own good.

The subject was not the constitution that was used to distinguish between a conservative and a progressive in the US, which is where the confusion seems to lie with Adventists and the term progressive adventist. By the way the constitution is expanded upon by the federalist papers. The constitution is no where as complex as the Bible as they are written with completely different uses in mind.

Jim Miller 1 week ago

I have problems with some of these definitions. The biggest one is political "progressive." From the early 20th century Woodrow Wilson is not the prime exemplar. Rather the most important Progressive from that era was Teddy Roosevelt. Overall, I find the definitions unsatisfactory, and as a result I find the points made also unsatisfactory.

Within Adventism I am progressive because I believe in diversity and toleration for diverse beliefs. However, on the Sanctuary I am definitely a conservative -- though I can understand why some have a problem there. On Ellen White I may be more progressive than conservative, in part
because I know her writings, and in part because of Nichol's Ellen White and Her Critics -- a book which cushioned me from the impact of everything written about her during the 1980's. When it comes to the Bible, I am conservative because I am progressive. I consider Alden Thompson the same, and consider his book Inspiration to be conservative. I also hold dearly the ideal of separation of church and state, an old Baptist idea enshrined in the 1st amendment. That makes me a social progressive. But mostly, I am dissatisfied with the definitions being used here.

Ron Corson
1 week ago

Jim wrote:
"Rather the most important Progressive from that era was Teddy Roosevelt. Overall, I find the definitions unsatisfactory, and as a result I find the points made also unsatisfactory."

Well you can't be upset about definitions because they don't mention everyone that fits under the definition. Roosevelt was a Progressive Republican, he formed the Progressive Party, but he is not the sum of Progressivism. To be unhappy with a label because it does not mention everyone encompassed under a label or because there may be someone with differences from the label is to disregard the purpose of labels. Labels are not all encompassing truth they are shortcuts in the language to describe something. Just as not all blues look the same they can still be called blue, that is the label a generalization to speed communication.

I rather like this comment from the Huff Post:
"All words are labels. They are convenient generalizations that allow us to think and communicate without being overwhelmed and paralyzed by the infinite diversity of constantly changing particulars that appear to constitute non-labeled (non-categorized, non-linguistic, non-conceptual) experience. All words (labels, concepts, generalizations) are inherently misleading, but extraordinarily useful. Always keeping in mind the inevitable distortions and (useful) limitations of all language and thought - refusing to reify and/or deify any concept - allows us to swim in a finite world without drowning, and prevents us from voicing meaningless cliches like "forget labels."
Comprehende?" http://www.huffingtonpost.com/social/Vegananza/the-problem-with-postgay_b_938380_105092626.html

Timo Onjukka
1 week ago

"All words are labels. They are convenient generalizations that allow us to think and communicate without being overwhelmed and paralyzed by the infinite diversity of constantly changing particulars that appear to constitute non-labeled (non-categorized, non-linguistic, non-conceptual) experience. All words (labels, concepts, generalizations) are inherently misleading, but extraordinarily useful. Always keeping in mind the inevitable distortions and (useful) limitations of all language and thought - refusing to reify and/or deify any concept - allows us to swim in a finite world without drowning, and prevents us from voicing meaningless cliches like "forget labels."

This is a concept lost on many. Words are merely metaphors, broken, but still useful to share
concepts, thoughts, ideas, feelings. To a left-brainer, words are unmoving pins, concrete foundations, and "literal". To a right-brainer, words are more fluid. Perhaps Babel was less a tongue-tying and dictionary scramble than we in our certitude claim...perhaps the deeper levels of communication were severed. After all, the verbal represents what, only 7% of "known" human communication? Involving dialog between such polarized groups is readily apparent in this very thread. Oh that we could learn to be one, as we were intended to be...as soon as we can pin a label on another, we've depersonalized them, and thrown them out of church, brushed off our sandals with a deserving "good riddance". Yet, God says "what I have joined, let no man tear asunder"...have we forgotten what the metaphor of marriage represents?

It's hard to be a right-brain Christian in a left-brain church...and vice versa.

---

John Andrews 1 week ago

I personally reject what is being proposed in this article because its implications and unacceptable: there is no God.

I'd rather have blind faith and live in blissful ignorance which is madness to the world rather than subscribe to the creative readings of the geologic column.

"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." (Heb 11:3)

But faith for Erving Taylor = wishful thinking.

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Jim Miller 1 week ago

Labels do matter. Sometimes it is all about spin, which often includes deliberately misleading histories. The Heritage Foundation is well known for this. Why even mention Wilson's anemic policies, when Teddy Roosevelt boldly attacked corporations, especially monopolies, and created national parks and monuments in the face of stiff corporate opposition? Also, Roosevelt's support of the women's vote was far more bold and "progressive" than Wilson. But the Heritage foundation has its own agenda. And this goes to the heart of social progressivism, issues of personal liberty, and making sure the powerful cannot ruthlessly crush all opposition (there is something Biblical about that notion).

I guess anyone who promotes the spin of the Heritage Foundation creates in me an inability to assume their integrity. Sorry, but that is the way it is. I find the categories poorly drawn and less than useful for a real discussion.

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Ron Corson 1 week ago

Of course Jim if you had read the Heritage article you will see Roosevelt is mentioned, actually a good deal. Now I did not quote all that but to assume as you do that it is not there because it is
not in one quote and yes Heritage foundations has an agenda as does the progressive senior fellow in the political progressive quote has an agenda. As I have an agenda. So I am sorry you can't trust my integrity, the facts are there but it appears your assumptions prevent your understanding of the facts. After all in the agenda game, why hold to either the label of Traditional Adventist or Progressive Adventist if you have no agenda?

Gailon Arthur Joy 1 week ago

I will continue to assert that "Progressive Adventists" are not adventist at all and clearly do not believe in the foundational beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church//therefore, they are not Seventh-day Adventists.

I leave them to their theory of being lead by the "spirit" and would admonish that we consider the notion it is a wrong spirit.

I would also admonish that they seriously consider an "open minded" study of Adventism to include the entire Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy lest they be lead into rebellion against the Holy Spirit and a hopeless lack of Faith that leads to a loss of Eternal Life.

Stephen Foster 1 week ago

Try as I might to give this column the benefit of the doubt, it is difficult to reconcile. I concur that there is a need to define labels if and when they are used; as this is something that I have recently discovered on this site.

What I am having trouble understanding is how the Bible can be viewed as open to varying interpretations, with its narratives subject to overruling by scientific consensus and the “realities” of modernity; whereas the constitution of a given nation is considered to be legitimately interpreted by only one ideological perspective and its provisions not considered subject to contemporary realities.

That it should be the other way around, from the Christian perspective, seems obvious.

Ron Corson 1 week ago

Stephen do you believe a seed dies when it is planted? Jesus said that. Science says the seed does not die and then grow. Science redefines and changes the meaning of things because science deals with reality. The reality is a dead seed does not grow. Now you may say Jesus was only meaning figuratively dies because it is buried. But the reason you do that today is because you know factually that dead seeds don't grow. To pretend there can be know difference of interpretations of the Bible is likewise to deny reality.
If Jesus said something Ron, it is true, by definition. He was/is inerrant. If He said something that doesn’t appear to be empirically true, then it is incumbent on us to figure out what it is that He actually meant. When progressives and conservative Christians figure this out, the better off all of us will be.

The point is that the Bible certainly can be, and is, interpreted in many ways; but there is only one way that it can be accurately interpreted. In that sense it is different than a national constitution written by unholy, uninspired men who provided for a judicial system and an amendment process for precisely these reasons.

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

The 'progressive' Adventism defined in this blog clearly exposes an 'apostate' Adventism. Nothing more, nothing less. Something worse though, they justify such 'apostasy' and attack the church from within.

T

David 1 week ago

Hum… now I have an idea of what they mean for progressive Adventism. I wonder how many churches adopted this view. Where I live is inexistence, also I wonder how many of their “progressive member” are reaching to salve souls in the streets or in the fields. I know the genuine Adventist church is growing more than any protestant church, well the message is better than gold.

Ervin Taylor 1 week ago

Although I would not advocate it, it would seem to me that those who oppose the increasing influence of "Progressive Adventism" in the North American Adventist Church, might wish to organize a separate church that would be entirely free of "Progressive" influences—a kind of "purified Adventist Church." I wonder if Mr. Hammond and David would like to consider that suggestion?

David 1 week ago

I may suggest that since I gave my live to LORD I learned the hard way that, He is the only one who knows the hearts and He is the only one who will separate the weeds from the wheat.

Jim Miller 1 week ago

Perhaps a better example for Stephen of the Bible being open to varying interpretations would be, let's see. . . Slavery. I just ran across an op ed piece about how secular culture shamed the church into joining
it in condemning slavery. Somehow our church, before the civil war, managed to be abolitionist while the Bible uniformly assumes slavery as a fact of life. Though the Southern Baptist Convention finally condemned racism about 20 years ago, they never got around to condemning slavery -- because they can't find the Bible condemning slavery.

War. There is good reason why there are a variety of outcomes when people try to reconcile the Sermon on the Mount with various types of warfare in the Old Testament. I often recommend the book. Slavery, Sabbath War and Women by Willard Swartly, Herald Press. It tries to provide the interested reader with a variety of writings, historical and modern, on what the Bible teaches on each of these four topics. It is VERY educational.

Nathan Schilt 1 week ago

Thank you for a very interesting column, Ron, as well as excellent comments you have offered to keep the conversation on track. One of the characteristics of progressivism, it seems to me - and yes, I agree that labels are both helpful and necessary, even though they are usually not all-encompassing - is that it seems to have no anchoring principles. Conservatism is about managing change. Progressivism views any attempt to moderate the progressive agenda as an irritating obstacle on the road to utopia.

As an example, since you accurately identified areas of progressive Adventism nearly ten years ago, progressive Adventism has moved far Left, to what is really a post-Christian kind of Adventism, promoting universal salvation, doubting the resurrection and miracles, disputing the doctrine of the Trinity, and viewing with great skepticism the divine provenance of Scripture. For them the Bible is simply a polemical tool to persuade conservative Christians that the political agenda of the Left is really a Biblical mandate. They defend vegetarianism as part of an environmental agenda, while scoffing at abstinence and traditional sexual norms. The progressive impulse refuses to accept the salutary check provided by traditional authority and morality, and thus it destroys the very substance of what it feeds on.

Why don't frustrated progressive Adventists form their own Adventist Universalist Unitarian Church? Because the progressive movement qua movement can only destroy. It can't build anything that will even last one generation. Look what has happened to Adventist celebration churches. They dissolve in scandal or peter out because none of the members want to be in charge of childrens' Sabbath Schools.

In many ways I am a progressive Adventist. But I see the self-proclaimed progressive wing of Adventism way too obsessed with negativity, and I just fail to understand why anyone would want to stay connected to a Church for which they have so much contempt, unless that is the only way they can feel important and superior...or they are dependent on the Church for their livelihood. We do need progressives in the Church. But what we most decidedly do not need, at least in my opinion, is for progressivism to become a protected identity group within the Church.

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

While I may not fully agree with some of what Mr Schilt posts especially on certain issues, I would say that he's 100% spot on - regarding this one. He took the words right out of my mouth.
I like the: "They dissolve in scandal or peter out because none of the members want to be in charge of childrens' Sabbath Schools." line as well. It epitomizes progressive behavior patterns within the church - "radical but denying the power thereof"

Kevin Riley 1 week ago

What do we now call those SDAs who still fit (at least some of) the criteria from 10 years ago but don't follow the political agenda you outline above? I know many SDAs who don't fit into the traditional mould, yet they wish to hold on to many aspects of Adventism. It seems at times we are presented with dichotomies - an inerrant Scripture to be read literally or a merely human Scripture with any meaning we like, the traditional IJ or no pre-advent judgement, creation in 6 literal contiguous day about 6,000 years ago or atheistic evolution, etc - when some of us want to reject both options and argue there are other answers other than those given by the far left and the far right. Perhaps we need more labels?

Ervin Taylor 1 week ago

I'm happy to read that Nate can levitate himself intellectually above the real world of Adventism so he can then complain about the negativity of progressive Adventism. He reminds me a little of the criticisms of Luther expressed by Erasmus. Luther was dealing with the religious world of his time as it existed and Erasmus was up on his own ivory tower making high sounding pronouncements. Who had the greatest impact on the real world of Western Christianity?

Elaine Nelson 6 days ago

Does geography impact one's views, liberal or progressive? Check this out:

Click on the following and see the different religions by state and elsewhere by holding the cursor over a state.


Trevor Hammond 6 days ago

I would like to rephrase the blog title: "The Problem IS Progressive Adventists" - tongue in cheek of course. Come on why not? They take swipes at trads all the time. ☺
Mr. Corson,

'Investigative judgment. A different view of the investigative judgment, or a denial of its biblical basis.'

A different view (Could have explained that a bit)???? A denial of its biblical basis: Really then where should it be based (I don't understand how one can put his/her belief outside the Scripture and yet claim to be an Adventist Christian)? The Adventist belief on IJ stands correct both logically and Biblically.

'Ellen White. A less rigid view of the Inspiration of Ellen White, from recognizing her fallibility to perhaps even denying her prophetic gift.' Is there any other unknown or untold or newly discovered facts (by Anti EGW view sporting groups) to support this statement or just those burrowed thoughts from some sites that claim to have exposed her weaknesses (by the way does She claim to be perfect? I don’t think so, She is just like you and me a weak human but then God chose that weak lady to impart those profound truths that’s too clear and is no secret-You find it in her books and even in her lives)

'Sabbath. An emphasis on the benefits of the Sabbath, but a denial that it is the ‘seal of God’ or that Sunday keeping will ever become the mark of the beast.' If there is no seal of God then how do you view those phrases mentioning the mark of the Beast (Keeping in mind that the Devil has always tried to play God-hope it is understood). A contradiction seen here (emphasis and denial). How is that we believe every advantage we get from it and yet deny it is not of God (mark/seal)?

‘Meaning of Progressive: Moving forward; proceeding onward; advancing; evincing progress;'...

‘Adventism' (Web dictionaries give this meaning)'A member of any of several Christian denominations that believe Jesus’ Second Coming and the end of the world are near' Taking into account this generally accepted meaning of Adventism it is clear that anything that comes with the Word Adventism has to be rooted on the Bible alone.

So if we add this word 'Progressive' in front of the word ‘Adventism’ my understanding is that you rely more on the word of God than ever rather than deviating from it. Progressive Adventism if it really wants to be progressive then it has to be more vocal about SDA beliefs that are rooted in the scripture otherwise it lands up being the group of children who complain to one another ‘We sang for you but you didn’t dance’. At it’s core Seventh-day Adventism is more progressive than the group claiming to be ‘progressive Adventist’.

How?

Progress in God’s language means (I think so) accepting His word as the final authority, growing everyday in His WORD more and more (‘Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom). Whether the issue of Sabbath or YEC or IJ etc. there is has to be acknowledgment of the fact that THE LAWGIVER KNOWS BETTER OF THE LAW THAN THE RECEIVER. Coming in and giving a different perspective other than those based on Scripture just because it doesn’t fit in with our limited human wisdom and post modern life is trying to tell God ‘Hey God you look outdated with those stone tablets lets make you fit into the age of Smartphone and I pads’ (so pathetic that is). If we take into account what the columnist says so far on these few new INSIGHTS or FEATURES of so called PROGRESSIVE Adventists then I WOULD rather go by the catch phrase Mr. Hammond placed in his post earlier "The Problem IS Progressive Adventists". Stay blessed
William Noel

JIMS Seven,

Your statement presents a curious contradiction between the historic meaning of "progressive" and how it is used to discredit those who hold different views on a scriptural topic. Adventism has a long history (prior to the last 50 years) of progressive understanding of scripture through intense study of scripture. But that scholarship has over the last half-century been largely replaced by a static view of doctrines that claims validity more because it is different from other churches than a continuing growth in our understanding of scripture and God. Such growth requires that we allow people to explore and express ideas that may be different than our familiar views. It also requires that we respect those views and be willing to explore them to know their fact or falacy. Does such exploration lead to heresy? Sometimes. Do we dare reject the exploration of scripture and seeking a greater knowledge of God because it sometimes has that end? Absolutely not. Indeed, such exploration makes our faith dynamic. Rejecting such exploration of scripture and God leads to the fossilization of faith. Fossils are not just dead, they've been dead for a very long time.

God has not revealed everything about Himself to us. So, how can we be so arrogant as to claim that our understanding of Bible doctrines is complete, that there is nothing left to learn, that God does not want to reveal more of Himself to us, or that our understanding of doctrines will not grow (and possibly change) when He does? How can we be honest if we use labels like "progressive" to discredit those who are learning more about God and sharing what they are learning?

Trevor Hammond

Pastor Noel, Sir

With all due respect - you're talking chalk and cheese 'progressives' here. I'm sure you are aware of what those who profess progressivesness believe on these blogs. Homosexuality? Evolution? Death BEFORE sin? No Second Coming? Sunday Sacredness? Sabbath abrogation? I would hardly call that progress. Come on Sir. It will indeed be 'progressive' to get our heads out of the proverbial sand and take a rain check on reality. JIMS Seven is spot on. Traditional beliefs have for far too long been progressively undermined and JIMS Seven is saying "How 'bout NO". I'm with him on this one. Progressive (or regressive) Adventism is the very reason so many in the West have lost there way and left the Church. They drank too quickly from the cup of 'fornication' offered to them on a silver platter by so-called pseudo-progressives thereby making them 'drunk' with false doctrines. My advice to anyone especially a Pastor is don't stand in the path of sinners nor sit in their seat of scoffers of God's word. The trademarks of progressives are the 1] condoning of sin and 2] scoffing at plain biblical truth. JIMS Seven is right in this statement he makes: "At it's core Seventh-day Adventism is more progressive than the group claiming to be 'progressive Adventist'." ... And I agree with this...

Thanks JIMS Seven for this.

T
Yes Pastor Noel,
Mr. Hammond puts it right. I mean 'how bout NO'. Do I look arrogant in that. Fine....Please kindly bear with me in this arrogance LOL (please take into account that i don't question God's Word that says 'God's Promises (words) are new every morning'.....in fact i think of heaven as a place of vast learning as well when we get there to be with the Lamb)......Stay blessed

William Noel
5 days ago

Trevor,

Again, we have a great example of how labels confuse things and prevent discovery. I have no idea what you mean by "chalk and cheese" but that really doesn't matter.

Let me make one thing very clear: I do not condone or endorse the opinions held by those who use the cloak of scholarship to support non-Biblical teachings. Still, we have the widespread problem of labeling others as "progressives" and lumping them in with the worst such offenders just because their Bible study has led them to a somewhat different conclusion than the one we hold. Labeling them prevents us from studying and testing as scripture counsels us to do. There have been several times when my first reaction was to use a label to avoid an issue. Then when I was forced to study to refute what I thought was wrong, I instead found myself being forced to admit that the other person was correct!

If you're merely looking to reject what makes you uncomfortable or what you see as wrong, labels are an easy way to avoid the situation. What I'm talking about is the progressivism that looks deeper into what we believe so we have a better understanding of why we believe it. That is a great opportunity for spiritual growth that we risk missing if we keep using labels like "progressive" with a negative or derogatory meaning.

Trevor Hammond
6 days ago

I like you JIMS Seven, Wise man from the East 😊.
T

Ron Corson
6 days ago

JIMS and Trevor, I completely understand your perspective, the problem is that Progressive Adventists are not Traditional Adventists. But actually that is a good thing, as when we go back to the Bible we see no IJ, we see nothing at all that presents the Sabbath as the seal of God or Sunday as the mark of the Beast. In fact when we go back to the Bible we see the seal of God is the Holy Spirit not the Sabbath. You see from the Progressive Adventist viewpoint we need to fix the problems rather then enshrining the problems as if they were not even problems but sacred truth. That of course is a problem for traditional Adventists to accept so you want progressive Adventists
Seminary Student  5 days ago

Ron, I agree with your first point that the "Seal of God" according to the bible is the Holy Spirit, on your second point to say that the IJ is not in the bible, that is "debatable". I am not sure if you have read what the Adventist scholars have written on that subject or you just have closed your mind to the biblical evidence. I have read on this topic and I know both those who reject and those who accept this doctrine have good arguments, but to say that it is not in the bible, that is just not true. On the issue of "progressive adventism" I think that people who do not understand the bible claim that title of progressive. I agree we should all be progressive and allow the Holy Spirit to lead in new areas, learn new things and unlearn somethings also but we need to do this based on scripture, not on opinions. The more I read about what you write, Ervin Taylor, etc all you have are opinions. If opinions are being "progressive" give me traditional biblical adventism!

William Noel  5 days ago

Seminary Student,

Here's another example of the meanings attached to labels being inconsistent. In your last line you said that if opinions are being progressive, you wanted "traditional biblical adventism." If you use that label to describe how the early Adventist church members vigorously studied their Bibles, that is great. But if your meaning is the current typical use to defend against having to discuss anything more than the texts and opinions expressed in the fundamental beliefs, that is very different. The first is what I embrace. The second is what almost killed me spiritually. I know a number of "progressives" who are great Bible students and terrific role models for how more Adventists should be spending time in the word.

Ron Corson  5 days ago

That is interesting SS, you say the IJ is debateable, and then you say, "If opinions are being "progressive" give me traditional biblical adventism." As if traditional Adventism has no opinions. (you note I deleted biblical from traditional biblical adventism, the reason is that that is a propaganda term when people want their opinion to appear to have more authority. They just claim it is Biblical as JIMS did when he said: "The Adventist belief on IJ stands correct both logically and Biblically." Now it is certainly not only my opinion that the IJ is neither logical or Biblical, after all if it was really biblical why is it not seen in any other Christian denominations?

Elaine Nelson  5 days ago

The INTERPRETATION of the IJ from the writings of Daniel is a very unique and lonely position by Adventists. I know no other Bible scholars, either in the past, or present who have interpreted it in the same way. It is "evidence" that they alone have been able to see. The birth of that interpretation was made by a disappointed man walking through the corn field and adopted by a
few people from very humble circumstances, none of whom could read the Hebrew or had any training in biblical hermeneutics.

There are many today: JWs and Mormons who also have "unique" interpretations. Choosing to follow non-trained Bible scholars has left Adventism open to ridicule in their positions on Daniel and Revelation, with the self-identification at the last day as being only comprised of Sabbath-keepers. If there will only be Sabbath keepers in heaven, what a small and dismal place!

Seminary Student

5 days ago

Ron, you said" Now it is certainly not only my opinion that the IJ is neither logical or Biblical, after all if it was really biblical why is it not seen in any other Christian denominations?" point well taken . My question to you would be, why only a few theologians have seen this inside Adventism ? ( Cotrell , Ford ) so if we follow your logic about the majority being always right , then the IJ is in solid ground since only a few adventist scholars have rejected it. continuing with this, what about Baptism by immersion ? how come the Catholic church has not seen the biblical view ? you see the problem, if we think that " all Christians " need to see the light in something so it will be biblical. Elaine, no one is saying that only " sabbath keepers " will make it to heaven, Elaine comparing the Adventist church with the Mormons and JWs and say we don't have capable theologians is not accurate. Have you read any of Dr. Roy Gane books on the sanctuary ? if you haven't then you don't knpw what you are talking about.

Ervin Taylor

5 days ago

Seminary student argues that progressive Adventists only have "opinions." May I ask Seminary Student what he has other than his "opinions."? Do you have some special insights about "The Truth"? Would not these "special insights" be your opinion? Please explain.

Trevor Hammond

5 days ago

Mr. Corson uses what I would term 'convenient logic' to sway the vote his way as usual. He has to acknowledge (if he is a Bible believer that is), that the Bible unambiguously reveals and speaks of judgement. That is a fact. The believe or claim otherwise is to be in a 'convenient logic' state of denial. Traditional Adventism does not chase straw-men: the Investigative Judgement is a reality revealed in scripture. Progressive's will deny IJ in order to 1] avoid Ellen White, 2] Disbelieve 2300 year prophecy in Dan, 3] Excuse sinful living and worldliness, 4] discredit our historical BIBLICAL position of traditional Adventism for obvious reasons (some already mentioned), 5] usurp the authority of Christ as Judge and replace with a spurious manmade concoction of dodgy theology.

PS.- The rejection of Ellen White forms much of the basis for the renegade half baked religion they subscribe to.

Here are a few passages for starters:

Dan 8:14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed
Dan 7:9 "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

Dan 7:10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Trevor Hammond 5 days ago
typo- "To believe or claim otherwise..."

Timo Onjukka 5 days ago

IJ, perhaps as an after the fact legal review, to exonerate God's justice and ultimately, character. Every knee shall bow indicates even satan; seems the accuser of the brethren is the one whom God is most concerned with demonstrating open and transparent governance in order to show his justice.

The forgiven and grateful sinners (thats all of us) have already understood this; we who accept grace do not need an after-the-fact review of evidence and process as much as the accuser does. The traditional teaching that the books are being compared to God's "forgiveness log" has already fallen by the wayside. How many of a certain generation rejected a church that taught if you had even one little sin (hmmm, like a moment of pride, or a stolen candy, or an errant glance at some lust-provoking image) that God would reject you?

Are we not witnesses, and God is on trial? Jesus took on the sin, and became (identity, not deed or doctrine) sin itself, and went to heaven.

If he took my sin to heaven, why am I being judged a second time for that same sin at some unknown point in the future? And my initial parole revoked? Pardon withdrawn? Death? Would this not suggest Jesus died in vain, and God's character remains questioned? Will every knee bow if they do not agree that his justice (and mercy) was perfect?

I am drawn to question that interpreting these tired proof texts in this way, as "discovery" (I am not a lawyer, nor do I play one on TV, but the analogy has some merit) pits the traditional understanding of IJ directly in opposition to faith in grace. It seems somehow very wrong to ascribe to God the character that he would wait until your page in the book opens arbitrarily and summarily to say "AHA, GOT ya, SINNER" (really? He wouldn't disclose this, and would spring it on the sinner, at the end?)

This sort of God doesn't seem like one I could trust if i were (say, like Jesus ) required to go below hell and come back with some keys, or even "only" die (a natural, not even martyrs death)
for my faith.

Second point; are not those who wish to accuse the questioners and push them out of the church (ostensibly so they can keep their church "clean", a mutual admiration society, and remain somewhat intentionally ignorant, to avoid having to engage their conscience and their hearts to often challenging questions? ) is denying the nature of our rag-tag group of strugglers as a progressive movement towards an infinite truth. Exactly who decides what truths will be progressive? And to what degree? And when? Seems free moral agency has been usurped, by a faction of the church....

Surely God has arms broad enough to wrap around and gather peoples and cultures from diverse times and places, whether they agree on IJ or not. Might even be a few Adventists in the mix; will he have to segregate us to keep peace in heaven? It shocks me in my own church to hear the reactions of traditionalists castigating anyone who dares question these unquestioned (and seeming illogical) holy grails. This thread, and others like it, demonstrate a rather vituperus reaction...and failure to engage on the meta-issues.

All I know is i do not know the answers. But i know the one who does know will not disallow questions. He welcomes them, and opens himself to being judged.

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**JIMS Seven**

Hey Timo Onjukka,

‘It shocks me in my own church to hear the reactions of traditionalists castigating anyone who dares question these unquestioned (and seeming illogical) holy grails. This thread, and others like it, demonstrate a rather vituperus reaction...and failure to engage on the meta-issues’

My take: it is not Traditionalists castigating anyone questioning the issues rather it is so called the progressives (at times reformed may be) that seem to just not bear the responses from the Traditionalists (when they cite their biblical beliefs). More surprising is the fact: The reaction (blaming the Traditionalists of castigating etc) of the so called Progressives when a Traditionalists puts forth or display the unchanged view on those eternal issues ......Progressives playing judge forgetting the fact that when we judge we reveal our own fears. Truth never changes and Traditionalists don’t fear (thus don’t practice the tactics employed by the so called progressives) to take stands on their views.

Progressives seem to make much progress this way claiming ‘EUREKA! We’ve found the new light IJ is non-existent, Sabbath is useless etc’

The Traditionalists question ‘Does the Scripture support it’. The progressives pretend ‘Oh, you know. Ah! Yeah’, Traditionalists insist, ‘Prove it through the written WORD’. The Progressives pound ‘We’ve got the new light, we’ve found this insight, and how dare you question our progressive philosophy that is based on progressive (actually regressive) principles’. Traditionalists still cry, ‘Foul’, Progressives conclude, ‘Traditionalists will trail (behind) while and Progressives will pace (‘speed up’ actually speed up in regression….this is
Columnist Mr. Corson Sir,

‘…. I completely understand your perspective, the problem is that Progressive Adventists are not Traditional Adventists.’

My take: Yes indeed, with that sort of points you mention in the beginning of your column citing wikipedia (failing to answer some queries I made in my comment on your points). How can the two walk together with so much of difference. OK-OK you still claim to be an Adventist Christian because the word ‘Adventist’ is after that pseudo ‘progressive progress’ (so I get a sense that you at least believe the Bible). Why not justify your statement on the basis of Bible Alone.

‘ when we go back to the Bible we see no IJ’

My take: It is like that famous lame question ‘Show me the word TRINITY’ a pathetic assumption that there is no ‘Trinity’ because there is no such particular word there in the Bible.

Another commentator Mr. Hammond has given a list of verses to support certain traditional beliefs and I will not ask you to agree with each of those as you believe something else but I humbly would just ask you to just explain to me Revelation 22:12 from ‘progressive’ (your) point of view as to how that reward would be given if there is no investigation prior to or before that (Please be practical as to how you buy the groceries or vegetables in the market: Just pack all the potatoes regardless of their condition or chose the best ones for your kitchen after careful inspection etc). You should be knowing this fact very well that the Traditionalist with conviction on IJ can write volumes of things on IJ not just because they were taught that way but because there are many infallible truths that display the truth of IJ in the Bible here and there. You didn’t chose to write this sentence without studying the WORD, but I am afraid that even after studying the WORD you didn’t get the idea of IJ in the Bible then I will have to really doubt that you ever grasped in detail the working style of God in relation to His Judgment done in love.

‘we see nothing at all that presents the Sabbath as the seal of God or Sunday as the mark of the Beast. In fact when we go back to the Bible we see the seal of God is the Holy Spirit not the Sabbath.’

Presenting these lines have been always the favorite sayings of those groups that are unwilling to accept the Sabbath. Anyone claiming to be a SDA (I believe) will be sporting this belief of Sabbath as the seal of God if for nothing atleast to keep the respect of the name SDA. Me thinks you are trying to not to get a difference between ‘A SEVENTH DAY’ and ‘THE SEVENTH DAY’. Mostly when we talk about Sunday as the mark of the beast people think it’s just a blind attack on RC, how poor is that assumption. God has His people in different places and times. The issue is above RC and SDA Church rather the issue is much bigger and serious than that. At least up till this
If Sunday is not to be considered as the Mark of the Beast then I think there is a serious problem with your perception of the Christian Church history. (By the way: Can you please explain as to what is the MoB other than Sunday? Is it Monday or is it the limousine ridden by Mr. Obama or is it some Microchip? And please would you mind being little more specific as to where the MoB will be placed as per your new progressive light?) You know in these issues the Traditionalists can come very strongly biblically but I am simply not putting in those thoughts because you still haven’t answered my concerns on those three points that I asked you. You just make a statement but fail to prove it scripturally. It’s like the other day a respected commentator made a sandy claim of ‘Time prophecies in Daniel’ being sandy foundation of Bible’s divine origin but failed to answer the how and why thing. Good day.

Ron Corson
5 days ago

JIMS, I must have missed the questions your referred to, I would expect that they would have been answered if you read the original article which is linked above. I am not going to derail the subject or even respond to the error of pretending that any judgement is the same as the investigative judgement. The IJ is not the subject of this column. It is sad however to see the wide range of disparaging remarks used about Progressive Adventists which have nothing to do with Progressive Adventist beliefs. The assumption that Progressive Adventisism is the same as Liberal Christianity and the people like Bishop Spong. but again if you had read the original article you would understand they are not the same thing.

The problem is that if you are going to define something you must define it in the way that those who hold to a particular label define it. Not by how those opposed to the label define it. After all Adventism for much of its existence was defined by many religious people as a cult. Does that make it a cult? No and neither do the disparaging comments of people like Trevor make his statements any more accurate of Progressive Adventism then those folks who defined Adventism as a cult.

Elaine Nelson
4 days ago

Does the new book by J. David Newman being advertised: An Adventist Search for Direction suggest that after more than 150 years it still has not determined what the search is for and where it is going, or what direction it should take?

From its beginning it has taken many twists and turns: backtracking; changing original concepts; and eliminating or adding new doctrines. This implies that it has no determined direction but is still searching.

Trevor Hammond
4 days ago

RE Mr. Corson's line: "No and neither do the disparaging comments of people like Trevor make his statements any more accurate of Progressive Adventism then those folks who defined Adventism as a cult."
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Well, well, this is odd. Is there another type of Progressive that Mr. Corson is referring to who do not subscribe to the 'disparaging' stuff he falsely accuses me of mentioning. I just stated plainly what in my opinion so-called progressives subscribe to. What I have stated is factual. Do I need to repeat the homosexual compromise, Sabbath breaking, Ellen White bashing, Evolution, etc...? Those who call SDA's a Cult are simply wrong and do it just because we don't practice the popular compromised unbiblical kind of Christianity they subscribe to. These are governed by the secular (and religious) CULTure of the day which in turn results in a form of Cultural Compromised Christianity made possible by some twisted false manmade doctrines to legitimize it. The Progressives within Adventism, even though they are a sub-culture within Adventism itself, DO JUST WHAT THE FOLKS WHO DEFINE ADVENTISTS AS A CULT DO, except of course, Progressives do it from within the Church. This Website, Spectrum and some others, all do exactly what those that accuse us as cults do. In their enthusiasm to win their flesh and blood war, they are destroying the faith of many, even at the expense of their own children, within the Seventh-day Adventist church, and then blame Traditional Adventism for the mess. How disparaging is that?

T

Ron Corson

Trevor wrote:
"The trademarks of progressives are the 1] condoning of sin and 2] scoffing at plain biblical truth."

No that is not disparaging, I mean you see that all over with Progressive Adventists. Why it is hard to find a progressive Adventist that does not say go ahead and kill your neighbor and cheat a friend, after all we condone sin. Maybe the biggest problem is what people such as Trevor thing are facts. Which is why I have always said we need critical thinking skills, if not then facts are meaningless and opinions can be all powerful.

William Noel

So, what does all this argument about labels, particular doctrines and if a person really is or is not an Adventist have to do with actually bringing people into the Kingdom of God? Some of the comments in this string present specific beliefs about certain doctrines as a litmus test to measure whether or not a person is a "real" Adventist. Get over it, guys! Such arguments remind me of a line from the old Southern Gospel song that says, "You're so heavenly minded you ain't no earthly good!"

Trevor Hammond

Pastor Noel and Mr. Corson make their views known freely on these blogs and say whatever they want - often with snide remarks without fear of banishment or censureship. They are allowed to do so because they are from a certain camp. I have had the editor delete my post which I responded to on another blog. So it seems progressives aren't ALL that open to robust
discuss as they claim and seek to stifle the thoughts and views of those that rub them the
wrong way.

Mr Corson refers to my comment that says "progressives condone sin" and then mentions that
in this remark I imply "kill your neighbor and cheat a friend". True critical thinking doesn't
use false assumptions to twist what someone says to and try and pass it off as a logical
conclusion. I mentioned "homosexual compromise, Sabbath breaking, Ellen White bashing,
Evolution, etc...?" All these are generally condoned in progressive circles. Now that's a fact.

William Noel
3 days ago

Trevor,

I'm not a pastor, just an Adventist who has been redeemed from the traditionalism that
enslaves so many to arguments defending particular doctrines and painting people who hold
different opinions with broad brush strokes of condemnation. I praise God that He has
given me a love for others that enables me to be friends with others regardless of their
opinion about particular doctrines and lead them into an empowered relationship with the
Holy Spirit. I'm in the business of winning souls and encouraging spiritual growth. I'm
seeing God bless my ministry where the evidence is changed lives. How many people have
the arguments expressed by most of the writers in this message string brought into the
Kingdom of God?

Ella M.
3 days ago

William Noel: Why did you consider yourself to be "enslaved?" No one forced you to
be inflexible. One needs to own up to their responsibility for the past, I believe. But
praise God, you have been converted into serving and loving people into the Kingdom.

William Noel
2 days ago

Ella,

I was enslaved because I was surrounded by traditionalism that was unbending and
where church leaders taught that adherence to those practices was both the way to find
God and the way to serve Him. My liberation came through discovering that those
teachings and practices used the name of God but had none of the power of God. In
fact, many of them were barriers between my and God that prevented having the
intimate relationship that I wanted. The old ways died a lingering and difficult death.
But over time I discovered both the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The
transformation He has made in my life has enabled me to leave those old chains behind
and to live in His power from day to day. Today I have a ministry that is growing the
church, bringing people closer to God and giving me purpose that I did not have
before.
It appears to me that the vast majority of American SDA’s are more on the progressive side. They do not bash EGW but neither do they feel guilty about using vinegar, spices, Starbucks or green tea, forbidden by EGW. They watch movies and TV in spite of EGW’s negative comments of fiction, theater and sports. The 1844 investigative judgment has no effect on their daily lives most rarely think about it or consider it when purchasing property, furnishings or planning a vacation. Most SDA young men and women follow the same modern (progressive) dress styles as their peers.

Most SDA’s ascent to the Testimonies, but few have read them or desire to. They affirm family and marriage but have the same divorce rate as non-SDA’s and the same emotional and family problems. They believe in the soon coming of Jesus but the same power struggles and internal conflicts consistently rock Advent churches. If their job depended upon occasional Sabbath work, many would compromise for the sake of family and mortgage; most medical workers see no conflict, and few would lose membership over Sabbath conflicts.

Prayer meetings are not well attended in 95% of SDA churches. In most churches, there is very little serious Bible Study; Sabbath School attendance represents about a quart of membership. Regular attendance of nearly every SDA church is generally one-half, or less, of total membership. Most SDA churches sit empty during the week and if they should close for a year, few in the community would notice or care. This tells me that there is a large percentage mostly lifestyle progressive SDA’s.

Progressives and conservatives for the most part are found in theological positions, lifestyle and family problems are often very similar. Conservatives do not welcome anyone who questions the authority of the Bible, creation, end time events or EGW; they view them as the enemies of truth, which is not true. To be a wholesome functioning church we need conservatives and liberals, Spanish, English, German, French, and African, with all their different cultures and values, in order for love to be demonstrated and balanced to be achieved. When Puritans took over England, the king was beheaded.

As a rule when conservatives gain the upper hand, they become very judgmental and exacting. Calvin required church attendance and was intolerant toward opposition; few of us would be comfortable in Calvin’s Geneva or the Reign of Terror of France.

Progressives need conservatives to keep them focused on the basics of faith. Jesus called zealots, staunch supporters of Jewish nationalism, and Matthew who represented the liberal element, giving us a picture of the true church. Paul represented the liberal wing of Judaism, minimizing circumcision, and welcoming unclean Gentile into full fellowship on faith alone. Whereas James represented the conservative wing of believers with emphasis on the law. I ask what would the church look like today should James have expelled Paul from fellowship?
William Noel

Frank,

How is Calvin's intolerance any different than the intolerance being expressed today in the use of labels to typify, classify and condemn those who are seen as different because they have a different view on a particular topic? Was not Jesus the ultimate "progressive" because his teachings were in such contrast to the traditional views held by the church leaders of the day?

The items you list as measures of declining spirituality should be taken seriously, but the causes and remedies may surprise you. The root cause for all those negative measures is because of the cavernous absence of the Holy Spirit in most congregations. Without that power what we hear most is the echo of our own voices as we seek ways to prove that we are empowered by God and doing His work when, in fact, we are not. The cure is simple: discovering the guidance of the Holy Spirit and following so we can experience the reformation and renewal that He brings.

Ella M.

There is a lot of stereotyping here as usual, and it is hard to discuss with people who hold them. It would seem any remark could cause one to be labeled. I won't be labeled--I am conservative on some points and progressive on others. I am inclusive yet hold biblical beliefs about salvation through Christ alone. I believe the Bible to be inspired but not dictated.

I reject this wholesale labeling of persons. And I would suggest we are all a mixture. If not, we need to take long look at our belief system.

Elaine Nelson

The church is dominated much more by specific, even detailed doctrine than the Holy Spirit which leads on into truth, not in uniformity of such details. It is much easier to determine if such doctrines are observed externally, but who can discern the Holy Spirit, and base it on certain behaviors? If the Holy Spirit leads in new directions, as it certainly did at Pentecost, who should dare question?

William Noel

Elaine,

There is a widespread fear of the Holy Spirit in the church because people have such false concepts about what He will or will not do when He comes, how we will know when He has come, etc. Our biggest problem is that we're looking for a "Latter Rain" outpouring of power to come on a dramatic day off in the indefinite future when we're not using the power He has already given to those who believe. How can we expect God to give us such great power when we don't trust Him enough to use the power He has already given to us? The Bible is so clear and definite in statements on this topic that we can know who is a believer or not simply by seeing whether or not they are empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit.
Scripture promises that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. This is one of the areas I enjoy the most about the Holy Spirit because He gives such clarity of understanding on topics. Since I discovered the Holy Spirit, I have come to understand many things much more clearly than before. Probably the biggest thing I have learned is that there is so much God wants to teach us that He has not yet revealed that anyone who claims that their understanding of a doctrine is a liar. More than that, God is not in anyone who attempts to judge whether or not a person is a believer because of how they feel about particular doctrines. The spirit of condemnation comes from Satan while God is in the redemption business.

The greatest fear about the Holy Spirit is that, when He comes, churches will be divided and false doctrines will abound. Anyone who claims this simply hasn't studied about the Holy Spirit in scripture and is desperately needful of meeting the Holy Spirit. My testimony is that the Holy Spirit is already here and, when He comes, the opposite happens. Divisions are healed, false doctrines are exposed and people come closer to both each other and Him. People quit labeling each other, start uplifting each other and growing in faith and love. It is truly a beautiful experience that I wish more could have!

Seminary Student
2 days ago

The Holy Spirit inspired the men who wrote the bible, so the holy spirit always leads people back to scripture. The problem that people like Elaine would suggest that the Holy Spirit leads in different direction than the bible. Trying to go back to the original topic about "progressive Adventism' I don't think it is an option. It so called progressives get their way, all doctrines would disaappear since for people like Ron, Elaine and Ervin, they see these doctrines as something that divides us with other Christians and we "need to be the same". The work of the reformation was to get people back to scripture, So true adventists see themselves as heirs of the reformation and continue to find those truths who had been forgotten or denied by tradition, "progressives" don't have a high view of scripture therefore, whatever they know will never prosper in Adventism.

Seminary Student
2 days ago

William Noel, you said" that Jesus was the ultimate progressive" I agree with that however to compare Jesus to so called "progressives" here is" sacrilegious ". I would like to study with Ron, Ervin and Elaine or people who think like them with one condition, that we give a high view of scripture that is something that they will not agree. You see Jesus was progressive based on scripture remember how much he quoted scripture? So progressives ignore what the bible said on things they disagree, things such as literal 6 days creation, Investigative Judgment, Sababath, second coming etc. You see the bible spends a great deal of time on this but they will just ignore those texts dealing with that.

William Noel
1 day ago

Seminary Student,
Labels like "progressive" get used with such broad, inconsistent and varied meanings that offense and confusion are the only predictable results. Merely pinning a label on someone allows you to accuse from a distance without having to deal with the issue they raise. Labels create division when God wants us to be healing the wounds that separate believers. The sooner you stop using them, the sooner you will discover effectiveness in ministry.

**Seminary Student**

I would like to know how "progressives" can claim to be Christians and ignore the teachings of Christ? doctrines such as the second coming that are mention so many times, how come they don't consider those important issues? I think as a young Dad, how difficult it would be for be not to take the bible seriously and teach my children to do the same. How can I raise good children if I tell them that stealing is wrong but sabbath is not that important. And if stealing is wrong, on the basis of what? If I don't take the bible seriously. If I am teaching my child about the love of God but if I don't believe in the biblical data of creation how can I tell him/her that the wages of sin is death, if death existed before Adam and Eve, and then death is not the result of sin.????

**William Noel**

Sernary Student,

Let's turn the question around. Using labels creates division, confusion and dissension in the church. That's the work of Satan. So, how can you call yourself a Christian if you are defending the use of labels like "progressive" to make broad accusations and question whether or not a person is an Adventist?

**Ervin Taylor**

I see Seminary Student has returned. Earlier, he argued that progressive Adventists only have "opinions." May I ask Seminary Student what he has other than his "opinions"? Do you have some special insights about "The Truth"? Would not these "special insights" be your opinion? Please explain.

**Ron Corson**

SS wrote:
"I would like to study with Ron, Ervin and Elaine or people who think like them with one condition, that we give a high view of scripture that is something that they will not agree. You see Jesus was progressive based on scripture remember how much he quoted scripture? So progressives ignore what the bible said on things they disagree"

Indeed Jesus quoted Scripture but not quite the way you think SS. He did not quote it with the high view you are apparently thinking of. For example:
John 10:33-36
33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.
34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?
35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;
36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?
(KJV)

Now the quote from the Psalms was:
"Ps 82:4-8
4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.
7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.
(KJV)

So did He shut them down by quoting the context and meaning of the original or did He use a section for His particular purpose. In other words did He submit to the scriptures or use the scriptures. You can submit by taken the wooden literal meaning or ascribing the meaning to a tradition. Or you can use the scriptures as tools in learning and teaching. There is a big difference and which one do you think would be called a high view of scriptures in Adventism today?

Ervin . I don't believe that there is an individual who has all the truth and I also believe that there is not one individual who has it all wrong . My big challenge is how can we learn from each other , how can we find a common ground .I feel that I am in the middle , on the one side I see " historics Adventists " like Standish , spear etc to be way off and on the other extreme I find progressives .How can we keep our church together without splitting ? you see historics want to build a wall , claiming to have all the truth  and progressives claim we are just like the rest of churches . If we have all the truth are Historics claim , we should be in heaven already and if progressives get their way , then we just erase the name Adventis from our churches and disappear . In my opinion we have see scripture as the word of God , and knowing that there are things we don't understand  but build on the things we understand . Ron , you gave a good example , the difference between us and JEsus is that he is God and he said that scriptures testify about him , he is the center of scripture . We can not do the same , we need to see the texts and compare and humbly accept what God want to tell us .
SS. that is fine we can wait for God to tell us, but we need to get away from this idea of us telling others what God wants to tell us just because we have a tradition that we think is true. As for much of the rest of what you wrote, such as Progressives want to erase the name Adventist and disappear. That seems to simply be an ill informed opinion you have. We have to all get away from those kind of ill informed opinions and think a bit and use some evidence and reason. You may think God just wants us to humbly accept but I think he wants us to think and reason and appreciate Him for what He is rather then simply submit to Him. I think we have Islam for those who just want to submit.

Stephen Foster

Ron,

From whence do get the idea that Christianity is not ultimately about submission? How can you love God with all that you have, and your neighbor as yourself, without willingly submitting yourself to God?

Is this a key to the differences between “progressive” Adventists and other Adventists? Is it (partially) a question of who is willing to believe that biblical Christianity requires submission; as opposed to what we “think?”

Ron Corson

John 15:15
15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (NIV)

Is there really any reason to be friends or to have made known God to us if it is all about submission.

Heb 10:22
22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (NIV)

Why be cleansed of a guilty conscience if it is all about submission? What does our conscience have to do with anything if it is submission that is desired.

Rom 13:8
8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who
loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. (NIV)

Does submission lead you to love? To love man or God?

It may well be the bedrock difference between traditional Adventism and Progressive Adventism. You have made a good point. It does make me sad for traditional Adventists however.

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**Stephen Foster**

1 day ago

Your question: Is there really any reason to be friends or to have made known God to us if it is all about submission?

My answer: Yes; because the human heart is evil, the human will must be surrendered in order for the Spirit of God to lead it.

Your question: Why be cleansed of a guilty conscience if it is all about submission? What does our conscience have to do with anything if it is submission that is desired.

My answer: Because the human heart is evil, it is only possible to “draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience…”after having surrendered our evil hearts and wills to His Spirit, by faith in the blood with which our impure hearts have been cleansed.

Your questions: Does submission lead you to love? To love man or God?

My answer: Yes. Because the human heart is evil (Jeremiah 17:9), it is only by submission of the will to the Holy Spirit is it possible to love either man or a God we have not seen.

Allow me to recommend that you “try these on.”

Psalm 81: 8-16

Romans 10:3

James 4:7

1 Peter 5: 5-7

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**Ron Corson**

1 day ago

Well Stephen with those answers, them being your heart is evil, you have just stated that you can not be in submission, in fact you can't even want to be in submission. which pretty much means that your proclamation of submission is phony. Much like that of the pharisees.

An interesting understanding of traditional adventism it appears.
Stephen Foster

No, my friend, this has nothing to do with Adventism per se; historical or otherwise. This has to do with Christianity.

Let me get this straight, in the progressive Christian world, the human heart in not evil? The mind (heart) does not need to be transformed? The will does not need to be surrendered to God?

How would you, as a progressive, explain/reconcile Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 10:3, and James 4:7?

Ron Corson

I don't think you can get anything straight with your attitude, I never said humans hearts aren't evil, only that God works with our reason and with reason we appreciate God and find Him worthy of worship and then worthy of doing what God would like us to do. Apparently that is not to your liking so you want to distort it into something absurd.

Stephen Foster

OK, so you actually agreed with me when I answered you that the human heart is evil. Somehow I interpreted your response (“Well Stephen with those answers, them being your heart is evil, you have just stated that you can not be in submission, in fact you can't even want to be in submission. which pretty much means that your proclamation of submission is phony. Much like that of the Pharisees”) as disagreement with “the human heart is evil and must be surrendered" approach.

Never mind what I say about submission; because you apparently agree with what I have said, but disagree with me. Let’s just deal with the texts that I’ve cited. God appeals to our reason to agree with Him that we are inherently wicked, and can do nothing without Him, and therefore need to submit to Him, His will, and His way. How’s that?

Now, is that an historical Adventist position; or have we possibly found common ground?

Nathan Schilt

Ron and Stephen - I think each of you is coming at this from a different perspective. Fundamentally, you seem, correctly in my opinion, to share a dim view of human nature. But you have different perspectives on the relative importance of reason, revelation, tradition and experience in dealing with the problem of evil.

You have each demonstrated, with your dueling proof-texts, that the Bible can be putty in our hands. The challenge posed by Scripture is whether we are putty in God's hands. If we are putty in God's hands (submitted hearts and minds), the application of reason and intellect to the Bible has
transformative power. If, however, we do not approach Scripture with humble, submitted hearts, the application of reason and intellect will turn the Bible into a weapon of human pride and ambition. The same Jesus who said, "Everything that I have learned from my Father, I have made known to you," also said, when asked to show His disciples the way, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." No road map - no set of abstract principles - just Jesus.

Growth and progress in the Christian life occurs as a byproduct of hearts and minds that abide in Christ. We need not choose between submitted hearts and keen minds. We just have to keep them in the right order.
It seems to me as the evidence for an old earth piles up and the debate heats up, there is an increasing absence
of common sense and honesty from some participants. There is a massive and growing amount of evidence for
an old earth, old life and an evolutionary process. In spite of this Young Earth Creationists (YEC) continue to
defend their position. It seems to me anyone who has studied these data with an open mind should seriously
question a 6000 year-old-earth, a special creation, and a global flood.

I am a Christian, but to me this evidence is beyond dispute. I find it frustrating and embarrassing when fellow
Christians invoke fanciful, bizarre or outrageous explanations of geology, fossils and other data to defend their
position.

For example, one YEC explanation for the Ice Age suggests that at some point in the flood, water erupted at
supersonic speeds from a massive split around the planet. Starting below ground level it was able to rise above
the atmosphere, freeze, and come down as hail, creating an instant Ice Age! Really?

I invite YEC to be confronted by their own authority – the Bible.

In Genesis the Bible describes a sequence of events immediately after Noah and through to Abraham. From it
we get a quite detailed description of the land in the region of Israel, Sinai, and Egypt. We can compare this
description with those very places today. When we do this we discover there is basically no difference
geologically between the land that Noah and Abraham walked on, to that of today. Israel, the Sinai Peninsula
and Egypt today are essentially unchanged. There may be more desert and less water, as time has passed, but
the mountains, the rivers, the oceans and the shores are the same. What does this mean?

The unchanged landscapes of Israel, the Sinai Peninsula, and the deserts of Egypt define beyond dispute
where in the geologic column of Noah's flood supposedly took place. This is at the very top. There are
land forms and geologic features, on and under the surface of the land, which by their very nature must
predate the Noah period.

Above the current ocean levels, in the deserts, and on the Sinai Peninsula, there are large sections of fossilized
corals, and fossilized coral reefs. These were all there for Noah, Abraham, and Moses to kick their toes on.
Corals do not grow in the desert, and yet they are there today, and it has been dry, at least since Noah built his
ark.

How do we explain this? The size corals, which are still evident in these places, could never have grown
during a 12 month flood, even in idealized conditions.

The only possible explanation is they must exist from an ocean prior to Noah's time. These corals overlay vast
depths of the geologic column. There are up to 8 kilometers of depositional material, oil, and the recent
discovery by Israel of the massive Leviathan Gas reserve, as proof in point. All these are deeper than corals in
the deserts where Abraham walked.

Then there are the two massive salt domes in the Rift Valley, under the Dead Sea. The Mt Sodom and Lisan
Diapirs, with some 500 cubic kilometers of salt being forced up from the depths. The Mt Sodom Diapir stretches from kilometers below surface and rises some 200 plus meters above the Dead Sea level. The Lisan Diapir's top remains over 100 meters below surface, stretching up from a depth of 7 kilometers.

These domes are gigantic, multi kilometer long, bubble like shapes rising ever so slowly to the surface, cutting through the thousands of meters of deposited material overlaying them.

YEC Flood proponents believe the Rift Valley opened up in the last several months of the flood, not at the beginning.

Surely there is no known, nor rationally imaginable scenario, whereby one can explain the emplacement of 500 km$^3$ of highly soluble salt, in a freshly opened rift, underneath 7000 meters of depositional sedimentary material during the last few months of the flood after the waters had receded!

I have not yet even mentioned the significant chalk beds in Israel. If there was a scenario to explain these salt domes it also must explain the formation of the chalk beds within the same time frame. This is even more difficult!

I suggest unless we are willing to invent absurdities to defend God and Noah's story, it is much simpler, and more respectful of people's intelligence, to accept that the Rift Valley, and the salt domes predate Noah, and there has not been a significant flood event to disturb them since the salt was deposited.

There are many other fossil corals, reefs, salt domes and occurrences of the geologic column around the world, all dictating against a global flood. This is different in that there can be no argument as to their position in the column relative to the flood story. The Bible describes the land. Whatever Noah's flood was, it had nothing to do with the placement of the geologic column which lies underneath these features. The Biblical description and unchanged nature of the land proves this.

What about the creation week and a 6000 year old earth? Frankly, it is impossible to fit into even a casual observation of the geologic data. The thousands of meters of geologic column below Abraham's feet, the eons of time it suggests have passed, and the development of life form complexity from bottom to top, are the lynch pin which collapses the entire young earth and special creation story.

We Christians need to accept this and put our efforts into understanding God and a Gospel in relation to an old earth and old life framework. That is not easy, but perhaps only then can real dialogue take place.

**Ervin Taylor**

Mr. Barrett contributes another voice of common sense and rationality to this overheated topic within the Adventist tradition. One conclusion from the decades of debate inside our little religious subculture on this subject is that the problem is primarily a theological and not a scientific one. From a calm rational perspective, the scientific evidence for deep time is overwhelming. Classical Adventism has positioned itself in a theological box and does not see any way out. A number of our theologians have offered a way out, but institutional objections have only delayed the inevitable. It will take generations of slow adjustments as certain individuals and groups die out and others of larger vision come to take their place.
Bryan Bissell

A couple comments:
1) We have ~100 methods pointing to a young age for earth and life and ~40 methods pointing to an old age. Does 40 beat 100 or 100 beat 40? Science is supposed to follow the weight of evidence and creation science has it in spades in most areas and easily beats universal common descent. But, the evolution and atheist establishments consistently refuse to follow the weight of evidence. They follow naturalism assertions instead and apriori rule out and actively hide and suppress much evidence that points to God and Bible truth being accurate. This violates even Darwin's own principle which I agree with:
"A fair result can be obtained only by fully stating and balancing the facts and arguments on both sides of each question" Charles Darwin, 1859, Introduction to Origin of Species, p. 2

Another fact is that even many of the 40 methods pointing to an old earth have recently been debunked by by many cases of soft tissue that have been found in dinosaurs. Even evolutionists agree that all science that we know shows that soft tissue can at max by 15-100,000 years old. So, that means that many of the old age methods can not possibly be accurate. But, of course evolutionists now are choosing to discard science and prop up universal common descent as they have many times in the past and trying to say that there must be a way that soft tissue can last 60+ million years.

See videos 1-5 here..and the notes as well.
http://www.youtube.com/user/TruthIsLife7#g/c/648C2EAD205F397C

See these links:
a) A summary of 100+ methods for laymen pointing to a young age for
http://creation.com/age-of-the-earth

b) Techniques That Argue for an Old Earth Are Either Illogical or Based on Unreasonable Assumptions.
http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/AstroPhysicalSciences24.html#wp3303729

c) Most Scientific Dating Techniques Indicate That the Earth, Solar System, and Universe Are Young.
http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/AstroPhysicalSciences33.html#wp2534183

d) Many technical papers on dating methods that support a young earth are here (and I have other sites as well, but most of the scientists here have degrees from secular universities and do quite good work):
http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers/topic/radiometric-dating

e) Scientists on dating methods pointing to a young earth.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKbaHoINReA&feature=related

3) On the coral issue, see video 6 in this link.
http://www.youtube.com/user/TruthIsLife7#g/c/648C2EAD205F397C

4) On the evidence for a global flood, this is a very impressive new seminar on the vast evidence that exists for a global flood by respected German geologist:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-BaMAt4dnE (Dr. Silvestru, Geology and Deep Time)
Start at 36:00. From ~54:00 there's a very good section on catastrophic plate tectonics.
Many more videos of evidence are here:
http://www.youtube.com/user/TruthIsLife7#g/c/14FDE276E5C97E24  (videos 2-9 are by Dr. Wise with a Ph.D. in geology from Harvard. He deal with plant order in the fossils, one of the supposedly best evidences for universal common descent, showing how creation science is better even here).

3) Consistently when the Bible and conventional historical or scientific wisdom have conflicted, the Bible has been right. Whether it's the existence of Hittites, David, the Israelites in Egypt, spontaneous generation vs. biogenesis, steady state vs. a beginning and stretching of the universe, God's statements have proven trustworthy and unrivaled in accuracy. Sometimes it takes time for establishments to realize their pseudoscience for what it is...in the case of spontaneous generation it took 1500+ years. But, it consistently happens. It IS important to question BOTH the scientific and theological establishments since both have been and can be wrong. But, there's no rational reason to give up trust in what God has said (not everything in the Bible is what God has said tho) which has unrivaled accuracy far better than any scientific establishment over 1000s of years for man's current opinion. People who have chosen to follow man's wisdom instead of God's clear principles (such as bleeding patients as the Greeks taught instead of respecting the Bible's claim that "Life is in the blood") have caused untold misery and even much death. It's just not smart or rational.

This video summarizes Dr. Kuhn's Seminal work "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" which shows that all over science, theories may have anomalies, due to human fallibility and lack of knowledge, etc...but scientists don't give up the theory because of that. Same goes for creation science and Bible claims. The weight of evidence is important...and the Bible as well as creation science has that in spades (I have ~200 videos in playlists on my youtube channel, www.youtube.com/user/truthislife7, showing this. See the creation playlists.) The problems are due to lack of human knowledge about science, not the Bible's being mistaken. This is a good intro video to Kuhn's view of science that are critical to understand. The Big Bang for example has a serious horizon problem among others, yet scientists don't abandon it (I think it has good evidence too..and if true is a great support for the existence of God).
Fundamentals of Scientific Understanding
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSDvkDaMso (start ~1:25)

That's only a small bit of evidence. I'm working on a book on all sorts of issues between creationist and evolutionists, Christians and atheists..trying to get it publishable this year hopefully.

Bryan

Bryan Bissell
1 week ago

Make sure you watch the flood video by Dr. Silvestru above..that's a VERY solid one. It's part of a recent very good creation superconference here:

cb25
1 week ago

Brian, your comments are nothing more than an attempt to create links and feed readers into the creationist sites.
Man up and provide direct comment on the blog points.

I invite you to give me a summary argument as to why the salt domes and corals in the regions mentioned in my blog do not demonstrate that the flood, if it happened, must have been at the very top of the geologic column.

If these corals and domes dictate where the flood must be placed if it did occur, then all the "information" (I'm trying to be polite) on the sites you mention is pointless.

Standing by for your reasons. For a budding author that should not be too much:)

Chris Barrett (cb25)

Bryan Bissell

With all due respect Chris, have you read the posting guidelines? They tell us to try to limit posts to 3 paragraphs. I could post literally 100s of pages of proof in just minutes on some topics with absolutely no problem at all, many that I have personally written. If you are not willing to go and watch professional presentations of evidence which relate directly to the things you claimed, showing how science supports the Bible extremely strongly, then you aren't really interested in the Bible or science when they conflict with the beliefs you've built up.

Here's one article for example on the massive salt formations and with time I can find others.

I've personally read and watched literally 1000s of hours of atheist and evolution arguments (most recently "Your Inner Fish"). Then I've compared them to the evidence I've personally read and some that I've seen on both sides as well as from top notch creationists like "Dr. Jonathan Sarfati" in his book "The Greatest Hoax of All" which just destroys Dawkins arguments for Darwinism.

I was responding first of all to your claim that the evidence for an old earth is mounting up. That is simply not true and I listed reasons why that would fit in the 3 paragraph limit. If it's OK to ignore that limit, I can post many pages with detailed references instantly. But, it's not possible for any person to be an expert in all areas and I for sure am not...and don't be so naive as to demand that of me or anyone. I have arguments that I myself have read and developed about aspects of coral. But, Dr. Robert Carter has his Ph.D. in that area and has much better developed arguments than I do. So, you have a duty to go and watch him if you have any real interest in science and the Bible.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulSD973a9hg

If you really care about the Bible and science, you need to take the time to look at the evidence on both sides as even Darwin said was essential. I know that you haven't to any significant extent because of a number of things you've said. You may have investigated some, but it was either very superficial or one sides or at best you had no idea of the right places to look. I've now provided you with several of the right places to look that deal exactly with your major topic of concern. If you refuse to go and check them, you're doing a disservice to yourself, science and the Bible.

I have recently had atheists make the same kind of demand as you have, that I'm supposed to an
expert on every possible field (and then when I go and do a ton of reading and bring back the evidence, they just dismiss it all, saying I don't have a Ph.D. in the right area). That's not a rational tactic or demand from anyone, since again:
A) NO one can be an expert on every topic and
B) I'm going through multiple personal crises in my personal life with dishonest people causing great trauma to my family and
C) I spend most of my time with atheists helping them to come to faith in the Bible and our Creator since there is nothing more important.

While I commend you for being willing to question theology as should be done, you did not dig very deeply into the evidence and you are using a couple anomalies to discount an entire theory...that is a profound misunderstanding of how science works. If that technique were used by real scientists, none of them would believe in the Big Bang theory because of the horizon problem for example. To discount 100s and 1000s of lines of evidence by just one is a profoundly unscientific approach. I strongly recommend you watch the link on Kuhn above for a primer into the philosophy of science. It is the weight of evidence that matters FAR INFINITELY more than any anomaly, although anomalies can have an impact too.

I'm not at home now, but when I get home, I can post a couple longer referenced articles I've written on this topic if needed.

God bless,
Bryan

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cb25 1 week ago

No problem Brian. I have read the guidelines, and I get your drift. I suggest you far exceeded the guidelines in telling me why you could not set out a response. May I also point out you probably took up more space saying so than would be needed for a concise response to my points!)

I am checking some links you gave. None are new.

Cheers

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cb25 1 week ago

Ok Brian, a little feedback on one of the vids. Corals.

* All possible explanations for similar corals are tentative theories...none demonstrable.
* He ends up admitting the issue of corals is "Giant enigma of coral reefs".
* He has no answer for Enewetok Atol. The possible explanation he gives is highly improbable, and not fitting all data of the reef formation.
* Asked when the ice age began and ended he seems to suggest the ice peaked about the time of the tower of babel, 5 generations from the flood, and then began to decline. Answering that question he speaks very fast and with lots of mistakes because he is on thin ice and he knows it....
This is his most obvious mistake. Earlier he suggests the waters took a long time to drain away from the continents and this allowed corals to grow where there is now land. The ice age then continued to LOWER sea levels. Presumably reaching their lowest point around the tower of babel.

The problem here is we know from Genesis that Ur was occupied at least within just a few generations from the flood. (See my comment further down) so according to his theory, sea levels in Ur must have FALLEN to the level of Ur very soon after the flood.

There are 3 Coral terraces on the sinai peninsula reaching some 20 meters above sea level. Each suggesting a sea level which was stable for a significant amount of time. His theory leaves just a few generations for the sea levels to have formed these terraces and then fallen some 20 meters, allowing Ur to be inhabited. All this long before the tower of babel. Would anyone suggest this could occur in such a short time? Hardly.

The whole lecture was as he said "made up", and theories clutching at straws to explain the "great enigma of coral reefs". It only ads weight to my arguments in the blog above.

Chris Barrett

cb25 1 week ago

btw Bryan, sorry I've been spelling your name wrong. And I do hope things improve for your family...

Cheers

Bryan Bissell 1 week ago

Chris,

Been very busy, so sorry for late response, and thanks for the wishes on family...and I hope things are going well for you as well no matter how much we disagree. I try to assume that people are sincere and really interested in facts and I want to emphasize that I think you are even though the way you evaluate evidence is extremely problematic both scientifically and theologically. But, your claim that none of the links I listed are new (when several are to a conference and presentations given just a month or so ago which indisputably have quite a bit of new information) and the way you have very seriously misrepresented what was said in the coral presentation by Dr. Carter is really disturbing and makes it appear that you wish to support secular evolution (creationists were publishing on creationist evolution levels LONG before Darwin) no matter what evidence is against it and follow anomalies instead of the weight of evidence.

I find it incredible that you can allege that Dr. Carter’s whole lecture was “made up” or “clutching at straws” or that he has no answer for Enewatak or that it doesn’t fit the data (see next post for this). None of these allegations are true at all. Either you didn’t actually watch the presentation or you don’t understand what counts as scientific evidence or the
difference between observable evidence and inferential scientific evidence. He presented quite a bit in the limited time he had that DOES support a creationist viewpoint and also pointed out some things that are impossible for evolutionists to explain about corals. BOTH views have some difficulties though and Dr. Carter has the integrity to admit creationists don’t have all the answers yet (an integrity that is OFTEN, but not always, missing among evolutionists in my experience with literally 1000s of evolutionists).

I’ll summarize a few things on corals below (and will need to go beyond 3 paragraphs to do that unfortunately…but your allegations are very seriously misrepresenting facts and so it is necessary). But before that, we need to keep these things in mind in discussions like this so that emotions don’t lead us to ignore important evidence:

**1) WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE: Almost all major theories have anomalies, but these do not and can not cancel the weight of evidence. Avoid following the red herring of thinking that anomalies falsify the weight of evidence. They don’t. The coral problem even if it really is a problem can not change the fact that 100 methods and countless confirmations of them, support a young earth. It is a very fundamental violation of science to claim that “all the information on the sites you mention is pointless (because of coral or salt domes)”. This can not be more crucial to understand..esp. when you obviously haven’t even read much of those sites. Soft tissue in dinosaur fossils does a LOT more to damage the old earth methods than coral does damage to young earth methods because
a) We have no known scientific processes that can justify soft tissue lasting more than 100,000 years and
b) We have observed rates of growth for coral than can explain even Enewatok forming in just a few thousand years.

**2) HISTORICAL SCIENCE IS IMPERFECT: When science tries to proven things in history, it’s often working on partial evidence and often unaware of much important evidence and unknown factors and processes we currently do not fully understand and with time OFTEN changes. Because of this, Darwinian explanations of the corals are also not demonstrable and are just as uncertain as creationist ones. This video summarizes a bit of the issue of 2 kinds of science superficially.

http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers/features/two-kinds-of-science

**3) BIBLE TRACK RECORD VS. SCIENTIFIC ESTABLISHMENTS: The updates in science and science have consistently vindicated the Bible in countless areas over time and continue to do so (see the recent book “The Myth of JunkDNA” for example). The Bible has a far better track record than ANY scientific establishment in history. If we just assume that current science is god and infallible, we will be blown about by every wind of foolishness and almost certainly proven wrong with time by more updates. Once we are convinced that evidence shows God is real and inspired the Bible, there’s just no wisdom in trusting anything about what God has revealed (again questioning religious establishments is good, but to question the Bible is no different from questioning the scientific method and whether it’s valuable). Examples:

a) Ronald Numbers heard that fossil forests in Yellowstone were 30,000 years old. He decided to put current science above scripture, and eventually slid into agnosticism. Now, those same fossil forests fit with creation science extremely well and are very major problems for evolution. See: http://creation.com/the-yellowstone-petrified-forests
b) The eminent English Christian surgeon Arthur Rendle Short and others had to decide...
whether to trust the Bible or accept the scientific establishments “Piltdown Man” claims long before it was proven to be a hoax. Now we know what was wisest.

There are countless cases like this.

**4) Dawkins makes a crucial point in diatribe against theistic religion, showing that if evolution is true, then Jesus death and torture was only for a myth and useless, saying, ‘Oh but of course the story of Adam and Eve was only ever symbolic, wasn’t it? Symbolic?! Jesus had himself tortured and executed for a symbolic sin by a non-existent individual.’

Dr. Will Provine a Cornell biologist and evolutionist makes an even stronger true statement.

“As the creationists claim, belief in modern evolution makes atheists of people. One can have a religious view that is compatible with evolution only if the religious view is indistinguishable from atheism.” No Free Will. Catching Up with the Vision, Ed. By Margaret W. Rossiter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) pg. 123.

Beware that in supporting evolutionary concepts above the Bible, you could be contributing to making people atheists. This is especially problematic since so many major and minor concepts of universal common descent have been utterly refuted and abandoned even by evolutionists. See www.darwinspredictions.com

**5) Atheists and evolutionists have done their best using political weapons, naturalism and other foundational violations of science to cut off all information, research and monetary funding into anything that is even remotely religious in science, esp. creation science. It’s phenomenal that with evolution being given an astronomical BILLIONS of dollars PER YEAR advantage that creation science has the evidence it does have and is doing so well. Then there’s the constant persecution of creationists that has been documented in the recent book “Slaughter of the Dissidents” by former atheist and evolutionist Dr. Jerry Bergman. If there were an even remotely fair playing field in science and education, I guarantee you that the majority of scientists and people would QUICKLY become creation scientists.

**6) PRIDE IS THE ENEMY: If I am wrong and you are right, me changing to follow you is a win for both of us. The reverse is also true. PRIDE is the biggest enemy. If truth causes 1 or both sides to change, THAT is a win. Following the overall weight of evidence (from history, science, experience, prophecy and many more lines of evidence) even though there might be some anomalies is absolutely crucial, esp. considering that atheistic and evolution philosophies (which are not the same, but very closely connected) have been involved in directly causing dire harm to knowledge, science, history, civilization as well as destroying belief in the Bible. Atheism alone has killed more than 30 times more people in just 100 years than ALL religions in ALL history COMBINED, including even false ones (www.godandscience.org/apologetics/atrocities.html). It also has no solution at all for billions of cases of injustice in history. Furthermore neither atheism nor evolution have done anything to advance science except their own narratives. They have done much harm and no good and offer NOTHING for our future. NOTHING. Why be biased in favor of evidence for them???
7) TRUTH SETS US FREE/FALLACIES DON’T: Fallacies and misrepresentations are probably the biggest enemy of truth, both scientific and religious. We need to avoid them like the plague they are. Watch this TED talk on why being wrong is good for us to see that even secular people recognize the value of admitting errors in progressing in knowledge and truth and this has long been a basic principle of religion as well: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F6gBIXW3XY

(Evidence on coral reef issues continues in the next post.)

ABOUT CORAL REEF GROWTH (Enewetak) & DR. CARTER’S PRESENTATION
This is an area of historical science and so we only have partial evidence, not complete evidence. Nobody observed the corals growing so there is significant uncertainty because of that. More study is being done, but it is hampered as usual by the chokehold of funding that evolution has. More research and improvements are being found, but, here are some brief answers we know now. Note that I am not a Ph.D. scientist in marine or coral areas..and I don’t think you are either (which makes me wonder how you can so easily trumpet that Dr. Carter is “wrong” when you haven’t even contacted him to check if there is further research and evidence he didn’t have time to present in that short lecture…very disturbing as well).

Let’s look at Enewetak for now and we can deal with others if needed:
FACT: The Enewetak reef is about 1405 m thick.
FACT: Observed rates of growth range from ~5mm/year to ~414mm/year with many in the 100-200mm range (These are ONLY the observed rates of coral growth NOW. Faster or slower rates may have occurred but not been observed).
FACT: Drilling operations into the atoll have shown that a significant amount of the material (up to 70 percent of the bore hole) was “soft, fine, white chalky limestone,” not well-cemented reef limestone (H.S. Ladd and S.O. Schlanger, “Drilling Operations on Eniwetok Atoll,” U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 260-Y (1960): 863–903.).
FACT: In 1972, Cyclone Bebe ‘constructed’ a rampart of coral rubble 3.5 metres high, 37 metres wide and 18 kilometres long in a few hours.
http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/cm/v14/n1/coral-reef

It’s really hard to calculate growth rates precisely because:
a) coral grows many branches and so the growth adds up exponentially.
b) coral is eaten and broken and it’s difficult to know how much of that has happened.
c) there are many known factors affecting growth rates (such as the above) + possible unknown factors + unknown past conditions.

But, a VERY superficial and inaccurate calculation gives us: 1405m = 1,405,000mm
5mm/year rate =281,000 years estimated coral age
50mm/year rate =28,100 years estimated coral age
100mm/year rate =14,050 years estimated coral age
200mm/year rate =7,025 years estimated coral age
300mm/year rate =4,683 years estimated coral age
414mm/year rate =3,393 years estimated coral age
This doesn’t count branching factors, eating factors or others. Since ~70% of Enewetak isn’t even coral (which backs up Dr. Carter’s hypothesis on this of much sediment being pushed up by geothermal endo-upwelling), we don’t even need the fastest rates or possibly even the medium rates to account for Enewetak coral. The calculations above also demonstrates that in some cases, esp. in areas of historical science where we have incomplete information, unknowns and can’t test things for certain, people on all sides can choose the “evidence” that fits with their own expectations and biases. This doesn’t work overall…but people can cherry pick…and then use the foolish method of following anomalies like coral or salt domes instead of 100 methods which have many physical facts stronger than coral or salt domes to excuse themselves from following the vast weight of evidence.

This is a possible explanation for Enewetok (and ALL the Darwinian ones are only “possible” explanations as well. NONE are certain):

“It may be significant that this atoll, along with many of the other atolls in the western Pacific, ultimately rise from volcanic pedestals. It is known that heat coming from these volcanoes draws cold, nutrient-rich water into the cavernous atoll framework and circulates it upward, through the atoll via convection. This process is called geothermal endo-upwelling and helps provide nutrients to the reef organisms near sea level.

Here is a possible scenario of how the Eniwetok Atoll may have become so thick in the few thousand years since the Flood (figure 9). The reef began as a volcanic platform. Carbonates (limestones) began to accumulate on the platform as the result of bacteria and other organisms that can precipitate calcite, especially in volcanically warmed water. This produced much of the “soft, fine, chalky limestone” found within the reef. Carbonate-producing organisms (like corals) were brought to the platform as small larval forms, transported by ocean currents. This explains the occasional occurrence of various corals and mollusks found within the deeper parts of the drill core. The volcanic heat source allowed the carbonate mound to grow, deep below sea level, and the process of geothermal endo-upwelling to begin. The combination of nutrient supply and heat may have allowed the carbonate mound to grow much faster than observed coral reef growth rates today. As the carbonate mound approached sea level, shallow water reef corals were permanently established and thrived as a result of the upwelling process.

http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/arent-millions-of-years-required Regarding Dr. Carter’s presentation:

1) You talk about coral reefs above current sea level. Dr. Carter’s presentation deals directly with several of them. He points out that there's a lot of calcium carbonate in many of them that was not formed by biological processes, much near the continental surfaces. And this can’t be that old, because it hasn't all been dissolved by rain water and washed away.

2) There are also underground corals to explain. Dr. Carter shows with referenced papers that it’s HIGHLY unlikely that some of these are actually reefs, since they don’t have reef framework builders

3) Dr. Carter makes the solid point that the problem of coral is one for BOTH creation and evolution science evolution’s ice age is also only about 10,000 years ago which still presents massive problems if you assume slow growth rates of 5mm per year.
4) It’s possible that some corals came through the flood and were not totally destroyed. It’s also highly likely that because of all the magma and volcanic activity that warmed up the waters, that some places had quite warm water conditions that are ideal for fast growth. Considering coral branching, it wouldn’t take much time to grow quite large sections of coral given the right conditions which seem to be present at that time.

As the documentary “An Inconvenient Truth” showed very well, heat can of course melt things, but sometimes, that heat can cause ice ages if it’s in the wrong place. But this doesn’t necessarily mean an ice age for every part of the planet. It can cause some places to even get hotter and drier.

So, the flood could have warmed up the water near the equator such as in Sinai and Ur, yet caused ice ages in more northern/southern places, leaving the Sinai coral to continue growing.

There’s MUCH more. But, I’m trying to keep this as short as possible. For more on this, check:
http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/arent-millions-of-years-required
http://creation.com/images/pdfs/tj/j13_1/j13_1_1-2.pdf
Creationist Solutions to the “Reef Problem”
http://creation.com/how-long-does-a-coral-reef-take-to-grow
http://www.icr.org/article/a-50-year-study-shows-coral-clocks-unreliable/

All the best and God bless,
Bryan
We could debate forever these issues you raise. But...back to the blog....These are not just anomalies to the flood creation theory - they are biblically documented landscapes. To date in the comments that have come few have made a serious attempt to respond to the specific issues raised. Simply, there is no flood model which can rationally explain the salt, the corals, and the up to 8000 meters of geologic column under the region.

You make some valid points in your material, but again. with respect, let's deal with the blog - specifically. Otherwise we'll be here forever.

Let's look at the Genesis story, the time frames, the land of Ur, how soon it really was after the flood that we can identify the same geology we see today. Let's face the conclusions that seem so obvious. If they are not obvious, show me from the Genesis story..

Horace Butler 1 week ago

Common sense, or blissful ignorance? The evidence against an old earth is what is mounting. Mr. Barrett ignores all the evidence compiled by Creationist scientists over the years. I wonder if he has even listened to the lectures on creation vs. evolution by our own Dr. Walter J. Veith? Peter described well the attitude taken by Mr. Barrett and others like him: "all things continue as they were from the beginning ... ." I Peter 3:4. Uniformitarianism makes assumptions that cannot be proven and all conclusions based on those assumptions are dubious at best.

The eruption of Mt. St. Helens showed how rapidly sedimentary deposits can be made, and canyons formed. There are so many unwarranted assumptions that must be made to achieve the alleged age of the earth that the effort ceases to be true science.

I expect this sort of nonsense from the agnostic and the atheist, but from a SDA? Why is it that so many will accept science over the Bible when the two are in disagreement? With so many discrepancies and errors in the radiometric dating methods how could anyone place any faith in their conclusions?

The blatant rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy that underlies many of these assumptions is a sad commentary on how far we have fallen.

Bryan Bissell 1 week ago

Very good comments. The links in the above post might be helpful as well.

Ervin Taylor 1 week ago

Mr. Butler seems not to know that very few scientists, including many Adventist scientists, take "creation science" arguments for a young earth or young life seriously. The general validity of most radiometric dating methods have been well validated. Current objections almost entirely derive from non-scientists and are based on theological and not scientific objections.
I assume that the term "Spirit of Prophecy" used by Mr. Butler refers to the views of Ellen G. White (This is not the place to note the inappropriate traditional use in classical Adventism of that Biblical term to refer to her). I would suggest that placing her views in proper historical and theological context constitutes an excellent commentary on how far, in a positive direction, a matured Adventism has progressed.

Bob Pickle 1 week ago

"The general validity of most radiometric dating methods have been well validated." So do you now accept the finding that the U/Pb ratios in U-238 halo centers in Jurassic and Triassic coalified wood indicate that those samples are not nearly as old as evolutionists assert?

"...a matured Adventism has progressed." On what logical and rational basis do you believe that regression from sola scriptura back to a pre-Reformation exaltation of human opinion above the Word of God is in fact "progress"? Typically "progress" does not denote a retreat, and I do not see how an abandonment of sola scriptura, given the history of the last 2500 years, can honestly be called "progression" rather than "regression."

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

Why do so many accept science over the Bible?

This was the position of the church when confronted with Galileo's finding that the earth revolved around the sun, not the sun revolving around the earth which was inferred from the Bible. When did Adventism stand by the Bible rather than choosing the scientific evidence? How long does it take for Adventism to finally agree with scientific findings? Only in medical science is the Bible diagnosing and treating of diseases discarded. Do Adventists accept Mendel's discovery? Do they accept that the universe is billions of years old, which cannot be disproved with the astronomical discoveries? Ignoring the discoveries of scientists in geology, paleoanthropology and the earth sciences only brings disrepute in the educated populace who may be those they are trying to convert.

Horace Butler 1 week ago

Unfortunately for those who bow down to the god of science, too often today's "science" is tomorrows myth, as new discoveries are made. But the Word of God is constant and unchangeable. Only our understanding of it increases.

Anonymous 1 week ago

Only our understanding of it increases.

Perhaps, Horace.
Should we dare admit our finite human chronos mind cannot possibly contain an infinite kairos God's truth.
But that then implies the same; todays understanding of scripture may be somewhat lacking through the eyes of tomorrow. Perhaps tomorrows science is todays "hunch". Perhaps science dares say: keep asking, and testing, your questions. Yet, some try defend "faith" and "truth" by denying even the questioning.

I'd further suggest, Adam bowed, as he walked in natures perfection, and observed all that God had made...and he perhaps dared ask questions.

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**Bryan Bissell**

Elaine,

The church had accepted Aristotle's ideas of geocentrism. Galileo challenged THAT understanding that the church tried to twist the Bible to fit. Dr. Hannam deals with this extensively in his recent book.

Out of 1000s of cultures, it was the Bible, Creation science and Christian scientists that laid and built the foundations of modern science, its most important processes and pioneered most of its branches. The records of history show that much of modern science as well as other aspects of modern civilization was built on a theistic superstructure and modern atheism is just a fa?de built on that. Not only the foundation but much of the interior that holds up the structure was built largely by creationists, and they were drawing both principles and specific scientific concepts directly from the Word of God.

Dr. Hannam has degrees in physics and history from Oxford and London universities and a Ph.D. in the history of science from Cambridge University and wrote “God’s Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science". He just released a new book, “The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution” This has been reviewed very positively by major secular scientists and organizations:


Dr. Hannam also gave an overview of the above book in a presentation at the Royal Society (1st scientific society in history which was started by a creationist Christian John Wilkins who also published ideas on speciation in the 1600s, LONG before Darwin.) about how Christianity and the creationist view of the world laid the foundations of modern science that no other culture ever achieved (Dr. Hannam is not a creationist. He’s an evolutionist. But, he agrees that the creationist view was fundamental to the development of modern science. This makes the claim even stronger since it is admitted by an evolutionist). Watch it here and a rough summary of it is after the review of the book belw: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-k24Q01vck

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**David Read**

Biblical descriptions of "a sequence of events immediately after Noah and through to Abraham" will describe only the post-Flood world, because the Flood came during Noah's life. The Bible does not give a detailed description of the land in the region of Israel, Sinai and Egypt until the time of Abraham, and he lived at least
500 years after the Flood, and possibly more like a thousand years afterward, depending upon variations in the chrono-genealogical data among biblical manuscripts. There would have been time for quite a bit of geological activity including fluctuations in sea levels.

The fossil corals of Sinai are quite young geologically (dated from 15,000 to 2 million) and are very likely post-Flood. There have apparently been several fluctuations in sea level relative to land on the Sinai in the geologically recent past. This is apparent from shelves or terraces that have formed at the site of ancient coastlines. No creationist disputes that sea levels have fluctuated--especially relative to any given piece of land--in the post-Flood era. A post-Flood Ice Age would have lowered sea levels world wide, and then raised them again as the glaciers melted away.

There have been fluctuations in sea level relative to land in the historical past, as indicated by the columns on a temple of Serapis at Pozzuoli, Italy. The temple was built by the ancient Romans, obviously above sea level, but subsidence had sunk the temple to some 23 feet of column depth, as indicated by scarring to the columns caused by the marine bivalve Lithodomus. Subsequently, volcanic eruption lifted the temple above sea level again. Charles Lyell was so impressed by this proof of geological activity that he put an engraving of the temple columns in the frontispiece of Principles of Geology. Apparently, similarly fluctuations have occurred on the Sinai.

Regarding the salt domes in the rift valley, it seems apparent that aspects of the Genesis Flood were conducive to massive precipitation of salt. Likely this precipitation was spread evenly along the bottom, but currents gathered it into the deepening rift, like sweeping dirt into a crack in the sidewalk, creating a very large salt deposit. Subsequent Flood-deposited sediment buried the large salt deposit, but because salt is generally less dense than the overlying sediment, it tends to move upward toward the surface, forming domes, diapirs, sheets, pillars and other structures as it rises.

The same conditions that caused massive precipitation of salt also caused massive blooms of diatoms, and/or precipitation of calcium carbonate. The Cretaceous chalks are thought to be the result of slow diatom oozes over long ages, but very slow deposition is inconsistent with the preservation of fossils found in the Cretaceous chalk in North America, such as in the Niobrara Formation, and the preservation of whale fossils in diatomaceous Cenozoic deposits in Peru. See here:


There's really nothing in Mr. Barrett's article that shakes my faith in the biblical chronology. Darwinists interpret according to their model, and we creationists interpret according to ours.

cb25 1 week ago

David, I was just re-reading your comments and perhaps for the sake of sticking with the theme of my blogg a few more comments.

* You say the sequence of events after Noah only describe the post flood world. Correct. Is that not a key point I was making?

* You allow up to a thousand years between the flood and Abram. No. Genesis leaves a gap of no more than 80 years when further sea level changes could have happened and corals could have grown. ANY sea
level changes after the "flood" would have left Ur 5 meters underwater. Water stretching half way in towards Babylon (Iraq) today.

* As you say, no creationist denies the terraces in Sinai exist. True, but only a desperate imagination would try to fit them in to a little window of post flood time.

* You offer a post flood ice age to explain sea levels. Again, the Bible description of the land rules out the sea level changes, let alone an ice age. Just read Genesis 10 through 12 again.

* The salt domes. Perhaps you would care to explain how salt can precipitate into a rift that is not even supposed to be there until the water has gone? Or if it was there, how that could logically happen in turbulent waters. Waters which one would think were less rather than more salty?

It seems to me that the explanantion you have offered in not a "rationally imaginable scenario".

Are we terrified of the possibility that evolution may be true? How long will it take us to realize that evolution does not attempt to answer how life came to be. It only explains how it has developed since it began. To accept an evolutionary process does not throw out God.

Chris Barrett (cb25)

Ervin Taylor
Mr. Read is quite correct: scientists interpret according to their model and Young Life Creationists interpret according to their model. The first reflects reality and the second reflects wishful thinking.

Bob Pickle
Erv,

If you were truly an objective scientist, I would think you would be open to all possibilities, and not be making derogatory comments about creation science. Yet you have here denied that creation scientists are really scientists, and have essentially called evolution reality and creation science wishful thinking. Does not this smack of bigotry as well as demonstrate a lack of objectivity?

Again, a truly objective scientist would not be closed-minded to any possible explanations of the evidence.

Kevin Seidel
I blame literacy. We as a society have been literate for hundreds of years. We have forgotten what it is like to not be able to read or write. We have forgotten that stories maybe used purposes other that the actual story. Maybe I tell a story about a man who takes a great journey, but the point is not about the man but it is a memory aid, it is a map of the area. The Peace Make story of the Iroquois isn't just a founding story of how they came to be, it is actually their constition.
I don't know what purposes the original telling of the Genesis stories had. I do know it was written from an eastern non-linear mind set and not a western scientific linear mind set. Some of the earliest manuscripts didn't have word breaks, vowel, or punctuation. I think it is wise to recognize the inherent uncertainty of our understanding of scripture.

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago

To stake everything on a story that is thousands of years old, while similar ones in other cultures are readily acknowledged to be only their way of describing the beginning of the earth, is to accept only one, in the Bible, that is absolutely scientifically true in every detail. It has acquired that position because it was designated long ago as "God's Word" and could not contain errors, contradictions, and was literally true.

The Genesis story was told for thousands of years before it was finally written down. Prior to that, it was passed down through hundreds of generations, each teller was interpreting the story as he told it. There was no miracle involved in protecting it from possible error, and there is much evidence that there are contradictions and several voices in many of the Torah's stories.

The Hebrew Bible was a DESCRIPTION of the world its people lived and functioned in, and not a PRESCRIPTION for people of all time. If it were, we would be obeying orders to kill all foreigners; take their virgins for wives, and believe in talking serpents and donkeys and sea creatures that swallow humans who live after three days.

If one chooses to read the Bible literally, there are enormous problems, especially in explaining the numerous contradictions. However, if seeking principles of life--mostly from the NT, there are many benefits. The literal reading has caused more atheists than is possible to calculate.

Bryan Bissell
1 week ago

Almost no book is intended to be read only literally or only symbolically. People are not using their minds very rationally when they force it to be only one or the other. The Bible is a large book with major parts that are indisputably literal, including creation science, but also parts that are symbolic, poetic, idiomatic and more.

Some of the OT commands were not for all time true. Not everything said in the Bible was meant to be followed in all situations at all times. Some was only for specific contexts were God condescended to meet the people where they were...even what He asked them to do was not always His ideal...but maybe step 1 or 2 towards His ideal. Even at Jesus time, Jesus couldn't say all he wanted because they were slow to understand.

People refusing to take God's words literally when they are obviously so and in context and metaphorical, etc. such as the health commands..and God's statements that hell is something that devours, NOT ETERNAL, has driven millions from belief in God and harmed millions in real life.

Roscoe Fogg
1 week ago
David Read wrote,
"The fossil corals of Sinai are quite young geologically (dated from 15,000 to 2 million)"
Wow. Do you mean 2 million years or 2 million days old?

Anonymous
1 week ago

To summarily (as many fundamentalists have) pit "science" as diametric to natural law (at least so far as the literal application of the Book of Beginnings) begs two observations;

Adam, the first scientist, botanist, geneticist, naturalist, agriculturalist etc...(God's nomothete) surely did not nullify his experiential interaction with observable phenomenon as "contrary to scripture". Not lost is the fact scripture was not in existence in written form for at least a millenia and a half...

"Theology" itself is a "science", a rational way of asking questions, thinking and understanding a new phenomenon

Hence, if nature is considered a "scripture", surely it speaks as clearly, or more so, than even the Holy word. "Even these stones"...will cry out (His name/character) if we do not. Barrett raises well asked questions, and a world is hungry for answers. Why are we collectively so afraid to trust truth, and dig for it?

Jack Hoehn
1 week ago

It appears that there may be two Huge misunderstandings here, one on the part of Bible students, and the other on the part of Science students.

1.) Adventist Bible students have made the mistake of assuming that the Bible contains a chronology of creation, and that guesses and conjectures about how and when God created are from the Bible -- in fact the Bible has no chronology of when creation happened, and next to nothing about how God created. The Bible states that God created, but it does not tell how or when he created. That is conjecture. May I quote Sister White on this? “Just how God accomplished the work of Creation, he has never revealed to men…” Ellen G. White, Christian Education, page 193.

2.) Science students have made the huge mistake of thinking that if the evidence shows that the creation of life as we know it took a long time, that it could have happened by itself due to random chance mutations and survival of the stronger or so called fittest. In fact no mutations are ever observed to increase fitness, even when some have a temporary survival advantage such as the sickle cell trait in malaria lands. The DNA code found in every fossil and living form of life proves that intelligence and organization pre-dates any forms of life. All life forms were planned and designed capable of adapting, growth, and development. Darwinian mechanisms for the creation of life are in fact scientifically dead, but most scientists either don't yet understand this, and are unwilling to admit it for philosophical and religious reasons.

So with Bible studings thinking wrongly their guesses and suppositions about the Bible, are the same as "believing the Bible"; and Science students thinking wrongly that long time and evolving creatures prove no
Designer was needed; is it any wonder we have an apparently insoluble conflict?

How I yearn for Adventist Bible Students honest enough to admit our past errors of misunderstanding of what the Bible was really saying in Genesis. (See the records of the Adventist Forum Genesis meetings September 2-4, in Chicago.)

And for Adventist Scientists who will thoughtfully and fully support the science of Intelligent Design, which is truly on the cutting edge of scientific advance.

And for Adventists Theologians who are brave enough to get out of the unexamined ruts they are stuck in, and start at Genesis, but not end there. We have guidance beyond Genesis from Ellen White. The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan is on display in the geologic record for all to see. Adventism knows that that Controversy between Light and Darkness (John 1:1-4) didn't begin in the garden of Eden, it began in heaven during the planning for the creation of life on earth. Satan and his fallen rebels have been on earth from the first Creation Day till the last Creation Day. It is time to understand that the Conflict of the Ages, has been going on for ages on earth, long before the creation and fall of man, as well as since then. So many made up problems disappear if we could use our Adventist theology in new and innovative ways.

Back to the past is never the route the Adventist Movement has taken before. It will be our death knell to try it now. Let our elected leader-servants run the mechanics of church organization. Let the Spirit of God lead our theology forward to accept the facts of a clearer understand of what the Bibles does and does not say, and what true Science does and does not say.

How I yearn for that! How I yearn....

Thomas "Vastergotland" 1 week ago

What I wish for is a creationist who takes a look at the various questions which the DNA code raises for its model and then goes on to explain the data after the creation model. Creationists talk about statistics, geology, astronomy, chemistry and a number of other fields of science which are unrelated to biology when they try to show that the unifying theory in biology is wrong. Where are the critics of biology who are willing to use biological arguments to do so? Could any of the creationists reading this blog write an article criticizing evolution from a genetic/systematic biology perspective? Don't forget to address the issue of how nonessential parts of DNA are mostly identical between closely related species.

cb25 1 week ago

Some interesting reactions to say the least.

Perhaps I could just pick up a couple of points. Horace Butler, you ask if I have listened to Walter Vieth? Yes. In fact Walter was the final cause of my departure from a more traditional creationist position. It was his position, attitude and unprovable statements that forced me to recognize it was time for honesty, and to face what I had been trying to avoid for years.
As for uniformitarianism: I did not raise that issue in my blog, and it is not relevant to the points made.

David Read, at least you have addressed the theme of the blog, unlike some other naysayers, in offering an explanation. However, many would dispute your claim that Abraham was so long after the flood. Don't you ignore the details in Genesis about Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and the descriptions of events up until Abram.

It also puzzles me how you can "accept" dates of 15000 years plus for corals. Even this pushes it too far back for a Creation event. Are you actually suggesting it is "OK" to accept these dates (from the scientific community?) because they "almost" fit your preconceived opinions? If so, its ok to pick and choose when it fits?

As for the Rift Valley, people like Andrew Snelling argue that it did not exist until the waters were drained away, so who is right? And, don't coccoliths prefer less salty water? But, perhaps they are different now?

Thanks for the observations all have made.

cb25

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Kevin Riley 1 week ago

Interesting. I have not yet abandoned the idea of creation in 6 days, but I suspect if I listened any more to Veith et al that I likely would. I know only enough science to get myself into trouble, so I tend not to focus on science. But I cannot fit history into 6000 years. I especially cannot fit everything between the earliest evidence of civilisation and the time of Abraham into a few hundred years.

Every so often someone hits upon a theory from some scholar that places an event within a timeframe that allows for a flood around 2500 BC and it gets shared eagerly around. But it usually leaves 99% of the evidence unaccounted for. The latest was the claim that Indo-European languages arose about 2200BC, which is close to the time of Babel. That was put forward as 'scientific' evidence that the tower of Babel story could be true. Unfortunately, it doesn't account for the need some language families have for a time depth of 15-40,000+ years. Australian and Austronesian require that long, and the Indo-Pacific/Papuan languages may require up to twice that time. If the suggestion of a connection between the Australian and Papuan languages is correct, then even more time is needed. We could, as some have suggested, accept the idea that God may have confused languages a number of times, artifically speeding up changes that would take generations so they took only a few years. But when you start talking about parents speaking a language unintelligible to their children, and this being repeated for generations, I think we have left the realm of reality.

I can accept the basic message of the Bible: God created everything there is. I even can accept, by faith, that he did it in 6 days. Beyond that, things get fuzzy.

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Bryan Bissell 1 week ago

You should watch the links in my post near the top of the page. There is vast evidence for creation science that many have never understood or been aware of.
Ella M.

Does anyone really believe that the uses of numbers the Bible are literal? It would seem to me they are more symbolic. With most of them being symbolic as in Revelation's 144,000, how could we decide where to draw the line between literal and symbolic or just a wild guess. The use of numbers over a million isn't used in the early civilizations as far as I can find. We know the chronologies are not written to be literal as they are different and have other points to be made. The parables the same thing--it is what they mean and not that they actually happened as stated (i.e., the richman and Lazarus).

I would say the Bible writers were of a different mindset than today and certainly not science oriented. Maybe they were post-modern, a term that scientists just hate!

Stephen Foster

Since the natural world and observations of it cannot either prove how life began on this planet, nor disprove the biblical six-day creation narrative—despite evidence of trends that lead to admittedly logical conclusions of at least how life has continued on this planet, if not how it began as well—it is then at least as intellectually valid to believe in ID and/or the six-day creation narrative as it is to disbelieve them; notwithstanding any/all inevitable protestations of pretentious erudition to the contrary.

As for “deep time,” how does the biblical account that “the earth was without form and void; and darkness covered the face of the deep” enter the equation; since we are given no biblical clue as to how long “the earth” was in existence in this (above-described) condition?

As for DNA, since the genetic code is at its essence “information” in the truest sense of the word, from where did the information originate? Who or what actually provided the information in the DNA code?

As Cris Carter would say, “C’mon man!”

Thomas "Vastergotland"

Stephen, you must not only look at the power of the accepted science to describe these things, and decide that any lack it has automatically makes ID or six day creation valid alternatives. You must also look at ID and six-day creation on their own merits in describing the evidence and be able to conclude that they in fact give better answers than does the standard science. Better as defined through explaining the evidence.

Preston Foster

Thomas,

For me, it is a fools errand to try to reconcile the conclusions drawn from the tools and theories employed by limited and (by definition) faulty men/women who seek to explain the origin of life on earth. Attempts to reconcile science with the purposefully mysterious ways of God invites confusion.

Scientific methods are designed to "make sense" within that arena -- to be proven and validated by limited processes. Science rejects the subjective and dismisses the unprovable. Spiritual things are, for
scientists, against their religion, so to speak. "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Corinthians 2:14. Creation was a spiritual event (Genesis 1:2).

Mixture of the two (science and the spiritual) is incompatible (including the so-called "creation scientists," in my opinion). "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine." Isaiah 55:8. Debates about the two will, by their nature, be frustratingly circular.

Thus, they devolve into name-calling.

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**Jack Hoehn** 1 week ago

Preston, are those of us trying to understand Genesis and the rest of the Bible, not just as "limited and (by definition) faulty" as those struggling with Science? Or do you feel you and I get a special ability when we think we understand Genesis?

**Preston Foster** 1 week ago

Jack, I believe that, in our own (intellectual) power alone, Genesis and the rest of the Bible is more difficult to understand than chemistry and biology. It is only by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that the Bible is has symmetry and clarity. For me, reading the Word is a spiritual venture, primarily.

**Thomas "Vastergotland"** 1 week ago

Preston

How does what you wrote relate to what Stephen wrote? Was he not arguing in the limited and faulty way which your protested?

**Preston Foster** 1 week ago

Thomas,

Although I think that Stephen has powerful genetic intellectual gifts (smile, please), I agree that debating spiritual issues from a scientific basis is a trap for everyone in the conversation. However, if we are to discuss the "deep time" scenario rationally, it seems logical and important to consider the "without form and void" factor (re: to the pre-creation description of the earth in Genesis 1:2) in the formation or examination of ID or evolution theories.

**songbird** 1 week ago

Preston,
Just a thought, but it was EW who said "science and the Bible, correctly understood, do not contradict" (not sure on verbatim). Then again, one of her bio's implied that she was afraid of saying a word for fear it would be taken as inspiration.

IMO, the only book more cryptic than Genesis is Job. Wow, God and the devil making bets on whether Job would cave?? It seems that some things are just meant to be stories, and sketches.

songbird, 

Mrs. White is very likely correct, but her premise ("science and the Bible correctly understood...") provides a thruway of escape. In 54 years, I have yet to find an arbiter of the "correct understanding" of science OR the Bible, much less the intersection of the two!

I'm with Elaine on this one.

Cheers.

I guess the old maxim is true. A person will believe what he wants to believe, no matter where the evidence points.

Horace, 

As an old salesman, I can attest to this. We were trained to leverage the fact that people buy for emotional reasons and cite facts to justify and rationalize their decision.

I am emotionally tied to God. On purpose.

Why can't we just realize and recognize that science and religion cannot ever be harmonized, nor should they be. Religion depends on faith; science cannot claim faith but seeks evidence while religion needs no evidence.

No, we do not agree Elaine. Most of us can not accept the schizophrenia of two incompatible worlds. We are spiritual and material beings, and we want one God to rule both. We may not have done a good job yet
of reconciling both, but just giving up is not an option we accept. Sorry!

Elaine Nelson
1 week ago

Keep trying! Maybe the one who finds the key to unlock the dilemma will explain to the rest of us. For some, we simply don't have the time or energy to keep trying to find the key.

Horace Butler
1 week ago

In response to cb25's comment ("To accept an evolutionary process does not throw out God."): no, it does not throw out God, but it makes Him into a liar, and undermines His written word; because the Scriptures assume the veracity of the Genesis record, and give no hint of evolution. If we can't accept Gen. 1-11 at face value, then how about the virgin birth and the resurrection? In churches which have acccepted the myth of evolution, many people have also come to deny the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus. There is a domino effect, and it is inevitable.

Thomas "Vastergotland"
1 week ago

I wonder, which is least damaging to God? That we, given our present assumptions read parts of the bible in a different way than what it was intended for? Or that God made the world in such a way that anyone who would study it close enough would have to conclude that it was made in a different way than what really took place?

cb25
1 week ago

Horace, you say that to accept evolution is to make God a liar and undermines the written Word. That is to assume that the interpretations, authorship, and authority we ascribe to scripture are correct and "cut and dried". Perhaps they are not and it is we who make God a liar by perpetuating as truth our assumed unerstandings.

This is an underlying motivation for my blogg - to highlight that it is becoming more and more obviously foolish to perpetuate a YEC position and the necessary "interpretation" of Scripture that it forces one to take.

Chris Barrett (cb25)

Preston Foster
1 week ago

cb25,

You write:

"That is to assume that the interpretations, authorship, and authority we ascribe to scripture are correct and "cut and dried". Perhaps they are not and it is we who make God a liar by perpetuating as truth our
assumed understandings (sic)."

This is the essence of the problem. Those of us who pitch are tents near the so-called conservative camp, assume that the "authorship, and authority we ascribe to scripture ARE correct and 'cut and dried,'" per 2 Timothy 3:16 and Revelation 22:19.

It is fashionable and reasonable to question the writings of EGW, as all things are to be proved by the Bible. Debating interpretations of the Bible is also, obviously, valuable and edifying. However, when the authority Word of God is questioned, there seems little value in discussing anything, as we (those who accept its complete authority) hold no common beliefs with those who question both its authority and authenticity.

Horace Butler

1 week ago

I can see that there will be no meeting of the minds on this, because, from my perspective, it is becoming more and more foolish to perpetuate an OEC position, given the mountain of evidence that's out there. I've been studying this issue for decades myself, and not just SDA sources. The prevailing theories on the age of the earth are shot full of holes, but the biases in the scientific community are such that these holes are patched over with clever rhetoric.

cb25

1 week ago

Horace, I think there can be a meeting of minds. Perhaps I should not use the word "foolish". Sorry.

However, apart from the few positive comments and David Read's comment, no one has attempted to tell me how a YEC position can explain these corals and salt domes in the context of a 12 month flood. We can argue forever over the "shot full of holes" stuff. Let's not go there just yet.

Tell me, how can there have been a flood on top of those corals and salt domes? Simple as that. Give me a logical sequence of events and the "shot full of holes" will become relevant!

Let's stick to the topic of the blog.

Chris Barrett (cb25)

Bryan Bissell

1 week ago

If you go to this link, video #6 is by a Ph.D. in marine biology who deals with the coral issues and a global flood directly. See also my links at the top of the page.
http://www.youtube.com/user/TruthIsLife7#g/c/14FDE276E5C97E24

Horace Butler

1 week ago

And by the way, if we can't ascribe supreme authority (infallibility, inerrancy) to Scripture, then we might as
well "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Kevin Riley 1 week ago

But I thought our traditional position was that we did not ascribe inerrancy to Scripture. We seem to be careful to circumscribe the infallibility of Scripture also.

Stephen Foster 1 week ago

For Christians, this contradictory dichotomous practice of interpreting scientific information in ways that “disprove” the Biblical narrative is ultimately silly and nonsensical. It does not make sense—at all—to accept the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent, omniscient creator *via the Bible*, while simultaneously arbitrarily disbelieving the Bible when it concerns things that are literally supernatural—on the basis that they are supernatural.

On the other hand, it is at least logically coherent not to believe in the concept of an omnipotent, benevolent, omniscient creator—or anything in the Bible of a supernatural basis—because of the supernatural nature of that which is described therein.

Thomas "Vastergotland" 1 week ago

Stephen

You misunderstand the problem. At least for me it is not a case of "arbitrarily disbelieving the Bible when it concerns things that are literally supernatural--on the basis that they are supernatural". It is rather a case of accepting the reality that events that take place leave visible results. Volcanic eruptions leave lava beds, earthquakes cause the breakdown of structures and/or tsunamis. Supernatural events also leave visible evidence. Elisha returning the Shunamite womans son to life would have given her grandchildren through this son, Jesus multiplying bread and fish would have left a very pleased crowd of people. Events leave different kinds of results in the world, and major events such as the creation of the world or a worldwide flood should leave huge and unmistakable results.

The problem isn't that the events in question are supernatural but that rock and stone and cell tell a different story.

Stephen Foster 1 week ago

Oh, I think I understand the problem all right. The problem is that the Bible is believed at will, arbitrarily, for a variety of reasons; that is what arbitrarily literally means. You claim to believe the Bible’s supernatural claims when you see evidence that satisfies your sensibilities, someone else may have a different standard for belief.

The point is that to “believe” arbitrarily is a nonsensical copout; in fact, the mother of all copouts in my view.
Belief in the God of the Bible is logically an all or nothing proposition. It makes no sense to believe in Him and not to believe any and all of His claims of supernatural actions.

Thomas "Vastergotland"

Jesus said that "because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Thus, it is good to believe without having seen the evidence, but at the same time it is clear that the evidence exists to be seen for those who's faith is weak. You summarised my view as "You claim to believe the Bible’s supernatural claims when you see evidence that satisfies your sensibilities". This is not how I would summarise it. I did not require that I personally must see the evidence, only that the evidence exist so that someone can see it. I have not seen the grandchildren of the woman of Shunem, nor have I spoken with anyone who was feed by Jesus on that mountain some 2000 years ago, but there have existed people who have been close friends with the witnesses of these events. The problem with creationism and ID are that evidence exists, and that this evidence points in a different direction compared to where the miracle requires it to point.

Stephen Foster

Huh?? Bear with me Thomas, but I do not understand what you are saying. It is impossible for me to determine whether you agree with yourself or not.

Since faith is in part “…the evidence of things not seen,” are you saying that you--or someone--either can be, should be, or needs to be influenced by the evidence of things that are seen in order to…what, somehow modify faith?

Thomas "Vastergotland"

Whether I agree with myself or not.. My previous post uses the defining supernatural event of christianity as its startingpoint, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the event which singularely makes the difference between you and I being Christians and not being so, and we believe it by faith because we have not seen it. But the 12 disciples saw the resurrected Jesus, His mother and other people who followed Jesus saw Him resurrected. Paul uses the existence of about 500 eyewitnesses as a major point of support for the gospel. Thus I am saying that Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, pointed out that the evidence of Jesus resurrection (the supreme supernatural event as recognised by christians) was seen by and influenced more than 500 eyewitnesses to produce faith in them. Also, in the first letter of John we read "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life." And in the second letter of Peter we read: "For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."
Clearly, it was important for these apostles to stress that the supernatural event which they proclaimed was no mere exalted idea or thought structure but a real event to which they were either personally witnesses to or for which living witnesses in bulk could be found. Nowhere in the bible are supernatural events something which is expected to be believed against or despite evidence. Rather, supernatural events are the evidence which supports God's claims.

Gailon Arthur Joy
1 week ago

Faith and Creationist responses constitute a lack of "Common Sense" and are fanciful, bizarre and outrageous" according to the faithless science crowd. Problem is, their "science" has no answer to the concept of a planet in rebellion, the need for a Saviour and a promise of Eternal Life for a simple Faith based upon a written word.

And what written word do the evolutionists rely upon? Their own!!! They are not Seventh-day Adventists but claim to be Christians. On what basis? Yet another disconnect!!! Their word against God's.

As for me and mine, we will rely upon the Written Word passed to us through generations and have clearly made a difference in the way humans conduct themselves and relate to other humans and their creator, who just happens to be our Redeemer!!! Precept upon precept, we have a logical and comprehensive solution to a very lost world. And the prophetic gift to prove it!!!

David
1 week ago

Some observations:
Noah did not have a flood, God is who produced.
The evolutionist try to explain thinks of the past considering present conditions, but they do only when is convenient to them they.
If they were consistent with the principal to judge the past with present conditions they will find out the evolution backbone even is weaker that the "flood". The great example is mutations (key stone of evolution). At present time we know and mutations are deleterious and lethal, but they wanted us to believe the opposite (make us better, stronger, more intelligent), So science is against the backbone of evolution.
How old the earth is only the creator knows. But saying that dead was before sin is just heresy. Goes against the teaching of the eternal gospel.

Horace Butler
1 week ago

Mutations also never add information. At best they rearrange information or lose it altogether. There is no know mechanism by which new genetic material can be spontaneously added to an organism.
The evidence for the flood is worldwide. That it was fairly recent is also apparent. The evidence is there, if one is willing to look for it.

**Roscoe Fogg**

1 week ago

Mutation plus selection does add information. The evidence against a recent worldwide flood is overwhelming. Just say a miracle happened to make the world look old and all is well. Don't try to use science or any kind of observation as evidence that a miraculous event occurred. The occurrence of a miraculous event is not falsifiable.

**David**

1 week ago

Roscoe stated “Mutation plus selection does add information” I agree with that. The question is what kind of information? Here is where science goes against evolution. The mutations that we observe and are reproducible are **deleterious and lethal**. I can mention hundreds even thousand examples of them.

Now show us 50 mutations that make us better, what about 10? maybe 5? having hard time?… what about at lest one.

**Thomas "Vastergotland"**

1 week ago

Inducing mutations has been a plant breeding technique for almost a hundred years now. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutation_breeding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutation_breeding) This would obviously not work if all mutations were deleterious and lethal.

**David**

1 week ago

Now you have to be careful what you compare and how is done. In plants they do the mutations with x rays and chemicals. And still we don’t know the long term effects. Try that in animals or humans and you will see the result is the deleterious and deathly. Hiroshima Nagasaki Chernobyl rings the bell?

**Thomas "Vastergotland"**

1 week ago

The example is sufficient to show that the generalisation of calling all mutations deleterious and lethal is false. I did not attempt to say neither more nor less than that.

**David**

1 week ago

Thomas just you did not mention one mutation that **makes us** better. I can give you thousands of examples that mutations are deleterious and lethal. Do you see where the evidence is?
Hoarces post said that mutations never add information to an organism. I failed to see that your comment on "deleterious and lethal" was restricted to only humans. My bad..

John Andrews

As a Christian I have to reject what is being proposed here because of its logical conclusions: There is no God.

The author or Hebrews says that: "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." (Heb 11:3).

But faith for Ervin Taylor, Barret and others = wishful thinking.

Roscoe Fogg

Just who has proposed that there is no God?

Stephen Foster

How can there be a God if there is has never been any natural or scientific evidence of such a Being?

ANYONE who suggests that scientific observation of fossils, rocks, or cells, or...whatever, is determinative as to whether the Bible's version of origins is correct (or plausible) is using this logic; whether they admit it to anyone--or even to themselves--or not.

John Andrews

Roscoe, you must read between the lines. We may speak in cryptic terms and yet be unable to avoid the logical conclusions of what we're saying.

It is by faith that we accept the reading of the Geological column that accommodates a creator God. It's faith that leads us to accept that what we see may not be what was, i.e., evidence of millions of years between the layers of.

You need to trash God in order to accommodate Mr. Bartlett and Taylor's views. That is the inescapable fact.

Trevor Hammond

The question has been asked: "Just who has proposed that there is no God?"
Perhaps one good calm and rational answer would be EVOLUTIONISTS!

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**Roscoe Fogg**

1 week ago

Theistic evolutionists believe in God. Believing in God and agreeing with you are not the same thing.

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**John Andrews**

1 week ago

If evolutionists believe there is a God, they don't believe a word he says...

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**cb25**

1 week ago

John, as someone asked "who has said there is no God?" That is neither explicit nor implicit in my blog. You and a couple of others have made that assumption.

Evolution does NOT address the issue of where life came from or whether there is or is not a God. That is the realm of philosophy not science discussion.

And, yes, I can continue to believe in Jesus the Messiah.

In fact, the world out of which I believe life has developed is profoundly more in need of a Saviour than the neat little garden from which Adam took a tumble! Perhaps Calvary is a bigger event than we imagine. What if the Great Controversy has more to do with "nature, red in tooth and claw..." than we like to admit? Anyway...that's not the topic of this blog, so please, don't read into it what I did not say.

Chris Barrett (cb25)

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**John Andrews**

1 week ago

Wow! So a world where death occurred for millions of years and was but the stepping stone for the improvement of creation actually needs the death of Christ more than God's "real" creation?

I find that impossible to find in Scriptures, precisely the place where we learn about death entering the world by 'sin' and where we read that Christ was the agent of Creation.

The implications of your blog continue to be to the effect that if there is a God, you don't believe a word he says.
cb25, Sir - You asked: "John, as someone asked "who has said there is no God?" That is neither explicit nor implicit in my blog. You and a couple of others have made that assumption."

Here is the culprit ☺ that asked this:

Roscoe Fogg 2 days ago  ReplyApproveDelete

Just who has proposed that there is no God?
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T

Ervin Taylor 6 days ago

As a factual matter, many evolutionists believe in God, but question the truthfulness of what humans, who say that they speak for God, say about Him/Her. Even Ellen White took the position that God is not represented in the words that mere humans use to describe God.

John Andrews 6 days ago

If the choice is between what "humans" say about God, I'll choose the ones who wrote Scriptures. It has stood the test of time, can't say the same for atheistic or theistic scientists.

Scriptures, Brother Taylor, that's the standard. If you can't agree on that, then you should not theologize, stick with a-theistic science.

David 1 week ago

Theistic evolutionists believe in Jesus as the Christ?

Ervin Taylor 6 days ago

Simple answer to David's simple question: Some do and some don't.

Bob Pickle 1 week ago

Chris,

The salt domes you speak of as large bubbles rising slowly, what are the surrounding sediments like? Are they violently fractured by the rising salt? What I am asking is if these sediments appear to have been solid, hard rock at the time the salt apparently rose, or do they give the appearance of being softer? If they appear to have been softer, then a flood scenario is the likely explanation, since that model calls for a lot of
sedimentary layers to potentially all be soft at the same time.

As far as the origin of the salt itself, consider Walter Brown's theory in *In the Beginning*, which calls for the waters that gushed out of the earth during the Flood to be highly mineralized. As far as corals go, I think possible explanations for these have been floating around for decades, after modern storms caused corals to "grow" rapidly when coral was transported and rammed into existing coral in another location. (I'm not sure where you got the 80-year figure between the Flood and Abraham.)

For your next blog entry, why not try a different approach? Why not take what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy say about creation, the Flood, and the age of the earth, and look for possible explanations of the evidence that support these divinely inspired sources rather than contradict them? After all, this is *Adventist Today*, and so it might be assumed that these various blogs here will not undermine Adventism's fundamental belief in the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, including matters of faith or belief regarding origins.

cb25

Bob,

I've placed a link below to info on the salt domes. Note in the seismic images about half way down the page the faulting and shaping indicative of hard rock.

re Brown. Highly imaginative "theory".

re Corals. The corals we are speaking of would require a growth rate multiple times what even the most generous creationist would suggest is possible.

The 80 years. This is not the time between the flood and Abram, but the time for which we cannot identify geography fully.

Note in Gen 10 Nimrod is the builder of cities in locations easily identified today. He was great grandson of Ham. That is not 500 years, let alone 1000.

Also, we are told Arpachshad was born 2 years after the flood. He became father of Shelah at age 35. So, 37 years after the flood. Note the ages of each of the next generation:

Eber 34 fathers Peleg
Peleg 30 fathers Reu
Reu 32 fathers Serug
Serug 30 fathers Nahor
Nahor 29 fathers Terah. Terah was born in Ur. Later, Abram (Son to Terah at 75) leaves Ur The land of his fathers and follows God's leading.

How long had Ur been the homeland? Those ages give us about 200 years from the flood, and there is little or no suggestion that Ur has not been the homeland for a long time. My suggestion is that they had been there at least since Peleg. Probably longer.

The coral terraces on the Sinai would place Ur 5 meters under water. There are three massive coral terraces
Would anyone suggest these three sea levels plus the associated corals happened between the flood and the time we find Ur very inhabited? Hardly.

Here's the link for the dead sea:
http://books.google.com.au/books?id=hU73uKLDywkC&pg=PA12&lpg=PA12&dq=geology+beneath+mount+sodom&source=bl&ots=u69KwcGVJB&sig=RnMmPrturZ1MJiW81vOVTeQ1V6I&hl=en&ei=PU9PTdiWKcaXcby91fkL&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CDcQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=false

Bob Pickle
6 days ago

Chris,

(a) There is no picture on the p. 12 which your link went to. Could you direct me to which picture you are speaking of? A photograph is preferred. (b) Brown's theory is no more imaginative than evolution. (c) Your comment about corals seems to ignore my point about storms causing coral reefs to drastically increase in size overnight. (d) Since the dispersion from the Babel did not occur until Peleg, why are you suggesting that Ur was occupied longer than Peleg?

Given the counsel regarding "seeds of doubt" in COL 41 and elsewhere, I am interested in hearing about your personal efforts to reconcile the supposed findings of skeptics with sacred history. What proposals have you personally come up with or located regarding the Sinai coral formations, etc., that reconcile these with biblical chronology? To just leave everyone hanging can plant seeds of doubt in people's minds that can lead to apostasy and the loss of heaven, as COL 41 states.

So what answers have you found that affirm faith in the accuracy of God's Word, and if you are short on answers, to what sources would you direct folks for such answers?

cb25
5 days ago

Hi Bob,

Sorry,...in the multitude of posts I didn't realize you had replied.

a. If the link went to the right place...you should be able to scroll up?
You could also do a search for this: New frontiers in dead sea paleoenvironmental research By Yehouda Enzel, Amotz Agnon, Mordechai Stein

b. One is based on very observable data, the other on possibilities that have never been observed and are not likely to be.

c. Storms can do as you say, but such an increase in size is depositional, not growth related. We are talking about growth related sizes.

d. My calculations suggest Peleg was born 100 years after the flood. So, I am suggesting that Ur was
occupied at least from 100 after flood. Probably earlier. Leaving a very short window of time to fit all this stuff in.

How do I reconcile these corals with Biblical chronology? I cannot. I wish I could.

re answers. It is my hope that recognition of the difficulties that these things represent, would encourage us collectively to seek those answers. Unfortunately, I don't think any answers will "affirm faith in God's Word" in the way you seek. It is bigger than that.

---

Bob Pickle 3 days ago

Chris,

(a) If I scroll up, there are lots of illustrations, but I have no idea which illustration you were directing attention to. (b) You seem to be comparing apples to oranges. Evolution is based on possibilities that have never been observed, and Brown's theory is based on very observable data. In other words, both sides discuss both data and possibilities. Regarding the highly mineralized-water aspect of Brown's theory, see http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/Limestone.html which discusses the very observable problem of earth's excess limestone.

(c) How do you know that we are talking about growth-related size rather than storm-related? Have you personally observed these corals?

Regarding reconciling, what efforts have you made to try to reconcile them? How much time and effort have you put into trying to come up with solutions?

---

cb25 3 days ago

Hi Bob,

a. The illustration/s are on page 5. That is a side on view of the Lisan diapir.

And page 6, bottom. This is a view of the Mt Sodom diapir. The view is from the southern end. That is as if you were standing at the south end of it and looking northwards along the western side of the dead sea.

The section on the right of the image is split from it because the images are the result of Isreal and Jordan. They have only recently begun to "share" data/research etc.

(c) The research I have done indicates corals that have grown in the place they are, If they were storm related, they apparently would be more composite.

No, I have not been there, but I have done a heap of research. I have emailed one tour operator in the area, and all the evidence I can find points to real, growth related corals.

How much effort to reconcile. A lot. I had begun to seriously question my YLC/YEC position, but when I came across these things it was difficult. This was mainly because, as I read it in the
Bible the land has not changed, and to see these corals, and especially the salt domes, blew me away.

Had you ever realized that stuff was under the dead sea? I certainly didn't, and I bet not many other readers did either.

Remember, most us Christians believe that the valley of Sodom is the original fertile valley that God poured fire and brimstone on in the days of Lot. Lot and Abram puts us way down from the flood. Actually, while I have not been there, there is a popular tourist spot on Mt Sodom, which is salt. It's a salt pillar called Lot's Wife!.

You do not get fertile valleys on top of 500 cubic kilometers of salt! So, yes, lots of effort.

cb25

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cb25

3 days ago

Bob,

I just tried to paste a couple of pics of Lots wife, and Mt Sodom, but could not get it to work properly. I think they were overload for the system. If anyone knows how and thinks it is worth doing let me know...

cb25

3 days ago

Bob Pickle and I have been dialoging about two thirds way up the thread. I”m going to try to past a couple of pics re the discussion about the dead sea etc. here to make it easier to find. (if I succeed)
The first pic is of Lots wife. It is in mt sodom, which itself is a mountain mostly of salt. being the tip of a 7km deep diapir.

It is considered by some to be the original fertile valley on which God poured fire and brimstone in the days of Lot. It's a public domain pic from blogspot.

Bob Pickle

3 days ago

Hi Chris.

(a) I have not digested every word of the article, but I keep seeing words like "interpretation," such as in the caption for Fig. 4, which indicate that lots of this is speculative and uncertain. In contrast, the same book of Genesis that calls the Dead Sea the "Salt Sea" speaks in no uncertain terms regarding the age of the earth, creation, and the Flood.

(c) Is it not possible that a weakness in your research is the relying on the data and theories of Adventist Today: Noah's Flood - A Lynchpin for the Creation Story
skeptics and infidels, when most of the time such individuals will not be sharing information contradicting their theories, often because they do not see such information since they aren't expecting it to be there? Before concluding that the Bible must be wrong, I would recommend that you do your own independent, thorough, and critical evaluation of such individuals' research.

If you can't have a fertile valley "on top of salt," why are farmers in the southern Jordan Valley growing bananas? Genesis describes a previously more fertile area near the Salt Sea, and millennia later we have an area near the Dead Sea where they grow bananas, a fact used by the Israeli government to lure tourists to visit.

Hi Bob,

I don't really think "interpretation" should be construed to mean speculative. Are they not quite different?

My personal view is that the dead sea is not the site of Lot's Sodom, and that in fact it was there long before. The reference you speak of plus the "tar pits" into which some of the kings fell are coherent with the dead sea region today. Tar balls still occasionally float to the top.

I am continuing my critical evaluation of data from both sides. At this point I think there was a lake (lisan) under the region between 70 and 17 k yrs ago, and is the source of the salt.

re my relying on data from infidels and skeptics. That is a pretty harsh judgment, and one that many scientists would object to being called.

Bob, just because one believes in or presents evidence for an old earth and life, does not make the either a skeptic or an infidel?

I do agree that sometimes we don't see what we are not looking for. In fact the hardest thing to find is what you are not looking for. Unfortunately, I think us Christians have such a monopoly on that one that the scientists are lucky to get a look in:) 

Cheers

Hi Chris.

(a) The article's repeated use of words like "interpretation" make clear that it isn't talking about certainties. It also makes clear that there have been other different "interpretations." So which interpretation is correct, if any? Sounds like speculation to me. (b) If you do not believe that Sodom was near the Dead Sea, where do you think it was?
What determines whether one is an infidel or skeptic is whether one believes the Bible or not. A scientist who refuses to believe the Bible and who repeatedly promotes conclusions that contradict the Bible may object to the use of these terms, but the labels fit nonetheless. We should remember that God told the Adventist church long ago that those who promote the idea that the days of creation are long ages are promoting a most dangerous form of infidelity.

"Old earth and life." How old do you think life is on earth? Was there death before Adam and Eve sinned, or do you think the apostle Paul was wrong when he denied that idea? But note that according to conventional radiometric dating techniques, as brought out at http://www.halos.com/reports/science-1976-coalified-wood.htm, Triassic and Cretaceous coalified wood samples were at least 270 to 760 times more recent than commonly dated by evolutionists. Given the references to these strata in the article on the salt domes, these corrected "dates" must be taken into account. Does your 70 to 17k figure take this into account?

cb25

Hi Bob,

You make some good points. Yes interpretations change. However usuallly such changes are not diametrically oppsed to previous interpretations, but a tweaking of the edges due to new information.

Where do I think sodom was? Near the Dead Sea. My point was that the dead sea is not the result of the burning of Sodom, but predates it by a very long time.

re death before sin, I have commented on that elsewhere in the thread. Death before sin on this earth.

Radiometric dating? This may sound silly, but even if we conclusively proved such dating did not work, I would still have to believe in a very old earth and life, because how I see the geologic and other matter around me says simply it is very very old.

If we don't like the interpretations I have supported, then someone needs to produce another one. But...it needs to take account of the existing data and be believable to anyone with common sense. Brown, Snelling and other YEC at this stage cannot explain the salt or the corals, or anything else in the world and still meet the common sense criteria imho.

re the 17kyrs etc. Whatever dating methods one accepts is irrelevant to the point there are 500 cubic kilometers of salt buried under thousands of meters of overlaying deposited material. The Bible story tells me it was there before Abram, probably immediately after the "flood" event time frame. I have to conclude that the volumes of highly soluble salt, under such debris, could not have gotten there during or after the flood, so must pre date it. Dating methods are not needed, but simply become useful as a confirmation.
Hi Chris.

"Death before sin." Wow! I found what you wrote elsewhere on this. Personally, I think people who put their own personal opinions above the Word of God have a severe ego problem, since they somehow think they are smarter than God. But then, on what logical basis are you using your understanding of a Bible story to date salt domes and alleged corals if you don't believe the Bible anyway? Why are you taking the stories about Abram to be authoritative if you don't take what the Bible says about Adam, sin, and death to be authoritative?

Note that, assuming you understood my point, you indicate in your reply that you are determined to hold your opinions regarding salt domes and alleged corals even if standard radiometric dating techniques demand that there is not enough time for evolutionary explanations for these phenomena to take place. This suggests a lack of scientific objectivity since it puts preconceived opinions above clearly observable data.

The fact that the U/Pb ratios in the U-238 halos are too high and about the same for Triassic and Cretaceous coalified wood samples suggests that these layers were deposited at the same time, relatively recently, presumably by a catastrophic flood. Common sense demands that any hypothesis regarding the salt domes and alleged corals cannot ignore these facts when the article you provided a link to depicts the salt domes in relation to Jurassic and Cretaceous strata.

Hi Bob,

mmm re authoritative ...you may notice in my blog I invite YEC's to be confronted by "their own authority". The Bible. While I recognize it has such, my view is quite different.

re objectivity and observable data. My opinions are based on observable data. Dating methods are a dating method which to me is confirmatory, but not needed to show a very old world etc.

Some one made a great point on Dr Taylors latest blog about some of these dating arguments: suggested that measuring something a few hundred years old and expecting accurate results was like measuring a hundred yard dash with a sundial.

Different context and point, but it does make one. The observable data is evidence enough to convince me, that unless a coherent scenario can be found, these things point to massive amounts of time prior to Abram etc.
Cheers

Bob Pickle  7 hours ago

Chris,

Your comments come across to me as if your reliance on "observable data" is subjective, not objective. If that be the case, no amount of evidence would be convincing to you because things would still look old to you, even when they are not.

Far better would it be to acknowledge the time constraints imposed by the U/Pb ratios already mentioned, and then ensure that your theory for the origin of the salt domes and alleged corals falls within those contraints. If you feel resistant to that idea, then I would suggest that neither the Bible nor science is the ultimate authority for you. The question would then be, what is?

Given the very evil results COL 41 depicts as resulting from planting seeds of doubt as you have done in this blog, I really think you need to rethink all of this. It isn't as if God never told you and me in explicit terms that we should not be doing this. Read COL 41 and see if you don't think it applies.

Bob Pickle  6 hours ago

One additional thought is that you are putting so much stock in "observable data" which you have admitted that you have never personally observed. Therefore, you aren't basing your conclusions on observable data at all since you haven't observed that data, but must instead be basing them upon the assertions of skeptics and infidels, which for some reason you have decided to give more weight to than, and to exalt above, the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus. Would not this qualify as apostasy?

http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/HydroplateOverview7.html provides an explanation for salt domes. http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/HydroplateOverview4.html refers to salt water being found in German and Russian superdeep boreholes. http://www.slb.com/~/media/Files/resources/oilfield_review/ors95/jan95/composite.ashx confirms that a lot of salt water was found in the KTB borehole.

Really, discounting Brown's hypothesis by calling it imaginative and saying it doesn't appeal to common sense is woefully inadequate given the topic you have chosen and the issues you have raised. Please be specific as to why his hypothesis cannot possibly be a plausible explanation.
Was it mutation that caused the southern hemisphere humans to have darker skins because of climate, and the northerners to have lighter skin?

Was it harmful or beneficial (to the people) to have sickle cell that prevented malaria, while at the same time causing damage? Did it allow larger population to survive that might have otherwise died of malaria? (Children are more vulnerable.)

Does the "increased knowledge" relate to mutation or what? Mere education? Do genes mutate to improve the race, e.g., the approximately dozen members of the most talented musicians of the Bach family? Does acquired knowledge improve the genes through generations? We now know more about nature than has ever been known previously, and we shouldn't discount all the genetic discoveries in the past decade which may reveal information that contradicts much of received intelligence. Should we dare limit our knowledge to what is known currently?

David

Mrs. Nelson I will assume I'm talking to my gram mother. With the respect I will say “Abuelita”

Was it mutation that caused the southern hemisphere humans to have darker skins because of climate, and the northerners to have lighter skin?

Depends how far (south or north) you wanted to go because people that had close to the North Pole they are the similar color to the ones who live in South America.

Was it harmful or beneficial (to the people) to have sickle cell that prevented malaria, while at the same time causing damage?

We know that this mutation results in deleterious effects a live full of pain (while in crisis) and died sooner if medical treatment is provided.

Did it allow larger population to survive that might have otherwise died of malaria? (Children are more vulnerable.)

Who knows but not every single place that is found malaria they have sickle cell.

Does the "increased knowledge" relate to mutation or what? Mere education?

Abuelita  i don’t understand your question

Do genes mutate to improve the race, e.g., the approximately dozen members of the most talented musicians of the Bach family?

No as far we know, on the contrary mutation resulted in diseases and death. The Nazis at one point
they really believed in evolution and they implemented their diabolical methods to exterminate other “inferior races”

The family of Back have a mutation to makes they great musicians? Hum... they have to prove.

Does acquired knowledge improve the genes through generations?

Is complicated, we know that smart, normal and retarded children may born from very intelligent parents. Genius kids are born from average parents and when they have their own kids they could have intelligent, normal or retarded children. (Linear regression)

Should we dare limit our knowledge to what is known currently?

Of course not, but what we know is pretty clear that mutations are against evolution. If some day is proven that mutations makes better, stronger, more intelligent we may have to accept the facts. By the same talk if same day the sasquatch appear we may have to accept his existence and maybe we could invite him eat a cake with Ice cream. But until day this are just wishful thinking

---

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

I will strongly agree with the question and statement below raised by Mr. Butler among his other very pertinent, calm and rational comments:

- I expect this sort of nonsense from the agnostic and the atheist, but from a SDA?
- The blatant rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy that underlies many of these assumptions is a sad commentary on how far we have fallen.

T

---

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

David, you wrote:

"The family of Back (sic) have a mutation to makes they great musicians? Hum... they have to prove.

Evidently you are not familiar to what the majority of musicians say is the greatest musician of all time: Johann Sebastian Bach. His family for many generations were widely known throughout Europe. He composed all his music dedicated "Sola de Gloria" and composed dozens of masses, religious cantatas and more.

---

David 1 week ago

I was not referring if the family of Bach were accomplished musicians. I was referring that somebody has to prove if this was because they have a “specific genetic mutation”. Is most likely that their accomplishments were a result of the environment (good lessons, high stimulation, family pressure etc,
etc) that a genetic mutation.

Elaine Nelson  1 week ago

But then the question arises: Are such effects only dependent on environment, or is it possible that increased education plus environment cannot be transmitted genetically?

I recall some years ago reading of an adopted boy who was always so different from the family who raised him--poorly educated, but loving, parents with little exposure to other worlds outside their immediate small town. He began early to be extremely interested in the arts and theater, and long afterward, he discovered the identity of his parents: they were both Shakespearean actors! There was nothing in his environment that would have given him such interest.

This has been shown repeatedly in twin studies: twins separated at birth when meeting in adulthood had many more same interests from foods to hobbies and even dress preferences!

David  1 week ago

Of course that question is interesting but somebody has to prove, to identify the “specific mutation”, but like I said before until now is wishful thinking.

A more serious question is why not all the descendents of Bach are great musicians?

Ervin Taylor  1 week ago

Mr. Fogg has again contributed to reasonable discourse on this thread with the comment: “The evidence against a recent worldwide flood is overwhelming. Just say a miracle happened to make the world look old and all is well.” Excellent suggestion although that approach might call into question what kind of God would do that. But that is for another discussion.

Might I ask those who insist that there is a lot of evidence in favor of a recent worldwide flood why the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) of the Adventist Church, which has spend literally millions of dollars of tithe money over a period of more than 30 years, had such a difficult time coming up with solid scientific evidence supporting the idea of a recent world wide flood? Do they need to spend more money? How much longer should they be given? At some point, perhaps a reasonable person would conclude that the GRI has been given an impossible task because convincing scientific evidence simply does not exist.

Bob Pickle  2 days ago

Erv,

A reasonable person cannot conclude that such does not exist if they have read the literature. The U/Pb ratios in coalified wood samples from Triassic, Juerassic, and Creatceous strata would be just one example. David Read's book on dinosaurs, which you reviewed, catalogs other evidence, such as lower strata layers
containing dinosaur tracks but little or no dinosaur bones, and higher layers containing dinosaur bones but little or no plants. Yet another example would be the discovery of soft tissue in dinosaur bones, which indicates that the portion of the geologic column containing such anomalies and above are much younger than what evolutionists assert and assume, which in turn requires something akin to a catastrophic flood to produce what we now see.

When you suggest that no convincing scientific evidence of the Flood exists, what are you really saying? What sort of reasonable, unbiased person would conclude that the above is not convincing evidence, even if ultimately they decide against the biblical account?

Horace Butler  1 week ago

I'm not sure why GRI has a difficult time coming up with evidence for a recent flood. I rarely peruse their material because others are more active in debunking the myths of evolution, and are, frankly, doing a better job at it. I find the evidence more than convincing. Too many dubious assumptions must be made to achieve a flood that happened more than a few thousand years ago. The assumption of a certain rate of deposition of sediment, for example. But there is no way of knowing the rate of deposition at the time the sediment was laid down. And the eruption of Mt. St. Helens has shown that canyons complete with "many years worth" of sedimentary deposits can form in days, or even hours, given the right conditions. Even some evolutionists are coming around to the idea that the Grand Canyon was formed rapidly by fast moving water. The aftermath of the flood fits that scenario well. That's only one example. There are many more.

Oh, and if the flood occurred as long ago as some here would like to believe, we'd have to throw out the Biblical chronology, which, although it may have a few gaps, certainly does not allow for more than a few hundred years one way or the other.

Why is it that so many are so willing to question the Bible before they question the conclusions of so-called scientists?

David  1 week ago

It just occur to me an interesting conversation is going on among, Elaine, Chris, Erv, Quimo, Roscoe, Thomas and others who do not believe in the 6 day literal creation and the flood. They are having their time of their lives attacking to the ones who believe in the creation as well in the flood. Suddenly a young man no educated in the prestigious universities of this world engage in the conversation and He says  my name is Jesus I came from a little town call Nazareth and this what I have to tell you “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” Matthew 28:30.
I wonder how they will answer...
Now here is a really a problem to the ones who they call themselves Christians and don't believe what Jesus believe.
Jesus believed in the flood, as is described in Genesis (nothing more nothing less). If He believed so I do.
If the flood did not occurred, Jesus, the Messiah, the Creator, the one who stated he was the true believed in a lie?
If a “Christian” does not believe in the flood why he will believe in the Second Coming of the Lord? Well Jesus put together both events one as a guaranty to the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horace Butler</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>Well said, David. It may be time for me to stop beating my head against the wall. Maybe . . . .</td>
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<tr>
<th>Roscoe Fogg</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>David, I believe that &quot;In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.&quot; I cherish the Sabbath. I've accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and I look forward to His second coming. May I call you my brother?</td>
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<tr>
<th>David</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Roscoe you can call me brother, because you are my brother in Christ</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ervin Taylor</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Butler thinks that other YEC/YLC apologetic organizations such as Answers in Genesis do a &quot;better job&quot; than GRI. The reason is that Answers in Genesis and similar organizations are totally irresponsible in how they handle scientific data. At least the GRI has some reasonable standards by which it operates. (By the way, some YEC/YLC organizations consider the GRI to be &quot;too liberal&quot; because it views the age of the earth as being billions of years old.)</td>
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<th>John Andrews</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brother Taylor, you advocate so much the separation of science and theology yet, at the same time, you would like to see theology bow down complete to modern science. Can we PLEASE keep them separate? What we choose to believe as christians should not depend on the confines of atheistic science, it's simply called FAITH (what you call &quot;wishful thinking&quot;). Scientists should also be free to analyze their data how they see fit while respectfully allowing Christians to see things how Scripture helps us to. You seem confused on how you'd like to have both relate to each other.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Elaine Nelson</th>
<th>1 week ago</th>
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<tr>
<td>If the SDA church has funded the GRI for so many years with the specific mission to &quot;prove&quot; the Bible story of the flood, and they admit they have no evidence whatsoever, who among those posting here are far more knowledgeable in such sciences to conclude they know much better than the SDA-sponsored study group?</td>
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Are they to be believed?
Where is the evidence? Would throwing more money hasten the answers? Send more money to GRI, those who are determined to find evidence.

Spencer Albracht 1 week ago

I read the comments from top to bottom and a few observations are apparent to me. The gentleman who wrote the article and those who support him think they are presenting new information to those who believe in a literal 6 day creation. Unlike evolutionists, creationists are willing to look at all evidence from every aspect, not discounting an idea because an atheist is involved in the process. The tone taken by the creationists in this comment section are markedly different from the berating and belittling tone the evolutionists have taken. I am embarrassed for the evolutionists positions as well as their lack of respect.

Christ Will Create A New Heart In His Followers

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3. The change that must come to the natural, inherited, and cultivated tendencies of the human heart is that change of which Jesus spoke when He said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”... He virtually said to Nicodemus, It is not controversy that will help your case. Arguments will not bring light to your soul. You must have a new heart, or you cannot discern the kingdom of heaven. It is not greater evidence that will bring you into a right position, but new purposes, new springs of action. You must be born again. Until this change takes place, until all things are made new, the strongest evidence that could be presented would be useless.... EGW

Jack Hoehn 1 week ago

Spencer, you may have "evolutionists" here who believe Science has done away with the Creator, but most of us on AT do not believe this. We believe the Creator is greater and more amazing that we used to think, and that the Genesis story is a short introduction to a much larger and more wonderful reality. Since the WORLD of God has enlarged and expanded our understanding of the WORD of God for us, we feel we are grown up Christians, not atheist evolutionists. Yet you suggest we have only two choices--believe against the evidence that it happened 6,000 years ago in 144 hours, or be atheists. There is another choice. We can believe that God is the Creator of all that is, and humbly admit that how and when He did it, we didn't fully understand in our childhood and youth.
It is not fair, not kind, and not true to paint us a godless evolutionists. We are God's best friends and even if we are wrong in our science, we are not His nor the church's enemies. If you wish you can continue to
categorize and demonize us as "evolutionists", but it would be more correct to refer to us as "long term Creationists". This conversation would be more useful if we realize it is largely between two types of Creationists, not between creationists and evolutionists.

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<tr>
<th>Preston Foster</th>
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<td>Jack,</td>
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<td>I understand the sentiment of what you are saying, and, I'm sure that there might be more accurate descriptions of your position (as you've provided). But, the bottom line is, though you believe in God, you don't believe the way His Word BEGINS is accurate and is flawed.</td>
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<td>In essence, you are saying, &quot;We understand more than what the Bible reveals,&quot; effectively putting your knowledge in a superior position to the way God chose to introduce Himself to us in His Word.</td>
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<td>That requires more confidence in ourselves than limited believers are entitled to have -- to say the very least.</td>
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<td>If Genesis (the beginning) is wrong, how could what follows be right?</td>
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<td>This is why those of us believe that this quasi-evolutionist theory is, wittingly or not (doesn't really matter), underlining the authenticity of God and the authority of the Bible.</td>
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<th>Elaine Nelson</th>
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<td>Flooding a comment with links demonstrates the paucity of ability to explain one's opinions. The internet has all sorts of material ready at a click. There is no sorting for veracity only a proliferation of information by a request.</td>
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<td>Using the Bible for a source of the latest and best scientific evidence is used very selectively as anyone can prove almost anything using the Bible; and it has been done since it was written. How soon is forgotten that the church for nearly 1500 years used the Bible as &quot;proof&quot; that the earth had four corners and that the sun revolved around the earth. Are the creationists here willing to stand by Joshua's command for the sun to stand still? It's there--in the Bible. There is no &quot;starting date&quot; for Creation, only the very faulty genealogical record &quot;assuming&quot; backwards. Had God wanted man to know more, He surely would have told us. The age of the earth has absolutely no relationship to one's salvation, as the one command echoing through the centuries is &quot;Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.&quot; There was never a mention of doctrinal belief on the age of the earth; but men choose trivial pursuits and avoid the weightier matters.</td>
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<th>Jack Hoehn</th>
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| Adventist long age creationists don't disbelieve in Noah and his flood. They disbelieve in the theories that try to make that flood explain everything in geology. Adventists who permit Sister White to be a human spokesman for God who gave God's message using the common science of her day, instead of a divine immaculate source of data are just trying to prevent our
church from reproducing the sin of the first Christian church who made the mother of Christ immaculate and
divine. We Adventists who love and respect Ellen White are greatly grieved by those who follow the devil's
plan of making her irrelevant to the 21st century by the sin of deification of her writings as sources of secret
knowledge. Both the Bible, Jesus, and the Spirit of Prophecy spoke God's messages using the science their
audience knew. Today Jesus would not speak of epilepsy as being caused by demons.

JIMS Seven

Blogger, Mr. Barrett blogs:
"I am a Christian, but to me this evidence is beyond dispute."

As a Christian one will always have lots and lots to do with the word 'FAITH' (at AT some of the eminent
writers prefer to call it 'Wishful thinking' a lame effort that is often employed also by the individuals and
groups who try to question the resurrection of Jesus by attributing the 'Evidence' of the disciples seeing the
reurrected CHRIST). If there are evidences well and good but one should be careful on relying on 'Evidence'
too much. Somewhere I read this 'A faith built on proofs can easily crumble when those 'Proofs' at times turn
out to be......'.

'Faith' and 'Evidence': Hebrews 11:1 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things
not seen'. When faith is involved evidence is a secondary thing I guess as the person will be walking by faith
and not by sight.

Mr. Barrett asserts: 'It seems to me anyone who has studied these data with an open mind should seriously
question a 6000 year-old-earth, a special creation, and a global flood'

The bible believing SDA Christians didn't invent the Special creation because as a bible believing Adventist
Christian will always stick to only one account of Creation (Genesis account), And it is all those 'millions of
years group' that invented this theory of another creation in place of Genesis version. That is too well known.
Whether one believes it or not-There is no another truth of Creation except the one for which we as a bible
believing SDA take stand and are often made fun of. Origin of Creation can never be compared to Original
Creation (Genesis). Science is good. When used and understood properly it will always lead to a more closer
faith walk with the one WHO GIVES WISDOM TO MANY SCIENTISTS.
But when Science too much tries to be master of everything on the basis of it's basics such as Matter (Earth),
Space (Heaven), Energy/Power (God), Time (In the begining), Action (Created) etc. then it falls short of it's
purpose of bringing glory to God.

Data on global flood: I at times find it funny seeing the frail effort of people when they try to ask this
question (mostly to support their own million of years' theories and to question the truth of God's word):
There are enough datas to prove there was a global flood (Personally I would believe this even if these datas
were not available): 'Scholars have found legends of remarkably similar nature (Global flood reporting) in
many of the world's tribe and nations' (Emphasis supplied).There are more than 80 such legends and
traditions around the world's tribes where the global flood story is featured in more or less the similar
manner. How can this be? This needs a serious thought.
One thing is clear mankind has only one 'Original account of creation and the flood story also is supported by
the historical facts.
Some here even are expressing there dissatisfaction when the links are posted here for providing detailed information (however it's upon and individual discretion whether the person wants to click the link or not), me thinks this is also because of the fact that the person is not sporting those ideas, So what should i say..."It is OK to post the links when they support my idea and it is not OK to post the link when they don't support my idea"........oops...somebody help'....good day...

Horace Butler

It just occurred to me that those who are engaged in this discussion come to the table with 2 contradictory mindsets. One group appears to have more faith in science than in the Bible and will side with science when it appears to be in conflict with Scripture. The other group takes the Bible as its authority and final arbiter of truth, even when it appears to be in conflict with science. One may argue that it is our interpretation of the Bible that is in error, but the traditional methods of Biblical interpretation used by SDA's are not unique and they are based on the most straightforward understanding of the text, depending on context, style (narrative, prophecy, poetry, allegory, etc.), and how other inspired writers (Jesus, Paul, Peter, etc.) have interpreted it.

There is no reason to abandon our historic understanding of the flood narrative just because current science appears to have proved it erroneous. I don't know much about salt domes, but I do know one thing: there were no scientists there when they were formed; no one to measure their rate of formation. There are many factors which would affect the rate at which these salt domes (or any other type of formation or deposit) were formed. Since these factors are impossible to know this far removed in time from the event, certain assumptions must be made in terms of chemical composition, rate of flow, etc.. Therefore, any conclusions based on these assumptions cannot be accurate. It's sort of like walking into a room and seeing an hour glass that is half full. One assumes that it was turned over a half hour ago, but unless someone tells you that, it is an unwarranted assumption.

cb25

Horace, I just have to pick up on your hour glass example. It is opposite of what you say:

all one has to do is take a look at the hour glass...if it is still running, it is in fact a warranted assumption that it was turned over half an hour ago. To suggest otherwise would be the unwarranted assumption! This world is still "running" and I can take a look at it and make pretty safe assumptions on why it looks like it does in certain places, because in spite of all the ho ha about uniformity....salt glasses still run just like the always did!

Cheers

Horace Butler

How can you know it was turned over an hour ago? Did someone tell you that, or did you just make that assumption? Someone could have turned it over when it was half empty, only seconds before you entered the room. It is the same with trying to date past events that occurred before detailed record were compiled. Radioactive decay rates are not always constant, yet that's what so much of the dating mechanisms are based on. Erosion rates are not constant, and yet that is what the erroneous conclusions about the age of the Grand Canyon were based on. Too much is taken for granted by those who make these assessments, partly because they have already decided that evolution is a fact and the earth is
billions of years old. Any evidence that seems to be contrary to that philosophy is discounted—unless the scientist is really searching for the truth.

Horace Butler

Sorry, I meant a half an hour ago in that first sentence.

cb25

Horrace,

You are right...someone could have turned it over seconds before I entered the room, in which case it would still actually have been running for half an hour!

I do take your point, there are variables that can vary the degree of certitude in any assumption. However, to walk into a room, observe a running hour glass, and that it is half empty, means the most obvious and logical assumption is that it was turned over half an hour ago. Further research into the variables you mention is useful and may change the conclusion. But you would not begin with the less likely conclusion first!

So it is with the world around us...if it looks like salt in the Rift Valley - it probably is. If it looks like its been pushing its way up for 50000 years it probably has. If there are corals in the deserts higher up than Ur where Abrams ancestors lived...Then it must have grown there when Ur was under water. The only time that could have logically happened is before the "flood".

True, there may be variables that show this assumption is wrong, but I suspect not. I also suspect that if there were no agenda to cling to a YEC position, the variables would not even be considered possibilities!

cb25

Trevor Hammond

Hey – JIMS Seven Sir, I just heard about the 6.9 earthquake in your area. It’s nice to know you’re ok. Your post indicates that you are safe. We are praying for you guys out there in the Himalaya’s. God bless. T

JIMS Seven

Mr. Hammond,

Yes, It is measured the same as you mentioned, the reports of loss of life and wealth are still coming in. God is good and We have made it to another day without complications. Thank you for your prayers for peace and restoration in the Himalaya's. God bless you and many others who are praying for us at these
difficult times. Signing off with this beautiful quote I received in my email from a dear friend:

"There is so much of these natural disasters all around the world. I believe that they are a reminder that we are not in charge of this planet and also these signs tell us we are heading to our heavenly home. It’s closer than we think..."

Stay blessed.

---

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

Praise the Lord! Brother JIMS Seven, Wise man from the East...Praise the Lord!

**Psalm 91:1** He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

**Psalm 91:2** I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

😊

T

---

Thomas "Vastergotland" 1 week ago

A quote I found interesting from the [http://biologos.org/blog/ask-an-evolutionary-creationist-a-qa-with-dennis-venema](http://biologos.org/blog/ask-an-evolutionary-creationist-a-qa-with-dennis-venema) webpage:

"Your assumption, that “evolution offers a mechanism for understanding the existence of living organisms that doesn’t require the existence of a god” holds weight only if one has the view that “natural explanations” and “theistic explanations” are a zero-sum game. This is a God-of-the-gaps approach, where God has less and less to do as we understand more and more how nature works (and a view I reject). Logically, if I held this view I would view science as an inherently evil activity, since any natural explanation diminishes the activity of God from this viewpoint. Your view is also one that science cannot establish as correct, since science cannot speak to the absence of divine action in an observed phenomenon."

Dennis Venema

Emphasis added by me.

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Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

Hey - Bryan Bissell, Sir

Thanks for the informative links you have provided. Evolutionists have unambiguously tried to pull their evolved wool over our eyes which in most cases is forced onto the general public using unscrupulous politicking via a majority of atheist scientists ganging up via the state supported educational institutions and schooling systems which are freely available as pulpits to further the ideals of a godless society and moreso a godless Universe. I'm so glad there are people like yourself and the many others out there who say; 'How 'bout' NO!'"
It seems many evolution scientists have their heads stuck in the 'fossils' for far too long which has caused them to avoid seeing the rather inconvenient truth (to them that is) that Intelligent Life is a product of an Intelligent Creator who is NOT governed by the constraints of time, space and matter. From the micro sub-atomic particles of matter to the giant stars that 'hang' in space and the innumerable designed 'systems' found throughout the known universe, there is undeniable order and purpose. Evolution grossly lacks a reasonable explanation for this: just lots of Hoo-hah.

God Bless

T

Dr. Walter Veith has been brushed aside as one who has erroneous views. Here are a few excerpts of his views. I think it is only fair to him as a scientist to have his view also considered in such a discussion. He has, from what I have gathered, shaken the very basis of evolution theory and debunked it as a true science just like many other reputable scholars like Dr. John Lennox and Dr. Ravi Zacharias who unlike Dr. Veith are not SDA's.

Professor Walter Veith obtained his doctorate in zoology from the University of Cape Town in 1979. He believes that the theory of evolution does not provide a plausible explanation of our origins, and that the geological and paleontological data do not support evolution over long periods of time, but rather imply catastrophism, which is consistent with the Genesis account.

- Over the last decades, theories of compromise between science and Scripture have become more common. However, the two worldviews—a literal six-day Creation and a naturalistic evolution—are mutually exclusive if we wish to accept them in their fullness.
- The Gap Theory proposes two cycles of Creation. In the first cycle, there is an initial six-day Creation. Everything is then destroyed by God, and a gap or period of time occurs. Then, the Creation described in Genesis occurs. This interpretation allows for long time periods. However, there is no evidence of a gap in the fossil record and this model raises more questions than answers.
- Progressive Creation suggests that God created numerous times, and that these Creation episodes were spread over long ages. Scripture does not support this theory.
- Deistic Evolution adheres to the concept of some form of deity, but denies Scripture and the personal nature of God. God, according to this model, is not active in human affairs.
- Space Ancestry, also called Panspermia or Cosmic Creation, proposes that life did not evolve on Earth but was transported to Earth via meteorites or other stellar sources. This idea originated in response to the fact that evolution on Earth is not a viable option. In a sense, this theory merely transports the problem to space.

These theories of compromise are not substantiated in biology or geology, and contradict the Word of God. [This article is adapted from The Genesis Conflict by Professor Walter J. Veith, PhD Zoology, renowned author, scientist, and lecturer from South Africa’s Cape Town University. Veith believes that the theory of evolution does not provide a plausible explanation of our origins. His findings are also available on DVD or online through Amazing Discoveries™.]

It is rather odd that scientists defending ‘old earth’ and evolution theory as found in this blog should try and avoid a very credible Christian and Scientist like the honourable Dr Walter Veith by trying to discredit him: not based objectively on the science he subscribes to but based on a subjective effort to discredit him.
It seems many evolution scientists have their heads stuck in the 'fossils' for far too long which has caused them to avoid seeing the rather inconvenient truth (to them that is) that Intelligent Life is a product of an Intelligent Creator who is NOT governed by the constraints of time, space and matter. From the micro sub-atomic particles of matter to the giant stars that 'hang' in space and the innumerable designed 'systems' found throughout the known universe, there is undeniable order and purpose. Evolution grossly lacks a reasonable explanation for this: just lots of Hoo-hah.

God Bless
T

---

**Thomas "Vastergotland"**

Trevor

Could you be persuaded into giving a one paragraph summary for each of the Dr's you mentioned above, describing how they have debunked evolution? I am a little familiar with Dr Zacharias through his podcasts, and the wikipedia biography of Dr Lennox shows that he is a veteran defender of theism. Neither wikipedia biography mentioned their evolution debunking work.

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**cb25**

Trevor,

I do not dismiss Veith lightly, but as I noted earlier - he "pushed me over the edge". A well meaning church member loaned my his stuff on creation and translations. Having done NT Greek, OT Hebrew and Canon, the alarm bells rang. I rechecked and he misquotes, miss interprets, and twists words.

Similarly with creation. Twisted words, twisted logic, wild assumptions, and theories presented as fact. Some things he presents are not as he believes them to be.

I wish he were right....it would be a lot easier. One only needs to see some of the reactions to my blog to see how it is in a local SDA church when one holds my position. I am not alone, there are many others who have taken the hard road and endeavor to maintain faith in the context of an evolutionary process. When enough of us do that...that is when real dialogue will take place!

Cheers

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**Trevor Hammond**

cb25, Sir

Please give ONE example of each of the following with you mention which based on your own NT Greek, OT Hebrew and Canon has caused you to be 'pushed over the edge' which Dr. Veith has been accused of doing:

"I rechecked and he misquotes, miss interprets, and twists words."
Please cb25, just one misquote, miss interpretation or twisted words example you have found with his views regarding his explanations as a scientist/zoologist in terms of our origins.

T

cb25 1 week ago

Hi Trevor,

I have returned the cd's now, and would need to go through and find references to give you examples. If you listen to the cd's re translation, and check his quoting re Westcot and Hort, and also his line up of early translations..I think it was Athanasius or one of those guys, and east vs west uses. But he totally miss represents and twists these areas. You will need to do the leg work on that if you are interested. I stand by my statements.

Re geology. Again, I no longer have access to get specific. One place I recall he referred to was Burning Mountain, here in NSW Oz. I have been there, and the points he made about it are the least conceivable assumption one would make as to its origins if they were not trying to grind a particular axe.

There were many others, but without the resource on hand, I risk mixing them up. He does claim if I recall that the geologic column does not exist in its entirety anywhere in the world, or similar to that. Obviously he knows little of the data that is out there on that one!

Again, I have no qualms standing by my points.

Cheers

JIMS Seven 1 week ago

Blogger Mr. Barret declares:

To: Bryan Bissell Sir,'...your comments are nothing more than an attempt to create links and feed readers into the creationist sites.' I wonder what is his (cb25) attempt here?

Then he demands : 'Man up and provide direct comment on the blog points.' But later at some point He responds to Mr. Hammond implying he (cb25) doesnot have CDs etc and etc. So Mr. Barret what should we do (you don't want to go and listen to the experts view pointed by Mr. Bissell and you don't want to accept the researched explaination by Mr. Hammond)? Actually some elderly and respected commentators here in AT do that quite often. I think we should only be providing the links and explainations that supports your blog (point) rather than.... hahaha ....LOL.. (no offense)..have a good day.

cb25 1 week ago

Hey Jims,
My purpose here is to raise the issues we as Christians face in an attempt to further understanding and dialogue.

I think you missed my point on the cd's. They were borrowed from someone and have been returned. I have listened to them at great length. In addition I have listened to many links and more than Mr Bissell provided.

I have no problem with links, but I believe they should be accompanied by a brief point or two that addresses the blog so as to stay on topic and show the writer has actually grasped the issues presented in the blog and is making an effort to address such. Mr Blisset did none of those things as I read it.

Cheers

---

cb25

Jims, perhaps I should give an example here of how Mr Bissel did not address the blog.

He did provide a link re corals, but when I watched that rather long vid, the material did not offer any significant points to address the blog. Sure, it dealt with corals, and I have put a reply to Bryan on that point. It actually gave credibility to my points as I understood it!

As for a "researched explanation" by Mr Hammond. Offering Dr Veith is not a researched explanation relevant to the blog.

Re respect. I don't know who most commentators on here are, so take them on face value of the veracity of their comments. It makes for a perhaps rather level playing field in my ignorance, but that can be a good thing.

Cheers.

---

JIMS Seven

cb25, sorry my typing is slow and due to some very personal reason could not reply earlier so in haste would just try to say this much: I knew you would come up with this coral issue for which directly or indirectly it was addressed (not forgetting many other topics in those links) to an extent of convincing a humble mind nevertheless you thought something else. The issue of Spiritual warefare I guess is much bigger than you or me so to say 'my credit' or 'his credit' is little childish...LOL....

RE: Dr. Veith- I am apalled at your response towards the post on Dr. Veith. It is like questioning the credibility of that man's knowledge ad by the way how much more in these small column post should we expect? WHOLE THESIS.......I stick to my previous post on this and as a fellow human i am convinced by what Mr. Hammond presented citing Dr. Veith....I don't need to know what clothes he wore? where he slept? etc....hope you get what I
am saying.

RE: 'Most commentators'...the words that I or you or someone else are putting in here reveals about ourselves much....more than that you should not expect me to name people.....what say????
good day

JIMS Seven

1 week ago

cb25 aka blogger Mr. Barrett:

We in our SS time have a segment in our local Church called the 'Feature talk'. The presenter brings out some amazing things either from nature or from some inventions and discoveries etc. The end of that presentation is always linked to the power, wisdom and providence of God-An important connection or lesson whatever we call it (perhaps some might immediately call us first class doctrinated people hahaha).

Now moving on to your statement/purpose etc (in the light of your claim as a 'Christian' in this blog): 'My purpose here is to raise the issues we as Christians face in an attempt to further understanding and dialogue.'

Good in fact very good but personally I feel the 'attempt to further understanding and dialogue' should concentrate on exalting the ONE who says, 'The cattles on a thousand hills are mine', 'The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof', 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool'

The common point in our attempt as 'Christians' (you say) 'understanding and dialogue' to exalt the ONE who has 'no beginning and end' falls without even reaching the middle path if our purposes don't agree, forget about reaching the end. The local SS practise I pointed above and your 'attempt to further understanding and dialogue' I think vary a lot. As a Christian we have to choose one: Either we accept the authority of the Bible or go about proving our logics and findings falsely believing they are better than the WORDS of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Please there is no middle line there. Though we label ourselves, Progressive, Liberal, Traditionalist etc certain truths never change: The truths of Biblical account of Creation, Sabbath, Sanctuary and the IJ to name few. We are either Sheeps or Goats. We cannot be both.

RE: 'I think you missed my point on the cd's. They were borrowed from someone and have been returned.'

Your explanation on CDs understood. Fine.

But you yourself again claim '....I have listened to them at great length. In addition I have listened to many links and more than Mr Bissell provided.' then you would have atleast have some soul searching then because he didn't provide some bogus links (moreover he also made some effort to clearly write certain researched facts and he has been sincere enough to claim that one cannot be expert in everything). If not I am afraid you must have listened or read those with biased attitude (Correct me here but be genuine- not to me but to yourself)

RE: 'have no problem with links, but I believe they should be accompanied by a brief point or two that addresses the blog so as to stay on topic and show the writer has actually grasped the
issues presented in the blog and is making an effort to address such. Mr Blissel did none of those things as I read it.'

To tell you the truth personally I found the posts of David (Sir), Mr. Hammond and Mr. Bissell more convincing than your blog. They brought in more new and better infos than yours (In this you as a blogger have succeeded-in getting the discussion unfold logical and factual truths). Please don't take it as a group campaign/attack hahaha. I would show my appreciation someday to your posts as well when I get convinced of the matters you present here in your blog and as a regular blogger you will perhaps be writing more often i guess.

RE: 'The thousands of meters of geologic column below Abraham's feet, the eons of time it suggests have passed, and the development of life form complexity from bottom to top, are the lynch pin which collapses the entire young earth and special creation story.'

Yes, Times have changed. You and I have changed but someone hasnot changed, His WORD hasnot changed.....Do we dare to take HIM on HIS WORD? It is then that we begin to understand (you say) things better from Biblical perspective.........good day

PS: If you have time and want to comment again to my post please re-read Mr. Hammond, David and Mr. Bissell's post as there is no point we both contributing to the chain posts again and again 'beating around the bush' as my view and belief on genesis account and global flood remains unchanged.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

Is God the God of all, are only the god of the Hebrews?

If the Hebrews are the only people who both knew and understood God and chose to write of him as they perceived, what about all the rest of the world who may have had a different view of god, or god(s)?

Why should the Hebrew description of the flood be the only possible one when many other flood stories abound in other cultures?

Why is the Bible considered the only possible history of ancient peoples when most people also have their own histories? Why do Christians limit their knowledge of God from the limited view of the OT writers, when no one can claim to have seen or known God's mind?

Why do we limit our information of history to the one told by the OT when it is one of only many historical accounts? How can it be verified from outside sources, or should it be accepted as the only possible account? IOW, if we accept every word of the Bible as authentic, inerrant and infallible, why read other books if it has the answer to everything--whether history, medicine, biology, astronomy, geology, and anthropology? Why waste time and money seeking further education when for most of western civilization the Bible was their sole source for information?
Trevor Hammond

The author of this question: "Why waste time and money seeking further education when for most of western civilization the Bible was their sole source for information?" has clearly failed to realise that Western Science as we know it was initiated by the Christian's desire to know more and understand more about the Omipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Holy Creator, Whom we call God (All Praise and glory and honour and power be unto Him forever and ever - Amen). Well, this was at least until the great deception of athiestic evolution theory came along from where all other great deceptions evolve: the deceiver himself - satan.

Yours in the ROCK of Ages
T

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Horace Butler

Ms. Nelson has failed to take into consideration the fact that it wasn't the Hebrews who "chose" to write about Him. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Peter 1:21. That same Holy Spirit foresaw our day and the age of skepticism (it isn't much different from the antediluvian skepticism), and inspired the authors of the Bible to write it in a manner that would be comprehensible to all generations, without the aid of modern "science" to decode it for us. We take it on faith, but that faith is based on the "evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1.

And thanks, Trevor, for that commentary on Dr. Veith. He has seen the issue from both sides, and if anyone has credibility on this issue, it is he.

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Nathan Schilt

I just want to thank Chris for this terrific column, as well as those who have made some of the scientific issues more accessible to a rank layperson such as myself. This has been very informative. While I am very much a skeptic - probably unbeliever would be more accurate - when it comes to creationist science, I continue to be mystified by the pervervid efforts to keep the Creationist and ID challenges out of the "earth origins and development" curriculum in even church universities. Understanding and articulating these issues requires a high degree of scientific and mathematical expertise, which definitely requires university training or its equivalent.

Given the ostensible commitment of higher education to diversity and the right to be wrong, shouldn't university students be thoroughly exposed to the best aguments offered up by scientists who provide the scientific foundation for origins theories that 75% of Americans believe in? After all, how would progressives feel if non-orthodox theological views, such as universal salvation, radical monotheism, and process theology were censored from the curriculum of SDA religion departments?

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cb25

Nathan,

Do I get that you are hiding sarcasm under a cloak of smooth talk? No, I'm mistaken:}
Anyway...How can you be mystified at the efforts to keep C and ID challenges out of places of education? They are just that - places of education. Do I take you inability to understand this to mean you would also be happy to have your/our children educated in the importance and veracity of the flat earth? Oh, and geocentrism, can't forget that?

I would much rather see us Christians in places of education offering an understanding of how God can be Creator through an evolutionary process. The human heart is spiritual, and there are many young people who would find God much easier if we did not put up our YEC type stuff as a barrier. Like it or not, the evidence is massive and growing. YEC is offensive to the common sense of many people.

cb25

Nathan Schilt

Why do ostensibly intelligent people call their intelligence into question by substituting *reductio ad absurdum* and ridicule for rational discussion? To suggest that challenging aspects of evolutionary dogma is like challenging the heliocentric view of our solar system or arguing for a flat earth is incredibly childish and insulting - hardly worthy of a blogger who wishes to be taken seriously. Do 75% of Americans and a large number of well-trained scientists believe in geocentrism or a flat earth?

Astonishingly, after demeaning the possibility that Creationists or ID advocates could possibly offer any credible criticisms of random mutation or natural selection, you proceed, Chris, to suggest that Christians need to offer students an understanding of how God created through an evolutionary process. Maybe that could go in the class on science fiction. We'll teach students that propositions which cannot be falsified nevertheless should be believed. Exactly why? And how would that fit into your definition of education? Maybe science as a foreign language for recovering creationists? Perhaps we should add the care and management of unicorns as well. Oh, and anthropocentrism…can't forget about that? Hope my sarcasm isn't too subtle for you.

If you think places of education confine themselves to what is reasonable and true, I've got a bridge I want to sell you. Higher education is higher indoctrination.

cb25

Relax mate...

I'm simply saying that to teach YEC psuedo science is akin to teaching those other outdated and disproven theories.

Just because 75% believe something does not make it truth.

Re teaching about God. Not in science class! Have you heard of philosophy? or Faith? There is a place for such in education. More so than for YEC which poses an unnecessary barrier.

No, your sarcasm is clear enough, and does nothing to promote goodwill or yourself. Regrettable.
Let's get back to the theme of the blog.

Cheers

Elaine Nelson

"We take it on faith, but that faith is based on the "evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1.

It cannot be both: either it is faith, or it is factual, verifiable evidence. Science does not seek proof from some religious book, but based on known evidence at that time.

Unlike science, religion seeks evidence both from the Bible AND science. Which is it?

Spencer Albracht

Elaine has forgot or never understood the doctrines of being a Seventh Day Adventist. Yes, the old and new testaments are the foundation of our faith and we do hold the Bible to be infallible and eternal.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. I Corinthians 3:18, 19

If I am thought a fool because I believe the Bible to be inerrant and everlasting then call me a fool.

Spencer Albracht

In Six Days
Why fifty scientists choose to believe in creation
edited by John F. Ashton PhD

Horace Butler

But surely they must all be part of the lunatic fringe, since no reputable scientist would believe those fairy tales.

An excellent book. I highly recommend it.

Elaine Nelson
As a PK for more than 80 years I am far too familiar with Adventism than many here: the doctrines, the politics, the financial shenanigans and more.

Doctrines are only what are formulated by a religious group based on their interpretation of the Scriptures, and these are not static, as any student of Christian history recognizes. Adventism adopted many of its doctrines from the universal church which agreed upon them through political pressure and much violent disagreements. Adventism has also not been static. It once adopted the "shut door" as doctrine; the sabbath was not originally a doctrine; the Levitical dietary rules were also not original, but only added by EGW; and the organizational structure is designed on the Roman church, as the late president Neal Wilson testified in court.

While Adventism may not change, people do, and there is much evidence that the church in different parts of the world is nothing like the U.S. church. The SDA church has reason to continue adding converts, especially in first world countries: it cannot replace the attrition rate here fast enough to continue losing membership. Check the attrition rate of young people, many who are second, third, and fourth generational SDA. There must be a reason.

**Stephen Foster** 1 week ago

Elaine,

Since you claim to know so much about Adventists and Adventism (having, as you do, about a 30-year head start on me), you should understand that attrition of membership in the so-called First World is something that SDA’S have predicted would happen—for a reason—as we approach the end of time.

You think you’ve seen attrition? You ain’t seen nothin’ yet!

(Oh, and BTW, the Sabbath has, obviously, always been a doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists.)

**Horace Butler** 1 week ago

EGW added doctrines? That's nonsense. She only brought our attention to what was already there, but which had been lost sight of during the dark ages. If you read the Bible carefully you will see that John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul did the same thing. No new doctrine; only a reminder and sometimes an amplification of what was already there. All the doctrines of the SDA Church are in the Bible. Ellen White didn't invent them. But it's a convenient argument for those who don't like her, or who are unwilling to search like the Bereans to see if these things are so.

To get this back on topic: equating flat earth and geocentricity theories with YEC is preposterous for the simple reason that the earth can be measured as can its position in space. But the science of origins has no such tools and remains in the realm of speculative science. The Biblical view is just as valid, and, as many of us believe, has more evidence on its side.
Think outside the box, Horace. The geocentrist/flat earth myth (even on the back of a sea turtle!) is not being "equated" with the present valid questions re literal 6 day/6000 yr YEC. What i see being compared is how people accepted the "new truth"; excommunicating, martyring, lynching proponents of the new heliocentrist/round earth.

Not a whole lot different today, in this discussion. There are many posters in this thread (and others like it) who think (and clearly state) anyone who dare question the presently held truth of literal YEC can go jump in the lake of fire or go swimming with leviathan in abussos....

I have met men more certain of everything (and willing to arrogate with certitude) than i am willing to timorously admit anything...

The greater issue is, how can one deny observable phenomenon, and yet turn around and try use it as evidence for something such as faith? To argue that "science" as a whole is nonsense, yet suggest that science provides more evidence to suggest a YEC literal chronology/recent global flood is arguing apples to disprove oranges...

Roscoe Fogg

I challenge any of you heliocentrists to prove that the Earth revolves around the Sun. I can refute any evidence that you give.

Trevor Hammond

@cb25

I only raised the issue regarding the honourable Dr. Walter Veith whose name was mentioned by you Sir. I was rather surprised at your remarks regarding Dr. Veith as he is a very credible scholar and scientist. I can’t help but think whether you were looking for someone with data to fit your beliefs or some beliefs to fit your data. If that was the case then I can understand why you would react in such an ‘over the edge way’ to the lectures on the media lent to you: they won't go down well with a die-hard evolutionist, it is understandable.

You must remember also that Dr. Veith is not alone in his findings as others also subscribe to much of his research and can reasonably say that he is a very credible scientist and scholar whose findings support the Biblical narrative you have rejected. One thing clear to me from all this discussion within this blog and elsewhere is that evolution and creation CANNOT be conflated as they contradict each other.

Secondly, I have to state, that evolution at its core is contradictory: in that life’s intricate COMPLEX biological systems evidently and unambiguously reveal remarkable intelligence and design, which leave natural selection and ‘chance’ or whatever, left clutching on to major straw-men which is really just over the top dodgy theory and sensationalism. The bottom line is that evolution is contradictory as it has NO basis or rational reasoning for the very EVIDENT phenomena of intelligent design AND a Creator as revealed in the
Holy Bible. The overwhelming evidence of how life on our planet exists with all its amazing wonders is the biggest argument in favour of ID and a Creator God behind all of this. Sin and evil is another anomaly that evolution theory would find impossible to address or resolve or explain. The Bible offers ample explanation and remedy: The Blood of Christ which was shed on the Cross says it all. I am a believer in the Blood of Christ and the Redemption afforded to me by His great sacrifice. Fossils can only remain silent on this.

Thanks for that Trevor.

I probably should just clear up. When I listened to Veith I was a Creationist. It was in attempting to validate what he was saying that I finally conceded both he and I were wrong. So, no I certainly was not looking for data to fit my ideas.

I agree that life shows remarkable "design" in many ways, but it is not a safe position philosophically. After all if I look at my world and say it must be designed because it is complex, therefore there must be a designer - God. Hang on, I've just invoked someone more complex and then claim He does not need a "designer". He just is. Well, on that basis so could my world! I know there are arguments both ways on this, but it makes a point.

Similarly with irreducible complexity. I heard a SS class the other day use the bombardier beetle to illustrate this. It never crossed their minds that if the bug is irreducibly complex then God made it that way. So here's a bug in the death and danger free garden of Eden shooting acid to kill and destroy the enemy! Not a good example I reckon.

I only mentioned Veith in response to a very early post on the topic. I did not bring him up first, but point taken.

Cheers

General Note...

Several have pointed out that I have been a bit blunt in my comments/replies. I do tend at times to "call a spade a spade" as I see it. For any who have felt offended by this please accept my intention was not to create hurt.

As noted above, I placed this blog to encourage discussion about issues we Christians face. Obviously many here see the issue from a quite different angle. Perhaps even seeing my "position" as part of the enemy.

As many have pointed out, a bottom line issue or problem with this topic is the Authority of Scripture. And yes, as has been said so well, if we simply accept creation was a miracle, no evidence is needed. Full stop.
But is that enough?

I think of certain other religions which also have their own "Scriptures" or "Sacred Writings". When the followers of those religions attribute absolute authority to their "Scriptures" there can be no dialog. That person may choose to become a terrorist or the like, but while they give their scripture the authority they do there is nothing I can do to change their belief.

Are SDA's any different? I don't think so.

If we are really honest, we must at least recognize that our claim that the Bible is "truth" is no more or less valid than the others who claim their "Book" is truth. Shocking thought I know, but we have to be fair.

So, how do we determine truth? Well, we usually look at the Bible's internal evidence, and it becomes its own source of verification! We condemn Mormons for that. What if this is not the best way? What if the point someone made earlier that nature also is a valid source of truth is correct? What if in fact we would do God more justice by letting the natural evidence we see guide us in our selection of what is true and right...wherever it might be? Not just in the Bible?

These are scary thoughts, but I really believe they are some of the hard questions we will need to address someday. There are many others doing a better job of this, but my blog was a little contribution to prod us in that direction. If it can create a little uneasiness in some over the certainty of the YEC type position, then maybe it can also create a chink in the armour and get us into genuine dialog...

cb25.

Nathan Schilt

"If we are really honest, we must at least recognize that our claim that the Bible is "truth" is no more or less valid than the others who claim their "Book" is truth."

Indeed, it is quite shocking for anyone who claims to be a Christian. Thank God for dishonest people! Your trite sop to radical postmodernism constitutes intellectual entropy. Knock yourself out trying to be God. If fairness demands that we regard all sacred texts as equally valid, then fairness likewise demands that we view none as valid. Quite remarkable! Having abjured external sources of moral and religious authority, it is good to know, Chris, that your own unhawsered moral wisdom and insight is strictly tongue-in-cheek.

Even as solipsistic Christians (now there's an oxymoron) throw themselves into the abyss of nihilism, they joyously and obliviously proclaim how wonderful it feels to fly above the madding crowd. I thank God that He has gifted me with limited intelligence which cannot easily escape the gravitational fields of common sense and experience.
A bit denigrating don't you think? Neither considerate nor courteous. Let's lift the game.

Elaine Nelson 1 week ago

If everyone who claims to give the Bible final authority could only interpret it exactly the same! There's the rub: no two people will agree to the same interpretation, unlike the Muslims or perhaps the Mormons, who do not argue or even discuss the differences.

Why do we believe the Mormons have an "odd" religious belief? Adventists also believe that we will be taken up to heaven (somewhere in the great beyond) through a "hole" in Orion, and we will celebrate Sabbath during the week-long journey (that's one that defies explanation), and later we can visit the ETA on other planets. Not more far-fetched than the Mormons who may be some of the occupants we may visit?

David 1 week ago

That sounds fun I think I'll enjoyed and for sure my kids will too! Any way they very sad when they found out that the "sasquatch" or the "pithecanthropus erectus" are not coming to have pizza or ice cream.

Nathan Schilt 1 week ago

I don't understand, Elaine, why you impose different standards on Christian beliefs than you impose on the beliefs of scientists. When it suits your purposes, you crow about the ability of scientists to have diverse opinions, and to change those opinions based upon new theories and evidence. But you scoff at diversity in Christian beliefs, as if inconsistencies and contradictions invalidate Scripture. Similarly, why are the consensus pillars of science validation of the Truth of science, but consensus pillars of faith are evidence of obduracy and obscurantism?

One of my primary reasons (there are many) for often being contemptuous of liberal pretensions is the pathological and hypocritical refusal of progressives to judge their own arguments and beliefs by the same standards they apply to those who reject their worldview and beliefs. It is one of the clearest identifying characteristics of fundamentalist religion - "We don't have to play by the rules we apply to others because we have the Truth"

Trevor Hammond 1 week ago

Cb25, Sir

You mention ‘irreducible complexity’. I have a basic gist of this term. I am not a molecular biologist or a geneticist etc., so have refrained from previously mentioning this on these blogs.

"Biochemistry professor Michael Behe, the originator of the term irreducible complexity, defines an irreducibly complex system as one "composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning". These examples are said to demonstrate that modern biological forms could not have evolved naturally."  - [Wikipedia]
The 'bacterial flagellum' is one such organism displaying 'irreducible complexity'. So there was a 'court case' in 2005 where Behe testified in favour of ID which without any surprise went in favour of the larger vocal scientific community (Atheistic Evolutionists). This teeny-weeny, molecular motor or 'machine' is indeed quite a fascinating phenomenon I must admit.

One of the arguments against this uses a five part mouse trap which without any ‘one’ of the five essential parts won’t work as a mousetrap. So the evolutionist who guy who claims against this takes two parts of his choice off which allows the now defunct mousetrap to be used as a – believe it or not – a ‘tie clip’ (an unsightly one at that). This mousetrap mutation exercise is used a ‘proof’ against ID. It gets worse. So they find a poison injecting bacteria which causes bubonic plague and is equipped with an injecting like tool to function and claim that when about 200 or so parts of the ‘bacterial flagellum’ are removed it is still a functional organism albeit not a molecular motor which is long defunct when the first part is removed. Evolutionists say that the molecular structure which is made up of various components can naturally ‘come to the party’ and combine into other such alternative mechanisms.

My questions are:

1] How is it that the evolution scientist makes the ‘intelligent design’ decision to remove ‘certain’ parts from the mousetrap to make a ‘tie clip’ which in itself is a completely different thing entirely, and then sidetrack from the issue that there is no mousetrap anymore, and point to natural 'luck' mutation (in the case of the mousetrap an assisted planned mutation) as the process by which such highly complex systems function? Is this true science? Luck?

2] Why is it that the removal of one of the components of the bacterial flagellum renders it non functional as a molecular motor and not even able to function as anything else not even a bubonic plague 'injection' bug?

3] If this is therefore a proven fact that this real functional purposeful very well structured and designed bacterial flagellum cannot on its own change its purpose, function, structure and design, then how did it became such an irreducible complex system on its own? What was its state before it evolved to its current state? Where are the transitional ‘fossils’? Why or how or when would the bubonic plague ‘tie clip’ mutated-mousetrap-poison-injection-mechanism evolutionists try to moot, ‘pull their socks up’, and start acting 'smart' and display... - can I use the taboo words of evolution science ... – INTELLIGENT DESIGN????

cb25

Hi Trevor,

I didn't really intend to start a new direction in the discussion, just making a couple of observations in response to your point about design. I am familiar with most the things you point out, and as I noted, there are arguments both ways. Philosophically ID and IC end up in difficult places, but if you don't mind at this point lets not bog the blog down with more branches to the theme? We could spend a lot of time on it. Perhaps another blog?

Cheers
Trevor Hammond 6 days ago

ok, cb25, you're the boss - Sir. I would remind you though that Philosophically, it is evolution theory rather, which ends up in difficult places where evidence for ID is irrefutable and therefore consistant with Bible Creation, made possible by Jesus Christ the Creator Himself, Who, I might add, via His incarnation, died on the cruel cross of Calvary to redeem us from the curse of sin and its disastrous result: death.

You say you were a Creationist. I'm curious to know, were you also one who believed in the traditional historical views of Adventism before Dr. Veith as you say, 'pushed you over'?

Just one small question Sir. I've asked Dr. Taylor the same question but he hasn't answered this so far.

Was there death before Sin, or was there Sin before death?

In the ROCK of the Ages
T

cb25 6 days ago

Hi Trevor,

Grew up SDA. B.A Th. with distinction from Avondale....subscriber to every doctrine we have/had! Some years in Pastoral ministry. That's traditional Adventism.

Re sin/death. Dr Taylor is wiser than me and his absence of response is probably because he understands the deeper issues and the difficulty of making such an either / or statement. To pose such a question may actually be a false dichotomy.

In spite of this, I will stick my neck out with a simple answer. On this planet: Death before Sin.

Cheers

Horace Butler 6 days ago

Well, at least we know where you stand on this issue, and it is completely out of harmony with not only Scripture, but the official positon of the SDA Church. Thanks for the clarification. Even if the church officially turned against this doctrine, it so clearly Biblical (Paul clearly states that death was a result of sin and preceded it) that I could not abandon it.

I fear for you. You are on dangerous ground.

David 6 days ago

At least you are honest to say where you stand in regards SIN /Death/SIN in this planet. So how you explain “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death
through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”
Was Paul wrong?

Hi David,

If, by sin entering the world we mean the moral culpability of the human race or person, then no, Paul is correct.

The first man (Adam if you like) who could look at his partner and say "I am, you are, we are....let's dance", was the man who could make a moral choice, and could therefore be held to moral account. In other words, the ability to make meaningful choices within relationship and life also reflect the ability to be morally sensitive.

That does not discount that death already existed as an element of nature. Death was. If God did bring this world to be what it is through such a process, how do we define death? Is it morally neutral? Or is it evil? Notice I defined death before sin on this planet. I did not define which came first outside of or before this planet, nor how that plays out in a cosmos where things are often more chaotic than we like to admit!

Cheers.

cb25 your Adventism could nuance your reply to the question if there was death on earth before Adam and Eve's fall a bit more. Try this. You Adventism taught you that sin did not originate on earth. As our prophetess revealed it started in heaven before the creation of earth, and the planning for the Creation of Earth seems to have been the issue that revealed Lucifer's jealousy of the Son of God. Your Bible also reveals that after Michael defeated Lucifer the fallen (sinful) angels fell to earth. This was not the created earth, this was the formless and void precreation earth.

So our Adventism suggests that Creation itself took place in the context of fallen moral creatures, so any death on this created earth was "post fall" but not post the Adam/Eve fall, post Satan's fall. And the Geologic record may record the Great Controversy between Christ the Creator (my Intelligent Designer) and Satan the wanna-be Creator (my Intelligent Destroyer). The human creation had a choice to make, which party would they follow. When they decided to know Evil and well as Good, then death came upon humans. And St. Paul's statement is fully compatible with this if you understand it to mean "human death" came from the human choice and fall. But Jesus in John 8:44 says the devil "was a murderer from the beginning" he doesn't say he was a murder from the fall. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the earth (Revelation 8:14), not from the sad choice of Eve/Adam. The Lamb was slain already from Satan's and angelic fall. I'm not trying to be literal or physical, but it has helped me understand that Creation itself is a part of the Great Controversy, and Light and Darkness began to fight on day one through day six. That is why each Creation Day begins in darkness and ends in light. When that stage's battle is over, God says it is good. Suggesting that it wasn't that good at the start of that stage? That is why Geology records a
series of battles. That may be why death was on earth before Eve/Adam choose which side they were on. Even in the protected Garden the only reason they didn't die was access to a Life Tree, otherwise they like other creatures on the battle field would be subject to death even before they elected to experience Evil.

Death came on earth after sin, Satan and his host's sin, he was murdering from as Jesus says "in the beginning." Human death came after Eve/Adam's choice, so death passed from plants and animals to mankind. Does this help anyone? It has helped me a lot.

Horace Butler 1 week ago

"If we are really honest, we must at least recognize that our claim that the Bible is "truth" is no more or less valid than the others who claim their "Book" is truth. Shocking thought I know, but we have to be fair."

Hogwash! For one thing the internal consistency of the Bible is unrivaled by any other work. And it has had an effect on mankind that no other book has. But beyond that, the Bible has what no other "sacred" text has: fulfilled prophecy. If nothing else, the time prophecies in Daniel that pinpoint the time of the Messiah are indisputable evidence that the Bible is divine rather than human in origin. Even if Daniel was written later than we believe (and I don't buy that theory) it was still written before the Messiah arrived. Try to find that sort of thing in the Koran, the Book or Mormon, or any other so-called sacred work.

Ervin Taylor 6 days ago

I would be careful if you wish to use the "time prophecies in Daniel" as "indisputable evidence" of the divine origin of the Bible. That is very sandy soil on which to build anything if you want a solid foundation, given the nature of the interpretations which have been offered to explain what whoever wrote Daniel was addressing.

JIMS Seven 6 days ago

Mr. Taylor Sir,

There are many proofs of Bible's divine origin: I will not go in there and Time prophecies in Daniel are just few of those proofs. I will not go here elaborating as to how and where of those prophecies as the blogger desires us to focus more on his side of the story. I will just end my note here with this quote :

'Sir Isaac Newton called the seventy weeks the foundation of the Christian religion.' (Wikipedia)

Researchers such as John Pratt did believe in Time prophecies of Daniel I guess. Whatever their area of interest one thing is certain that even the LEARNED MEN (if that is required as proof of Bible's acceptance as to it's divine origin-Personally i don't need that)

Thanks

David 6 days ago
Ery so how sandy is the book Daniel?

Looks the Jesus very comfortable using the book of Daniel as trustable prophetic word

Matthew 24:15-26 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Luke 21.20-21 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains…"

*I'll not be surprise if you not answer I realize that favorite answer is silence when things gets hot*

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**Bryan Bissell**

1 week ago

ABOUT CORAL REEF GROWTH (Enewetak) & DR. CARTER’S PRESENTATION

This is an area of historical science and so we only have partial evidence, not complete evidence. Nobody observed the corals growing so there is significant uncertainty because of that. More study is being done, but it is hampered as usual by the chokehold of funding that evolution has. More research and improvements are being found, but, here are some brief answers we know now. Note that I am not a Ph.D. scientist in marine or coral areas..and I don’t think you are either (which makes me wonder how you can so easily trumpet that Dr. Carter is “wrong” when you haven’t even contacted him to check if there is further research and evidence he didn’t have time to present in that short lecture…very disturbing as well).

Let’s look at Enewetak for now and we can deal with others if needed:

FACT: The Enewetak reef is about 1405 m thick.

FACT: Observed rates of growth range from ~5mm/year to ~414mm/year with many in the 100-200mm range (These are ONLY the observed rates of coral growth NOW. Faster or slower rates may have occurred but not been observed).

FACT: Drilling operations into the atoll have shown that a significant amount of the material (up to 70 percent of the bore hole) was “soft, fine, white chalky limestone,” not well-cemented reef limestone (H.S. Ladd and S.O. Schlanger, “Drilling Operations on Eniwetok Atoll,” U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 260-Y (1960): 863–903.).

FACT: In 1972, Cyclone Bebe ‘constructed’ a rampart of coral rubble 3.5 metres high, 37 metres wide and 18 kilometres long in a few hours.

http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/cm/v14/n1/coral-reef
It’s really hard to calculate growth rates precisely because:

a) coral grows many branches and so the growth adds up exponentially.
b) coral is eaten and broken and it’s difficult to know how much of that has happened.
c) there are many known factors affecting growth rates (such as the above) + possible unknown factors +
unknown past conditions.

But, a VERY superficial and inaccurate calculation gives us: 1405m = 1,405,000mm
5mm/year rate = 281,000 years estimated coral age
50mm/year rate = 28,100 years estimated coral age
100mm/year rate = 14,050 years estimated coral age
200mm/year rate = 7,025 years estimated coral age
300mm/year rate = 4,683 years estimated coral age
414mm/year rate = 3,393 years estimated coral age

This doesn’t count branching factors, eating factors or others. Since ~70% of Enewetak isn’t even coral
(which backs up Dr. Carter’s hypothesis on this of much sediment being pushed up by geothermal
endo-upwelling), we don’t even need the fastest rates or possibly even the medium rates to account for
Enewetak coral. The calculations above also demonstrates that in some cases, esp. in areas of historical
science where we have incomplete information, unknowns and can’t test things for certain, people on all
sides can choose the “evidence” that fits with their own expectations and biases. This doesn’t work
overall…but people can cherry pick…and then use the foolish method of following anomalies like coral or
salt domes instead of 100 methods which have many physical facts stronger than coral or salt domes to
excuse themselves from following the vast weight of evidence.

This is a possible explanation for Enewetok (and ALL the Darwinian ones are only “possible” explanations
as well. NONE are certain).:
“It may be significant that this atoll, along with many of the other atolls in the western Pacific, ultimately rise
from volcanic pedestals. It is known that heat coming from these volcanoes draws cold, nutrient-rich water
into the cavernous atoll framework and circulates it upward, through the atoll via convection. This process is
called geothermal endo-upwellling and helps provide nutrients to the reef organisms near sea level.
Here is a possible scenario of how the Eniwetok Atoll may have become so thick in the few thousand years
since the Flood (figure 9). The reef began as a volcanic platform. Carbonates (limestones) began to
accumulate on the platform as the result of bacteria and other organisms that can precipitate calcite,
especially in volcanically warmed water. This produced much of the “soft, fine, chalky limestone” found
within the reef. Carbonate-producing organisms (like corals) were brought to the platform as small larval
forms, transported by ocean currents. This explains the occasional occurrence of various corals and mollusks
found within the deeper parts of the drill core. The volcanic heat source allowed the carbonate mound to
grow, deep below sea level, and the process of geothermal endo-upwelling to begin. The combination of
nutrient supply and heat may have allowed the carbonate mound to grow much faster than observed coral
reef growth rates today. As the carbonate mound approached sea level, shallow water reef corals were
permanently established and thrived as a result of the upwelling process.

Regarding Dr. Carter’s presentation:
1) You talk about coral reefs above current sea level. Dr. Carter’s presentation deals directly with several of
them. He points out that there’s a lot of calcium carbonate in many of them that was not formed by biological
processes, much near the continental surfaces. And this can’t be that old, because it hasn’t all been dissolved
by rain water and washed away.
2) There are also underground corals to explain. Dr. Carter shows with referenced papers that it’s HIGHLY
unlikely that some of these are actually reefs, since they don’t have reef framework builders

3) Dr. Carter makes the solid point that the problem of coral is one for BOTH creation and evolution science. Evolution’s ice age is also only about 10,000 years ago which still presents massive problems if you assume slow growth rates of 5mm per year.

4) It’s possible that some corals came through the flood and were not totally destroyed. It’s also highly likely that because of all the magma and volcanic activity that warmed up the waters, that some places had quite warm water conditions that are ideal for fast growth. Considering coral branching, it wouldn’t take much time to grow quite large sections of coral given the right conditions which seem to be present at that time.

As the documentary “An Inconvenient Truth” showed very well, heat can of course melt things, but sometimes, that heat can cause ice ages if it’s in the wrong place. But this doesn’t necessarily mean an ice age for every part of the planet. It can cause some places to even get hotter and drier.

So, the flood could have warmed up the water near the equator such as in Sinai and Ur, yet caused ice ages in more northern/southern places, leaving the Sinai coral to continue growing.

There’s MUCH more. But, I’m trying to keep this as short as possible. For more on this, check:
http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/arent-millions-of-years-required
http://creation.com/images/pdfs/tj/j13_1/j13_1_1-2.pdf

Creationist Solutions to the “Reef Problem”
http://creation.com/how-long-does-a-coral-reef-take-to-grow
http://www.icr.org/article/a-50-year-study-shows-coral-clocks-unreliable/

All the best and God bless,
Bryan

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Nathan Schilt 6 days ago

Two points on your interesting post, Bryan: 1) An often overlooked point in these discussions is the chokehold, which you mention, that evolutionary theory has on government funding. When the government subsidizes something, it grows and becomes politicized, whether the something is poverty, corporate fraud, or a religious branch of science. The most recent and current area where that phenomenon has been apparent is in the discredited discipline of climate science, where government funding to test hypotheses contra to the prevailing metanarrative of catastrophic global warming has been virtually nonexistent. 2) Using the thoroughly discredited propaganda film - "An Inconvenient Truth" - as authority for any scientific proposition only makes an informed reader question the validity of other authorities you rely upon. You better reach for your wallet when Al Gorebull is promoting assertions that might otherwise seem self-evident.
Ervin Taylor

An excellent example of libertarian political assumptions getting in the way of objective understandings would be my good friend Nate's comments about climate science studies. The facts are the world is getting warmer and that human activities are contributing to that warming. The scientific question at issue is the degree to which humans are contributing, how fast the world will continue to warm, and what will be the consequences. Since, the economic interests of large multinational corporations are involved and thus a lot of funding for lobbying and propaganda from these corporations come into play. I'm glad that their money has been well spent in convincing individuals who are usually well informed such as Nate to take the position he does.

With respect to the so-called "chokehold" evolutionary theory has on government funding, that is correct since the federal government (NSF, NIH, etc.) funds science not metaphysics.

Nathan Schilt

So let me see if I've got this straight, Erv. Your opinions are based in science and reason. If folks disagree with you, their opinions are based in religion or politics. Hmmm...must be nice to have the world figured out so that you're always right. I somehow suspect that you are way out of your area of expertise when it comes to climate science. Indeed, parts of the world are getting warmer, and parts are getting colder. It's called weather. Most of the inferences and prophecies of AGW activists over the past two decades have been mugged by reality. Unfortunately, reality seems to be a four letter word for those who worship Mother Gaia.

I would be most interested in facts about how much corporate funding has funded AGW skeptics. You have been drinking too much Kool Aid.

Stephen Foster

Nathan,

Is every single topic or subject matter about (American) domestic politics with you? This, almost needlessly to say, is not only inherently divisive, but often distractive of the points that you attempt to make.

By beholding (or listening) we become changed.

That said I fully understand that, for you, the referencing of “An Inconvenient Truth” is akin to the mentioning of “Niagara Falls” in the old Three Stooges routine.

Nathan Schilt

Unfortunately, Stephen, there is very little in American life, including science, that is not political. I concede that controversial statements as analogies detract from the point one is ostensibly making.
John Rawls called them strong analogies. I call such such allusions drive-by opinionating. Weak analogies are of course preferable, because they are universally accepted and don't get in the way of the point one wants to make.

Sometimes I miscalculate. But I think politics is pretty interwoven with faith-science issues. To acknowledge and highlight the reality that politics and money are primary drivers of science may be controversial. But isn't it a legitimate part of the debate? My criticism of the use of "An Inconvenient Truth" as authority was indeed too political. But even if I agreed with the movie's conclusion, I would be critical of using it as an authority on science. Nevertheless, your point about avoiding "drive-by" shots is well taken.

Spencer Albracht

1 week ago

Chris thinks that he is doing everyone a service by bringing what he assumes is new information to us unlearned young earth creationists. He also thinks that he is doing a good thing by putting a chink in the armour of our faith when he is actually doing the devil's work. He wants to equate us with terrorists because we are fundamental in our beliefs and take God at his word and then states we Seventh Day Adventist are no different and wonders why some might say he is pushing it. By the grace of God I am not writing this in all caps and with many, many exclamation points.

What he forgets is that we are Seventh Day Adventists and the core of our faith is the word of God. Not some other book as the Mormons or other religions do. We are Seventh Day Adventist Christians. He tells us that what he is presenting to us is scary but what he doesn't realize is that we have already heard this and it doesn't belong in the Seventh Day Adventist church. You are poisoning the well and it has to be stopped.

cb25

6 days ago

Spencer,

Mormons and Muslims base their faith on the "Word of God". Just happens to be different books!

Spencer Albracht

6 days ago

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. But these speak evil of whatever they do not know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage; how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Jude 8,10 12,13 16,18-19
Thomas "Vastergotland"

I just saw the most curious thing. An anti-evolution webpage making a case for entire new (unique) genes evolving in a timespan of decades or less: http://www.darwinspredictions.com/#_4.2_Genomes_of

Ervin Taylor

Might I ask Mr. Albracht how he going to stop a rational discussion on this topic?

Spencer Albracht

I believe a rational discussion is necessary but for evolution in any form to be passed off as truth in an Adventist publication is wrong.

Trevor Hammond

Brother Spencer Albracht, Sir - I'm with you on this one. [PLEASE NOTE: Below is just my opinion and is relevant to such discussion which stands diametrically opposed to the traditional Adventist position]

Just between you and me, I think this website is notoriously NOT specifically a Seventh-day Adventist one: so I've been told. At first glance one may assume it is because of the usual Adventist name but it does not necessarily refer to Seventh-day Adventist but rather a compromised Christian version which embraces and leans towards Rome. (Just watch what will happen for what I am posting and see how all hell will break loose). I've been told that it is a - quote: "Holy Cow" (unquote) of some sorts on which homosexuality, denigration of the Holy Sabbath, Creation and the Biblical account of it found in Genesis is discarded, the promotion of sin as non-sin, that death occurred before sin entered the world contrary to the Holy Bible, that Ellen White is irrelevant, that the Law of God as seen in the Ten Commandments is optional or at best even made void, that the flood is a myth contrary to all the evidence confirming it, that 'educational' pursuits will lead one to Christian maturity rather than the working of the Holy Spirit of which the Third World is cited as proof, that Cultural and Socio-Political influence is allowed to supersede Biblical standards of Christian behavior and guidelines, that the Investigative Judgment is nonexistent, that the fulfillment of prophecies found in the Holy Bible are untrue, that Jesus may not be coming soon, that Sunday Sacredness aka sun worship is not a counterfeit of the Holy Sabbath, that the change of the Sabbath is just a myth, that Holy communion is a meaningless exercise, that there is no remnant contrary to what is found in Revelation, that the Church of Rome is kosher and isn't the Anti-Christ and the Beast revealed in Daniel and the Revelation as proclaimed by the early protestant reformers, that evolution theory is a valid doctrine and an option of Christian belief, etc., etc... and counting.

This apostate form of CULTure is encouraged and defended as rational discussion for 'those who like to think they can think' or 'in the name of seeking answers to base their compromised belief systems' - but again just between you and I, it is a notable front to destabilize Adventism and attempt to hand it over to the Church of Rome on a silver platter (well in this case a 'fossil' one).

Just watch how my freedom to express such opinions is anathema to the gurus who milk and worship the -
quote: 'Holy Cow' (unquote), no offense to Hindus intended.

Roscoe Fogg 6 days ago

Thanks for the post. Your position is now completely clear. Keep it up.

Ervin Taylor 6 days ago

According to Mr. Hammond, there are those who wish to "destabilize Adventism and attempt to hand it over to the Church of Rome. " What an amazing fantasy life Mr. Hammond has! Even if such a strange thing might be accomplished, I'm sure that our Roman Catholic friends would politely decline to take us since we are such a disfunctional church. Why take on more problems? They have their hands full with their own issues.

Kevin Riley 6 days ago

Perhaps we should remember that the old observation that the best argument against Christianity is Christians. If I just read books, Adventism is persuasive, but when I see Adventists in action, it makes me wonder. Just how do we reconcile a God who was willing to sacrifice his Son and risk everything to save sinners, with church members who are willing to sacrifice other members over a disagreement on doctrine or practice?

David 6 days ago

I just image a strange meeting; in one part of the table are “Charly” and “Ricky” with the “gospel of the survival of the fittest” and other side Jesus, Peter and maybe Paul with the “eternal gospel “ “Charly” starts the conversation; after my trip to the “Galapagos” I was convinced that we evolve from very elemental cells to what we are now by brutal evolution. “Ricky” jumps to the conversation and says; yes, yes! Thanks to “Charly” I wrote some books and make a few millions.

Peter can hardly hold himself, he wanted to take his sword and cut some tongues, and maybe some necks but he holds himself, he is a new man.

Paul wanted to blast them with philosophical arguments, but also he holds himself because also he is a “new man” Jesus looks at them and he says; I was in the beginning … I created the mankind to my image and it was very good. My heart was broken in peaces when your parents fell into the words of the deceiver. I offered my life for them and for you, and if you accept my give, I will create a new heart in you, also you will have chance to witness with your eyes that my words are so powerful to create again a new heaven and heart were dead will be no more.

Spencer Albracht 6 days ago

Adventist Today: Noah’s Flood - A Lynchpin for the Creation Story
Brother T, Sir, I appreciate your devotion to God more than you know. The same is thought of others who have expressed their devotion to God and his Word. I love and appreciate my fellow believers more than words can say.

Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. I Samuel 18:1

The encouraging words written by those who defend God and his ways gives me strength in my walk. I know I am not alone in my beliefs but it always shocks my system to know there are so many apostate Adventists in the congregation.

Adventists, Bible thumping Adventists, are expected to say what is right, not what is politically correct. I do not want to brag but I am an Seventh Day Adventist and I believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible. By the grace of God I love the Bible and love God's eternal truth that he has shared with me and many others. I am blessed to attend a Seventh Day Adventist church that preaches and teaches the Bible and the Bible only. I know there are other Adventist churches out there that do not like to speak Adventist speak and want to attract others into there flock by compromising God's truth and compromising your understanding and salvation. You can talk down to me. You can think you know more than me or think to be more enlightened than me due to my antiquated thinking. He is old school, we have moved on. I will not think the same of you. I will not talk down to you and I will not belittle your beliefs. I will stand firm on the Bible and I will not apologize. My heart goes out to the mom or dad who has the wayward child or the brother or sister whose loved one is caught up in what is fashionable today. I can only imagine the heartache so many feel.

Keep fighting the good fight T. Say it like it is.

cb25

Trevor, David and Spencer,

I have been what you would probably call a bible thumping Adventist. And I do identify with the angst you express.

I well recall a certain lecturer (doing B.A) who presented very challenging material on geology etc. It was a "look at both sides of the argument" thing. Very fair. Some of the class were angered. I think that the biggest thing that made them so was that along with the "undermining" information, there were no "solutions" given.

My hope for this blog was that a little recognition of the challenges we face just might encourage us to actually put some effort into addresssing some of the ramifications of an old earth old life world.

Sadly, I think we are more interested in shoring up cut and dried, the bible says it I believe it positions. We are so far from the topic of my blog it is amazing!

No one has yet shown me why, according to Genesis, there is more than 80-100 years before Ur was the homeland of Abram's forefathers. Hence by that time the sea level was static and reasonably close to what it is today.

No one has explained how the sea could have been 20 meters higher, and static for long enough periods for 3 separate and distinct coral terraces to grow in the time frame allowed by Genesis.
Only one has attempted to explain why the rift valley can possibly fit into a flood scenario, and that did not account for the timing of the rift valley opening, the solubility of salt, the amount of deposition on top of it etc.

David 6 days ago

The certainty how happened will not know, because all are retrospective analysis. Retrospective analysis no matter how strict they are incomplete and several times inaccurate when compared to prospective or o real time observation. Why? Because we don’t know all the variables, we assume that all the changes are on similar conditions that we observe at present time.
If you go to the high planes of Bolivia or Peru you will find out big seashells in the high flats lands and salars (UYUNI). An evolutionist will say the mountains are growing that is why these shells are up there (almost 12,000 feet high plains) a creationist will say you see that is the evidence at one period of time the flood was there (shell in flat area where maintains are not growing) and salt dry lakes as evidence that one tine sea water was there.
In my flied we cannot give the highest credibility when the experiments are not reproducible. We could have educated impressions but certainties not. How appropriate are the words registered in Job 34 when God said to Job Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it. 5 Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? Do you know all the answer?

David 6 days ago

Ery so how sandy is the book Daniel?
Looks like Jesus was very comfortable using the book of Daniel as trustable prophetic word
Matthew 24:15-26 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."
Luke 21.20-21 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains..."
I'll not be surprise if you not answer I realize that favorite answer is silence when things gets hot

Trevor Hammond 6 days ago

I have to admit that JIMS Seven is spot on. Our questions are been candidly evaded based on keeping to the topic. We obviously will have to comply out of mutual courtesy. I took a chance and provided some details regarding 'irreducible complexity' and the bacterial flagellum's interesting phenomenon which is a classic example of 'irreducible complexity'. I brought this up when I saw the terms used by cb25. I wrote in my
personal capacity based on my understanding of it from gurus in this field. I know Dr. David is on such expert.

I'm afraid cb25 should have chosen another topic for a first blog but it was his call and he has taken a very extreme position and seeks to defend it at all costs. My personal opinion is that he may have inadvertently already been pushed over the top in terms of his beliefs and may just have been looking for more ammo to back his beliefs up from the Dr. Veith media. Nothing to feel bad about as it is your belief and personal choice. I will admit though that cb25 has been quite honest and very civil and courteous in his dealing with us. He has been honest too in stating the 'death before sin' question posed to him (The Honourable Dr. Taylor has dodged this one). I'm sure though that as a die-hard evolutionist, Dr. Taylor must know that his position will be the same as cb25: death before sin. It is an intricately woven part of evolution theory. That's a no brainer!


What Noah's Flood account just a myth as evolutionist's assert? Is Jesus also wrong in referring to a nonexistent flood? Do they even question His Divinity and Creatorship? Methinks so!

T

cb25

Trevor,

I am not trying to dodge any topics. It just seems to me that there should be a limit to how much diversity we get into.

Re the flagellum. It is very well documented that there are a range of bacteria with varying components of the fully developed flagellum. They all work well for their purpose and are beneficial to the organism. The flagellum is an amazing thing, but it is not irreducibly complex.

I still maintain that the real issues my blog raise should be the prime focus of discussion. Apart from that I have no issue with covering everything that anyone cares to put up. But...is that really the purpose of a blog and comment capacity?

You criticize me for "avoiding" the points you made. That was not my intention. However, you made no comment re the bombadier beetle and Eden. Was the significance of that lost? Of course that bug is the tip of an iceberg of issues special creation faces. Lions, sharks, and any other thing that kills, hunts, and destroys....where do they come from? Adapted? Second creation? God made them in the Garden, in a perfect world??

Then there is migration, both birds, sharks, whales etc. All geared around either weather patterns or feeding locations etc. NONE of which would have existed in the perfect, pre-fall world.

Anyway....discuss what you think is relevant. Some of it certainly does not seem so to me, but apart from the guidelines, and what I think is ramble by some, so what?...
Further on the flagellum. If it is irreducibly complex. When did God make It? What was the purpose of bacteria like that? I don't think they are all freindly? Is not its purpose to do with death, decay, disease?

I do have sympathy for the ID movement, but as noted, philosophically it is a dead end. Example, I look at my dog and say he is so complex he must have had a designer. However if design or complexity require intervention...who causes, designs or creates the designer that made my dog? I only move the problem back a step. Ok, we say God has always been. Great, on the same basis I could also simply say dogs have always been. He is presumably less complex that a supreme being I have just considered necessary to make him, so that my dog has always been is on odds more likely!

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying there is no God. There are other ways of demonstrating the probability of a God, but we need to be carefull we don't end in philosophical dead ends.

cb25

Nathan Schilt

I'm not sure I understand your point, Chris. The fact that a theory is not totalistic doesn't render it a dead end. Evolutionary theory, by your the argument, is also a dead end since it only moves the ultimate causation problem back further. The conundrum of the "first cause" renders every attempt to understand cause and effect a philosophical dead end. ID doesn't claim to be a philosophical movement, does it? It is simply the application of logic and statistical probability to scientific data that casts doubt on natural selection and random mutation theories.

DNA evidence in the courtroom is just as significant for what it disproves as for what it proves. The fact that a defense attorney may not be able to prove whose blood was collected at the crime scene or how it got there doesn't really matter if the statistical odds against it being the defendant's blood are overwhelming. Moving the problem back a step, or billions of steps is pretty significant isn't it, especially when the problem is not ultimate causation, but theories of macroevolution?

Perhaps in another column you will share with us the better ways of objectively demonstrating the probability of a God. The fact that ID does not prove the probability of God, much less Biblical creation, hardly undermines the reality that ID poses serious and responsible challenges to natural selection and random mutation.

cb25

Nathan,

You are quite right that the "first cause" issue renders everything a dead end at some point. My point is that ID's claim - it looks designed therefore it is designed - is a faulty logic from the start. It
is an immediate dead end, because the very logic I use to posit a designer invalidates my "designer".

How can they say this is the "application of logic and statistical probability to scientific data to cast doubt....", when the whole premise is self invalidating as an evidence or "proof"?

If indeed, as you say the problem is macroevolution, not causation, then in fairness we have to admit there is more "chance" of change within life forms than of a "designer" popping up from nothing! And that is pretty much what ID claim. To the evolutionist they say "there is no chance things can change, but our designer just is, and we don't even have to explain where he came from".

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**Nathan Schilt**

5 days ago

You're too hung up on a "designer". The premise of ID is not a "designer". And you greatly oversimplify the ID claim. The premise is that cellular and sub-cellular processes which are natural, random, and reflexive should not demonstrate incredibly complex features indicating that the functions of the organism were prescinded. It may have been, as Richard Dawkins has suggested, aliens from parallel universes who guided the processes and implanted the genetic material. Intelligent design is the conclusion, not the premise.

The conclusion I draw from negative DNA evidence - "some other dude did it"- may be wrong. But the negative DNA evidence unequivocally establishes that it is not the defendant's blood. That's the most ID can do. It can't prove a "designer". But it certainly can, and in my opinion does, disprove natural selection and random mutation as an explanation for how we got from a singled celled organism hundreds of millions of years ago to 21st Century life forms.

To my earth bound mind, the chances of natural selection and random mutation producing the world we live in from nothing are virtually zero, as is the chance of a designer popping up from nothing, as is the chance of someone rising from the dead. A designer requires that I believe in only one impossibility. Billions of impossible random reflexive adaptations leading to incredibly and unnecessarily complex life forms is more than even the White Queen, who could believe six impossible things before breakfast, could handle.

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**cb25**

5 days ago

Nathan,

I have no problem with ID being a conclusion, not a premise. As I said I have sympathy with the ID position. It is precisely because of this, I believe in God, and suspect we see His hand in what we call design. However, let me quickly add: Observation suggests that natural selection does indeed produce comlexity.
But...let's take the position that there is an intelligent designer - now look closely at what has been designed - what do we see? We see "progression" in design and complexity. We see vestigial parts in many forms in a range of creatures. We see "perfect" "adaptation" (evolution) to fit environments. Environments of chaos, death, food chain (not vegetarian either) climactic etc - where very little reflects what things should have been given a perfect garden and world.

I would put to you that if we are going to take the complexity of life as it is to put forward a designer we must also allow that observed complexity to give us two things: 1. a hint at what the designer is like. 2. a hint as to the process he used.

As for 1. The geologic and fossil record strongly suggest "nature, red in tooth and claw"...

2. exactly that - a process not a command.

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Nathan Schilt 5 days ago

Yes, I agree with much of what you say. I have no problem with a God who paved the way for a world that, should the crowning work of His creation choose to trust the serpent over God's word, would both reveal and limit through death the terrible consequences of that rebellion. I tend to think that the Garden planted by God was an island in the outside evolved world. The Biblical account suggests to me that, when Adam and Eve sinned, they were banished from the garden to a world quite like our present world.

After all, in the timeless framework of eternity, the plan of salvation, we are told, was put in place long before sin. Christ's sacrifice worked backwards in time to save. Could it be that a plan to reveal and ameliorate the effects of sin was likewise put in place before humanity appeared on the scene?

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cb25 4 days ago

Nathan,

Probably a rhetorical question, but yes - all possible. You may recall in response to another question about sin before death or death before sin, I clarified my response as relative to this planet.

If there is merit in your garden within an old world which had a purpose in revealing sin, then that sin could predate death. It also can raise the question of whether we see only God's hand in what was outside the garden -red in tooth and claw.

And or course such verses as "the land of Nod", and the "Sons of God ...and daughters of men" come in to play.

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cb25 6 days ago
Thanks for that David.

I did err re Ur. Because of space I failed to include it specifically. It was intended to be there as part of the land Abram walked on.

Re Serapis, Yes I got the drift that you were referring to bradyseism in a specific region. The terraces are over a significant length, and also accord with levels of other more distant occurrences and levels. eg Great Western and Eastern Deserts of Egypt. Israeli coast etc. There are a few signs of later tectonic uplift, but these are too limited to explain the levels, so bradyseism seems an unlikely cause.

Re Where Ur was, I thought it was pretty much agreed it was near modern Nasiriya in mesopotamia. Land between rivers. Yes, well east of Sinai, but low lying, and where the ancestors of Abram probably settled very early after the "flood". I have no idea how you can get 500 yrs or 1000 years gap in that one.

Thanks for the feedback.

David Read 5 days ago

Chris, the idea that Tell el-Mukayyar corresponds to the biblical "Ur of the chaldees (or kasdim)" is one of those things that many people seem to believe, but that may not be true, like the idea that the volcanic Mt. Arrarat in modern Eastern Turkey corresponds to the biblical "mountains of Arrarat."

More to the point, how does mainstream geology explain the fossil corals of Sinai if not by resort to tectonic uplift? My understanding is that all of them are Pleistocene in age, and, during the Ice Age, the sea levels were variously lower than now because of the water locked up in glaciers. How would corals formed during that time now be above the water line--when the sea level is now higher than during the Ice Age, because the Ice Age glaciers have melted--without tectonic uplift?

cb25 5 days ago

David,

I probably should use the term faulting to describe the broken sections. Most do suggest there has been some tectonic changes but on a regional basis. The suggested amount of vertical uplift is not enough to explain the full distance between the top and bottom levels. There is actually a fourth one below sea level.

Sea level changes shown in the terraces is the most likely primarily eustatic.

You ask how could corals formed during that time now be above the water line - when the sea level is now higher than during the ice age...without tectonic uplift?

Because they pre date the most recent ice age.

Your question only highlights the difficulties of trying to fit all these geological features into a little window of time.
David,

The rather long link below might give a bit of perspective to the issue of faulting, tectonic activity, uplift etc. All of which have no doubt occurred, at different times in the history of the region. Remember, the issue here for creation is that these terraces need to be “fitted” in to a very brief period of time. In the period of time we are speaking of (just post flood) there is a total absence of tectonic explanations. Here's the link. I hope it works.


David Read

Chris, so if I understand correctly, you're saying that the Sinai corals pre date the most recent ice age, meaning that they formed during the interglacials when sea levels were higher than now.

During the last interglacial, the sea level was up at most about 8 meters, and the highest sea level during the Pleistocene interglacials was about 15 meters higher than today.

First, is that even high enough to account for the Sinai corals? I thought you said the highest were now 20 meters above sea level.

Second, are you saying that 8 meters of sea level rise or even 15 meters of sea level rise would make Tell el-Mukayyar (which was on a 20 meter hill) uninhabitable? Or make the entire biblical "land of the Chaldees (or kasdim)" uninhabitable?

Third, how does the Milankovitch theory of Ice Ages account for interglacials so much warmer
than today that sea levels were 8 to 15 meters higher? Are very slight cyclical changes in the 1) the eccentricity of the earth’s orbit around the sun, 2) the tilt of the earth’s axis relative to the plane of its orbit around the sun, and 3) the precession of the equinoxes sufficient to create conditions so warm that they raise the oceans by as much as 15 meters? (And isn't it awfully silly to worry about supposed man-made global warming when natural Milankovitch cycles can raise sea levels by 15 meters above the current level anyway?)

David Read

4 days ago

Chris, I'm looking at the article you gave me the link to, and it looks like it acknowledges that strong tectonic uplift of fossil corals is common in the area and acknowledged in the literature. Here for example:

"In this respect, strong vertical tectonism in a similar structural setting is well documented on Tiran Island, at the intersection between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea-Gulf of Aqaba transform, where Quaternary coral terraces are hundreds of meters above the present sea level (Y. Bartov, pers. comm., 1982)."

If "vertical tectonism" raised some coral reefs "hundreds of meters" above the present sea level, can you really rule out that the fossil reefs on the Sinai were lifted a few meters by vertical tectonism? Doesn't this shake your confidence a little?

cb25

4 days ago

David,

You are right there were tectonics. I think the same article suggests that during recent times (>20k yrs) the region has been relatively quiet tectonically.

cb25

4 days ago

Re shaking my confidence:

Let's assume these corals were raised up tectonically after the "flood".

Let's assume for the argument that took place within 200 years. (very unlikely given the bible descriptions of the region. There is actually nothing in the bible description to suggest any changes in the landscape after the flood).

There are four fossil coral reef terraces under discussion. 1 underwater, 3 above. This requires 4 different sea levels, each one stable long enough for a coral terrace to form.

There are only two options to explain this. No more and no less:

1. The four levels and four terraces all formed in 200 years. Is it physically possible? NO.
2. The four levels existed prior to the "flood".

David Read 4 days ago

Chris, we have not been discussing "recent times (>20k yrs)." You've been saying the fossil corals pre-date the last glacial advance (>110k yrs ago). Assuming that's true, the corals could have been lifted well before the area became "relatively quiet tectonically."

Where are you coming up with the number 200 years? Assuming the fossils were lifted tectonically, they could have been built pretty much any time before the region became tectonically quiet. Your tenuous, hypothesized connection between the Sinai fossil corals and biblical "Ur" (wherever and whatever that was) depends upon the corals having been formed during higher interglacial sea levels. If they were lifted tectonically, they're not necessarily connected to the interglacial sea levels.

cb25 4 days ago

mmm so when did they grow according to your scenario?

cb25 4 days ago

Yes... the corals predate at least the most recent ice age

First: Yes, 20 meters plus the regional tectonics over a longer period of time explain the corals

Second. Yes, I suspect 20 meters would make most of ancient Ur pretty wet.

Third. Sea levels during several previous interglacials were as much as 20 meters higher than current sea level. The evidence comes from two different but complementary types of studies:

Old shoreline features. Wave-cut terraces and beach deposits from regions as separate as the Caribbean and the North Slope of Alaska.

Sediments cored from below the existing Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets. The fossils and chemical signals in the sediment cores indicate that both major ice sheets were greatly reduced from their current size or even completely melted one or more times in the recent geologic past.

Global warming? Global warming has been and will be again. The only debate is to what degree (pardon pun) human activity is contributing to it. My personal view is that our biggest contribution is via land clearing/degredation. Carbon? There's too much money in that debate for sanity to exist atm.
The idea that there was high water mark of 20 plus meters in an interglacial seems to come mostly from papers by Paul Hearty and much of it seems to be based upon an analysis of one cave in Bermuda. He's concluding way, way too much based upon very little evidence. What's the causal mechanism for so much warming and so much deglaciation from current levels?

And he is admitting that if the sea was that high it was only a brief "spike" not a sustained coastline. A sustained sea level that much higher than today would leave an unmistakable terrace all over the world. In one of his papers he starts making excuses for the lack of other additional evidence of such a high interglacial sea level: "why other lines of evidence may not reveal a +20 spike at MIS 11" "why rapid spikes in sea level may leave little evidence on coastlines".

But assuming it is true--and I doubt very much that it is--a short spike in sea levels wouldn't be inconsistent with human habitation of Mesopotamia before and after the spike so it doesn't do anything to disprove biblical history.

Also assuming it is true, it really is ludicrous to worry about man-made global warming. If the warm phase of natural Milankovitch cycles will raise sea levels 70 feet above current levels, then there's certainly absolutely nothing pitiful man can do to avoid catastrophic sea level rises, and it is perfectly idiotic to cripple our economy trying to avoid them.

It is much more than on cave in Bermuda!

Anyway... **you tell me how the 4 coral terraces got there** in the little window of time after the flood?

We know it is not storms because of the length and constitution of them. If it was tectonism - when/how did they grow?

Again, "the little window of time" is based upon your idea that the corals are remnants of higher interglacial sea levels, which you think would have prevented the settlement of Biblical Ur.

I don't think there is a little window of time. I think the corals could have formed during the first thousand years or so after the Flood and been lifted tectonically.
So...you are going to have that level which is reflected in areas right across Egypt, Israel, Sinai, and Mesopotamia lifted up in a 1000 years window!!!!

No problem, If you can justify that in light of the descriptions given about the wanderings of the patriarchs in those regions, then there is no point you and I discussing that one anymore.

David Read 4 days ago

The Exodus, during which the children of Israel wandered through the Sinai, was over a thousand years after the Flood. I don't think the patriarchs wandered through the Sinai, but even if they did, so they wandered through a few earthquakes? So what? They lived in tents, and nobody was ever killed when his tent collapsed on him.

cb25 4 days ago

Archeological evidence would suggest that by the time of the Exodus, Egypt had been a dynasty for over 1000 years!

This is the problem with such discussions. Creationists stretch the imagination and "remove" a line of evidence from an old earth argument. Fine, but then they do the same on another line of evidence. IF only such would look at the big picture they would see that all the "stretches" of imagination needed add up to a collectively serious cause for doubt.

I just mention the dynasty for example. Yes, it risks starting a new line of wasted discussion. I could start the point about the pyramids being built of limestone blocks with shells in them....dug up in the deserts of Egypt? Once again, all good to fit into a 1000 year window? Wherein now we have to have tectonic uplift, fossilization of limestone, and excavation by the builders... so it goes on...

Yep...no doubt a few bruised heads in the occasional quake, but nothing like the bruised ego's if for even just a moment creationists allowed the possibility that the house of cards they construct could be shaky...sorry about the bit of sarcasm:) Cheers

Trevor Hammond 6 days ago

cb25, sir I'm sure you have by now noticed that when the 'reply' option is used in all good intent, the whole conversation and blog gets messy. I would prefer to post comments as new rather than the reply.

Trevor Hammond 0 seconds ago  ReplyApproveDelete

cb25, Sir - You asked: "John, as someone asked "who has said there is no God?" That is neither explicit nor
implicit in my blog. You and a couple of others have made that assumption."

Here is the culprit ☺ that asked this:

**Roscoe Fogg**

2 days ago  Reply Approve Delete

Just who has proposed that there is no God?

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T

**David Read**

6 days ago

Chris, from your original article, I didn't gather that the locus of your argument regarding fixed sea levels and shore lines was Ur of the Chaldees (or kasdim). (In your article, you say the Bible gives a "detailed description of the land in the region of Israel, Sinai, and Egypt," but Ur probably was not anywhere near any of those places.)

A preliminary problem with your argument is that no one knows where Ur was; the word "Ur" could be translated as "city" or as "land." If Abraham merely immigrated from the "land of the kasdim," that's not a sturdy foundation for the argument that sea levels couldn't have been higher during post-Flood biblical times.

There is a popular theory that Biblical Ur was on the site of Tell el-Mukayyar, but that is just a theory. Assuming that theory is true and correct, an interesting fact about that site is that some of it sits on an elevated area that is about 20 meters (66 ft.) above the height of the surrounding plains. It could have been a functioning city--perhaps a sea port or river port--even given much higher sea levels than those that currently prevail.

Moreover, I'm afraid I did not, in my original comment, clearly spell out the point of the story of Lyell and the Temple of Serapis. I did not mean to imply that the Mediterranean Sea rose and then fell by more than 21 feet between Roman pagan temple building days and 19th Century geological touring days. Sometimes land gets submerged not because sea levels rose but because land levels subsided, and sometimes land formations rise relative to ocean levels not because sea levels fell but because land was lifted up. That could easily have happened in the Sinai without effecting at all the relative land-sea levels in the land of the Chaldees, or Tell el-Mukayyar, because the Sinai is several hundreds of miles away, clear on the other side of the Arabian Penninsula.

Whatever else may be interesting about the fossil corals of the Sinai, they pose no threat whatsoever to the Biblical timeframe.

**Editor**

6 days ago

Folks: I need to remind one more time, you have been specifically requested to limit your posts to a reasonable collection in the range of 3 paragraphs. From this point forward, lengthy posts will become invisible and your comments will be lost to the thread. You may also be interested in informal polling
indicating an almost universal response of 'always skipping those long boring posts.' If you find your post missing, you'll know this message is for you. Please heed and be more circumspect - CH

Spencer Albracht  
6 days ago

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For a time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from truth, and be turned aside to fables.
II Timothy 4 : 1-4

Roscoe Fogg  
6 days ago

In his first post David Read wrote "The fossil corals of Sinai are quite young geologically (dated from 15,000 to 2 million) and are very likely post-Flood." Time units were omitted, but geologic ages are typically given in years not days. David's age range is not consistent with the "biblical timeframe."

David Read  
6 days ago

Roscoe, obviously I do not believe in the conventional chronology. I was referring to the conventional dates for relative dating purposes only, not because I actually believe in the absolute dating. I should have thought that was clear enough from the nature of my comments.

Ervin Taylor  
6 days ago

Would Mr. Albracht please enlighten the rest of us of who he thinks will not "endure sound doctrine"? That sounds as if he is suggesting that some of us are not following the God-given results of scientific investigations. Is that correct?

David Read  
6 days ago

"God-given results of scientific investigations"? Really, Ervin? If you start with the assumption that God never did anything, you'll end with the conclusion that everything happened on its own and by accident. But, having started with atheistic premises, it is awfully cheeky to then blame God for the outcome of your "scientific investigations."

Roscoe Fogg  
5 days ago

Would David Read explain why he thinks that "conventional dates" are reliable for "relative dating purposes?"
Roscoe, I accept the principle of superposition, i.e., that younger layers overly older ones. Thus, for example, the Pleistocene was deposited later than the Cambrian. Relative dating doesn't depend on absolute age dating, and is seldom in dispute between creationists and Darwinists. The dispute is about absolute age dating. My understanding is that the fossil corals of the Sinai are Pleistocene, relatively young geologically in anyone's model, and post-Flood in a creationist model.

Ervin Taylor
5 days ago

I too would be facinated why Mr. Read thinks that "conventional dates" are reliable for "relative dating purposes"? Also, would Mr. Read please identify who on this thread holds to the assumption that "God never did anything" and starts with "atheistic premises"?

David Read
5 days ago

Ervin, mainstream science starts and ends with the assumption that God never did anything:

"It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Is this really news to you, Ervin?

Roscoe Fogg
5 days ago

Darwinists and David Read are relying on the construct of the geologic column to determine relative ages. According to a prominent creationist (Hovind), “Poly-strata fossils, missing layers, layers out of order, misplaced fossils, and layers in reverse order all invalidate the geologic column.”

David Read
5 days ago

Roscoe, polystrate fossils do cast doubt on the absolute dating, but not on the relative dating (i.e., lower levels are relatively younger than higher levels). George McCready Price believed that the geological column was not a valid construct even of relative ages, but since the 1940s, almost all creationists have acknowledged that geological activity subsequent to the initial deposition--usually orogeny (mountain building)--has caused the instances of out-of-order strata. If he really said what you've quoted him saying, Kent Hovind may have been influenced by Price, but that idea does not reflect current creationist thinking; it is about 70 years out of date.
David Read,  It doesn't really matter. Since the Creation and the Flood were Supernatural events, nothing discovered in nature can contradict them. My faith in God does not depend on any scientific theory or discovery whether evolutionary science or creation science.

Roscoe, it does matter. In theory, it is possible that the data of nature could contradict the Creation and Flood, even though they were supernatural events. As interpreted by mainstream science, the data of nature **do** contradict them, but that is because mainstream science **begins** by denying these events and interprets the data accordingly. Creation science begins by assuming that these events happened, and interprets the data accordingly. One's faith, worldview, or philosophy determines one's beginning assumptions for interpretation of the data.

So if you are saying that origins is really much more within the domain of faith than of science, I agree completely for the above reasons. But if you're saying that we should believe by blind faith alone, and not try to show how the evidence supports our faith, I couldn't disagree with you more.

David and Roscoe,

If you can forgive me for butting into your points:

I am an example of someone who "began assuming these events (creation 6k ago) happened." In dogged determination I tried to interpret the data accordingly.

Honesty won out. I now am forced to end where you say the scientist began.

Chris, what you're saying is that you've been convinced by mainstream interpretations of the data. I don't deny that people can be convinced by mainstream interpretations, just as people can be convinced by creationist interpretations. Some people really are persuadable.

That's why creationists need to continually work on creationist interpretations of the data. That's also why the "blind faith" approach to believing in the biblical narrative--advocated by some who want to teach mainstream origins science instead of creationism in Adventists colleges--is a total catastrophe. If we take that approach, soon no one will actually believe in the biblical narrative. Most people's faith is not so strong that they will continue to believe in the biblical narrative when it seems like **all** the evidence points in the other direction.

David,
"...when it seems all the evidence points in the other direction." Is that not precisely the problem?

"...Creationists interpretations of the data." It seems to me that these are required to get more and more fanciful as more and more evidence points in the other direction. Hence for me there came a point I had to say enough was enough.

**David Read**  
4 days ago

Not more and more evidence, just more and more interpretation of evidence by people who are already basing their interpretations upon materialistic premises.

**cb25**  
4 days ago

Mate....it is more and more evidence. Compare the geological data available to you and I with that available 60 years ago.

Oil exploration has contributed massive amounts of data re the geology of earth's crust. An undeniable increase in data.

Similarly, drill holes in the arctic ice sheets....massive amounts of data and growing!

Seismic and other imaging. Growing data.

This growing resource of data cuts both ways: more for creationists to interpret too! And yes. both groups base their interpretations on a different premises.

Which one is correct? On that we disagree

**David Read**  
4 days ago

I agree that of course there is more data, but the raw data is not "evidence" that points in one direction or another until it is interpreted. . . . But I see that you acknowledged that at the end of your post.

**Roscoe Fogg**  
5 days ago

Data cannot contradict a Supernatural event. There is no way to predict the consequences of a supernatural event. There are no known laws governing cause and effect for a supernatural event. Use the term "creation model" if it makes you think you are doing science, but any creation model is non-falsifiable.

**cb25**  
5 days ago

Roscoe,
Jan Long wrote an excellent Feature article elsewhere in AT. "Adventist Education -- At the Crossroads"
He made this point:

"To the extent that Adventists are to remain committed to truth there is no choice but to frame our notions about creation in a way that balances revelation with that which we can derive through sense data and just basic commonsense reason. These different tools we have for aligning our thinking with the reality, as well as the process sometimes can create unresolved tensions, but there would certainly be no wisdom in ignoring solid data that suggests a contrary conclusion."

I agree with David on this one. It does matter.

Roscoe Fogg
5 days ago

cb25,
I appreciate the Jan Long quote.
Do you think that considering "solid data that suggests a contrary conclusion" admits that a contrary conclusion is possible? Creationists will not entertain a contrary conclusion no matter what the data. They ought to stop pretending to do science.

cb25
5 days ago

Roscoe,

Yes. Not only possible, but the most likely conclusion.

May I propose why your second point is spot on? Creationists will not entertain the idea of a contrary conclusion because most believe that to accept evolution one must believe there is no God. There is perhaps no more shocking thought to a Christian than the possibility of looking out into the night sky with the realization that there may in fact be NOBODY out there!

To avoid that possibility we become masters of apologetics and denial.

To accept evolution does not mean God is not.

It may perhaps be equally shocking to some that a person who has grown up an atheist, and who believes in evolution, can look out into that night sky, and without ever having opened the bible, say "I Believe". God IS!

Why? Perhaps when we put aside our fear, accept reality, and begin real dialogue on these things we will find the answer. To borrow from Jan: as people who seek truth we should be the most willing to begin that dialogue.

!
Mr. Read might wish to remember the elementary differences involving "atheism" (the complete rejection of theism), "agnosticism" (there is insufficient publicly-observable, objective evidence for theism or atheism), and "non-theism" (there may or may not be a supernatural force or deity but even if there is, there is no publicly-observable, objective basis of determining the nature of supernatural actions in the physical world and so the presumed actions of a presumed supernatural force can not be used in offering explanations for the causes of any physical phenomena). These are simple and straightforward distinctions.

Ervin, it isn't true that miracles leave no trace. Certainly, the discrete, simple miracles Jesus performed left verifiable results: people who had been blind could see, the lame could walk, and lepers had healthy skin. And in fact Jesus would tell the former lepers to go present themselves to priests to certify their cleanness.

In other words, the miracles were supernatural, but the physical results were natural and plain for everyone to see. The same is true of the creation and the Flood. They were supernatural events, but they left plainly observable results for everyone to see; in the case of the creation, the living world around us, in the case of the Flood, the thick layers of fossiliferous sedimentary strata.

What historical or scientific evidence do we have that the stories describing the miracles of Jesus are literally true? None. That belief requires faith that transcends evidence.

As any politician would know, the evidence of a crowd pleased at being feed only lasts until they are hungry again. The point is that there was evidence for anyone to see in times close to the event. Also, while very local miracles leave shortlived or hard to find evidence, very large miracles would leave widespread and easy to find evidence. The real problem then would both be the lack of such evidence for major miracles such as creation or a worldwide flood as well as the evidence that contradicts such miracles.

It is interesting that we moderns have no direct evidence at all of Jesus' miracles. The people he healed are long dead, as are their descendants to the 20th generation.

By contrast, we do have plenty of direct evidence of the major supernatural acts of the Creation and the worldwide Flood. As Paul wrote, "...what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."
Yet people often choose to believe, on the word of witnesses long dead, in the miracles that Jesus performed, but choose not to believe in the Creation and the Flood, even though we are surrounded by the evidence.

David

I would be very interested in seeing a creationist explanation of the evidence found in the genetic code (since I know more in this field than I do about statistics and geology which apparently are the creationist favourite fields of study.) Thus far, the evidence I may begin to evaluate for myself plainly points away from the creationist understanding of Genesis.

Thomas "Vastergotland"

The "code" part is of course a matter of semantics. The real question is how creationists could successfully explain the apparent relatedness of species (even beyond the borders that creationists have set up as safe evolution zones through defining microevolution). Data that would put Homo and Pan in the same baramin lends itself poorly to doing science along creationist lines..

Roscoe Fogg

We know that a code does not necessarily have to encode intelligent information, it can encode garbage. Just the EXISTANCE of a code does not imply intelligence.

Are you familiar with the work of the "father of genetic algorithms," John Holland. His work, including:

- *Adaptation in Natural and Artificial Systems*
- *Hidden Order: How Adaptation Builds Complexity*
- *Emergence: From Chaos to Order*
is fascinating. I've used genetic programing in some of my research, it's a very powerful idea. It's a technique that mimics the process of natural selection.

Thomas "Vastergotland"  4 days ago

I have not read Hollands work, although I did read a few similar papers such as this: http://www.nature.com/nrg/journal/v7/n2/full/nrg1771.html

Trevor Hammond  5 days ago

Jesus Christ, Himself, related the Great Flood of Noah's day to His own return to earth to reign over it and the people in it. See Luke 17:20-27, 19:11-27; John 5:22-23, 12:32, and Rev. 22:12." Was the Genesis Flood account just a myth as evolutionist’s assert? Is Jesus then also wrong in referring to a nonexistent flood? Do they even question His Divinity and Creatorship? Methinks so!

Those to subscribe to this school of evolution theory thought, fall by default into a category which believes that 'death occured before sin entered the world' pointing out their anti-biblical position (whilst some still claim otherwise? weird). These evolutionists say they 'honestly' look at 'facts'. What facts? Then there are those from within the same rabbit hole who conflate both evolution and theism. Who are they kidding? Fossils?

T

Roscoe Fogg  5 days ago

Some creationist think that if they can just falsify the theory of evolution, they win. Hardly, if the theory of evolution is falsified, another scientific theory will take its place. The prospect of creating a whole new theory would actually be very exciting to most scientists. More work for everyone!

David  5 days ago

Mr. Barrett

Base in your analysis of geology, for you evolution makes more sense. You arrived to that conclusion probably after a sincere interpretation of the data that was available. I presume that you interpreted that could happen in the past was base of what occurs in the present. (for example if the formation of 1 cm of coral takes 100 years a coral of 30 meters will take 300,000 years).

So the principle is; what we observe today explain what could happen in the past, fair enough. So lets be consistent with that principle. The fundamental principal of macroevolution is mutations; we evolve from inferior cells, animals, until what we are now (make us better). Today we observe thousands of mutation that are deleterious and lethal, until now we do not know one mutation that makes us better. That is fact. So base in the principle of judging the past with what we observe now the theory of evolution really is a very fragile position. The fundamental piece of evolution (mutations) disproves the theory.
David,

I do believe that what and how things happen today is a guide to how things happened in the past. The anit-uniformity industry within creationism is one of the biggest cons of all time. It is beyond doubt that processes generally do not change.

So, yes, what about mutations. First, as others have noted in this thread. Positive mutations do happen.

If there is no such thing, what do you do with vestigial parts to certain creatures and humans, (not to mention the geologic column)?

eg Whales: vestigial hip bones. Vestigial ear bones. Giraffes: Vestigial nerves running from the brain, down to the chest and back to the head. Humans: Vestigial milk lines running down from breast to abdomen with latent/innactive nipples. On male and female! Some people actually have these nipples develop. All mammals have the same milk lines.

Did God make all these vestigial things in creation week? If he really made Eve from Adam, why do men have nipples? Why do women, let alone men, have milk lines? Why does every mammal have the same thing? Why does each mammal develop nipples according to the young they generally give birth to?

If you rule out positive mutations and macro evolution - God has got some big explaining to do...and I don't really think He would explain it like YEC's expect.

David, the problem with your argument above is that its fundamental premise is wrong. Mutations is not the fundamental principal of macroevolution. Macro and microevolution occur because different processes (mutation is only one of them) create variation in a population, and this variation lets some individuals succeed better than other individuals of the species do. The importance of this variation is easily seen when a new pathogen arrives. In populations with no variation, what kills one kills all. In populations with variation, at least some survive to live another generation. Microevolution happens when one part of a population adapts itself to a different circumstance than the other part. This can be caused by events such as migration (a few American plants end up in Europe and start to adapt to their new surroundings), changes in land elevation (hills being pushed up as mountains or sinking down towards sea level) or that two equally viable variants happen to appear. The difference between micro and macroevolution is simply the number of adaption events that the two species have gone through since the divide started.

It was surprising when one of the anti-evolution sites quoted above (I made a short post pointing it out earlier) argued that evolution is disproved by the discovery that major adaption events can occur in a short timeframe (using for instance the example of bacteria being able to eat nylon a mere couple of decades after the fibre began to be produced). I could not quite figure out why the discovery that evolution is faster than previously thought would be a threat to it. If anything it should give pause to the branch of number theory and probability math known as ID.
David

Mr. Barrett
You see we have to be consistent other wise the seriousness is lost.
Now for a Christian this represent even more challenge. Defies the credibility of Christ, He believed that GOD made the man, He believed in the flood and used as a guaranty for his second coming and believed that sin was before dead.
The theistic evolutionist is not consistent neither with Science or Christianity.

Trevor Hammond

Dr. David's statement is brilliant: "The fundamental piece of evolution (mutations) disproves the theory." Imagine: the theory of evolution CONTRADICTS itself thereby making it ILLOGICAL and therefore IRRATIONAL in my opinion.
T

Roscoe Fogg

There's a big difference between not identifying a specific beneficial mutation and showing that beneficial mutations do not exist. (In mathematics, not being able to prove a theorem is not the same as proving that the theorem is false.) Identifying beneficial mutations is technically very challenging.
See "Accentuating the Positive: Researchers Closer to Pinpointing Beneficial Evolutionary Mutations in the Human Genome" at
www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=positive-selection-mutations-human-evolution

cb25

Trevor,

I would pose to you the same questions I put to David about vestigial elements. Can I ask for a few logical and rational explanations of these type of things? After all if mutations are non existent. How DO you explain them?

David

Mr Barrett lest be consistent, consistency gives credibility. Show us one proven mutations that makes better. If you want I can show you thousands, and millions of people dies each year. I image that you are familiar with p value of statistics; this is so strong <0.0000001.
Roscoe mention may be in the future will able to identify good mutation, well until that day, is just a dream or mirage!

cb25
I just found one...I looked in the mirror! Seriously...analyse the lower parts of the geologic column and consistently there are only simple life forms. What I see in the mirror is not. What changed?

David
5 days ago

Mr Barrett lest be consistent prove one mutation (i mean that we can replicate over and over now) that can improve us.

Thomas "Vastergotland"
5 days ago

David, did I just see you request an example of a repeatable chance event?

Spencer Albracht
5 days ago

Atheist Today

Lyleism - A Lynchpin for the Big Bang Story!

By Doesn't Getit
It seems to me as the evidence for a new earth piles up and the debate heats up, there is an increasing absence of common sense and honesty from some participants. There is a massive and growing amount of evidence for a new earth, new life and a divine process...........

Atheist 1: I thought this was an atheist publication that espoused an evolutionist's point of view.
Atheist 2: Well, this new blogger is a progressive atheist.
Atheist 1: What?
Atheist 2: You know, a progressive atheist. He believes that God did have something to do with evolution.
Atheist 1: That doesn't make any sense. Does he not understand what an atheist stands for? What the definition of atheism is?
Atheist 2: Yes, but he is progressive. He wants to change the definition of atheism.
Atheist 1: You can't do that. Atheism is exactly what it is. You can't change the definition. It's atheism! I'm an atheist, I don't believe in God. This is for like minds, not creationists. Don't you get it!
Atheist 2: Oh, he get's it. He is progressive!
Atheist 1: You have to be kidding.........................

Trevor Hammond
5 days ago

cb25 mentions the Geological Column. 1) I would point out that the fossils in all of the column are complex NOT simple as he makes claim. 2) Evolutionists and creationists agree that the best conditions for forming fossils are flood conditions (Parker, 2001). 3) By the way, the Geological Column is found ... where it belongs in evolution books which in my opinion belong in the fiction section of the library ☹:
"The column is supposed to represent a vertical cross-section through the earth’s crust, with the most recently deposited (therefore youngest) rocks at the surface and the oldest, earliest rocks deposited on the crystalline
“basement” rocks at the bottom. If one wishes to check out this standard column (or standard geologic age system), where can he go to see it for himself? There is only one place in all the world to see the standard geologic column. That's in the textbook! ... almost any textbook, in fact, that deals with evolution or earth history. A typical textbook rendering of the standard column is shown in Figure 44. This standard column is supposed to be at least 100 miles [160 km] thick (some writers say up to 200 [320 km]), representing the total sedimentary activity of all of the geologic ages. However, the average thickness of each local geologic column is about one mile (in some places, the column has essentially zero thickness, in a few places it may be up to 16 or so miles [25 km], but the worldwide average is about one mile [1.6 km]). The standard column has been built up by superposition of local columns from many different localities." (Morris and Parker, 1982 - Emphasis in original). From The geological column: Does it exist?

5] These fossilised trees can be seen to extend though thousands or even millions of years of rock strata, which suggests that these trees were buried quickly and not by a slow process taking millions of years. 6] Evolutionist believe that land plants did not appear until over 100 million years after the Cambrian trilobites died out, yet over sixty genera of woody pant spores, pollen and wood itself have been recovered from the lowest "trilobite" rock from around the world (Parker, 2001). 7] There are numerous examples of strata of rock either missing or being misplaced (Parker, 2001).

Dr Gary Parker in his book Creation facts of Life states that "Thus, a walk though the Grand Canyon, then, is not like a walk through evolutionary time; instead it's like a walk from the bottom of the ocean, across the tidal zone, over the shore, across the lowlands and into the upland regions".

Hmm, interesting!

T

cb25 5 days ago

Trevor,

It is at this point I feel like being unpolite to you....I knew full well when I mentioned the column in the way I did I would get (I can't use the words) like that!

The points you have made are exactly the areas Veith made which pushed me to do more work on the topic. The points you have made are long dead. Drilling, seismic imaging, ice cores, and other data have shown the "column" absolutely exists.

Here's just one little bit of work you may find interesting. I challenge you to really study this, do some research on seismic images of paleochannels at incredible depths in different places around the world. Analyse what lies on top of and below them. Then tell me the concept of a "Column" is not reflected in reality! You cannot.

Here's the link.

nowhere in the world does the complete column exist. 9] The majority of the geological periods are missing in the field. 10] those defending the column have invented ad hoc reasons to explain the missing geologic periods, they did not deny the hypothetical nature of the column. 11] creationists remain more than justified in highlighting the essential non-existence of the standard geologic column. 12] anti-creationists have argued that the 1% of the earth’s surface where the lithologies of all ten geologic periods can be found simultaneously is somehow more significant than the remaining 99% where they are not superposed. 13] any mixing of organisms during the Flood has already been accounted for by evolutionists by such things as long-ranging fossils (which are thereby not used as index fossils), and ‘reworking’ rationalizations, etc. 14] To the diluviologist this means, of course, that only the local succession has to be explained by Flood-related processes. Very seldom do all ten geologic systems have to be accounted for in terms of Flood deposition. 15] There is no escaping the fact that the Phanerozoic geologic column remains essentially non-existent.

"It should be obvious, to all but the most biased observers, that it is the anti-creationists who misrepresent the geologic facts. The geologic column does not exist to any substantive extent, and scientific creationists are correct to point this out." [http://www.trueorigin.org/geocolumn.asp]

Trevor Hammond

T

Trevor, I note there is one minute between my posting in response to your geologic column points and your next response. Could you please do me the courtesy of researching the link I gave you and providing informed comment on that? I will check your link out too.
tks

cb25

Trevor, I note there is one minute between my posting in response to your geologic column points and your next response. Could you please do me the courtesy of researching the link I gave you and providing informed comment on that? I will check your link out too.
tks

btw just because you break a long comment in three parts does not justify the rambling imho. The link you provide is well known. The writer fails to address most issues Morton raises. The source Morton uses for some of this data is very much available to Morton. He obviously just does not choose to get it.

oops available to woodmorappe I mean:)

cb25

Trevor, I basically agree with Chris that arguing about the existence or non-existence of the "geologic column" is a sterile exercise. The order of deposition of the strata is clearly real and is just as necessary for a creationist to try to make sense of the geology as for a mainstream scientist.

What isn't necessarily true is the conclusions about time that mainstream scientists derive from the concept of the geological column. These depend upon assumptions about rate of deposition that are often inconsistent with other evidence, like, say, the preservation of fossils, or the lack of erosion on
the surface of a stratum thought to be hundreds of millions of years older than the layer conformably overlying it.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>billman</th>
<th>5 days ago</th>
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| Must say I am thoroughly enjoying the toing and froing here, and feel that Chris is doing an admirable job defending himself against a solid barrage. Would have to say, I am more inclined to agree with Chris than with the YEC/YLC side, even if there are points I would disagree with Chris on. Here are a miscellany of thoughts:  
  - on another thread I posted that there is a higher percentage of science faculty in the UK that believe in a God than occurs in the arts faculty. After the scientists think about what they see, the question they come back to is - why.  
  - theology and science are not exclusive of each other. A belief in a creator is going to influence the interpretation of facts differently to a non-belief in a creator.  
  - given a belief in a creator, some people will endeavour to understand what the Bible means through the lens of science, whereas others will endeavour to understand science through the Bible. Galileo's catholic church used the later, and so does the modern adventist church. And so do some of those posting on this thread.  
  - the message of Genesis, some will understand it to illustrate that God is the creator, others will seek to use it to define how God created. The bigger message would have to be that God created.  
  - science attempts to answer the how. Faith attempts to answer the why. |

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<th>David</th>
<th>5 days ago</th>
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| Mr Barrett:  
Like stated before consistence gives us credibility.  
You wrote, “I do believe that what and how things happen today is a guide to how things happened in the past.” very good.  
I used the same argument: I have to assume that what I observe today (mutations for us are deleterious and lethal and are pretty reproducible) is also a solid guide to what happened is the past. So evolution cannot be explained by mutations that make us better!, I feel very confortable believing that mutations in us produce devolution (making us worse)  
I have given you the credit for your analysis; I hope you will do the same for my, not using data that we cannot observe at the present time. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trevor Hammond</th>
<th>5 days ago</th>
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<td>cb25 You haven't really read what I posted. The glorified 'geological column' doesn't really exist in its entirety. It is shown in books and in schema and models. Sir, The very fact that we have sought to threaten impoliteness towards me comes as no surprise. What is worse, though, is that evolutionists like yourself and others, who openly defy the Almighty Creator God by arguing Atheistic philosophical scientific methods to prove the Bible wrong, have been impolite to the God very God of Heaven and Earth. I would not find it</td>
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very difficult to call this defiance Blasphemy Sir. By taking the position of death before sin you and others insult the Grace and Mercy of God in Christ Jesus who died for the sins of this world. You can't be taken seriously therefore as a believer in God or the Bible, Christian Belief and the authority of Christian Canon as seen in the Word of God, the Holy Bible.

Those expletives you suggested you couldn't mention in parenthesis can very well be used to describe more aptly just what evolution theory is. People like Walter Veith and others who stand up for Biblical Creation Truths are far more reliable than those who hide within the millions of years evolution theory chaos. You know for a fact that no-one has witnessed to the Geological Column forming. Where is there a repeated observable occurrence of it? This immediately takes it OFF the empirical science platform and places it in its rightful philosophical meta-physical sphere in atheist books. There is no rambling Sir, in my post. I have quickly summarized a few objective points which point out that there is no real Geological Column which you have tried to pass off as real. These, as stated in my earlier posts are best found and left in the evolution 'fiction' story books.

Thomas "Vastergotland" 4 days ago

The events surrounding the siege of Srebrenica during the violent breakdown of the Yugoslav republic in 1995 are also not repeatable. The events surrounding the explosion on mount st Helens are not repeatable. The spread of the bubonic plague throughout eurasia in the middle ages is not repeatable. Yet noone contests the historical reality of these events. Why is there no concensus that all of these non-repeatable events are removed from the science platform and really belong in the philosophical metaphysical aisle of the library?

Ervin Taylor 4 days ago

A very relevant response from Thomas "Vastergotland" which YEC/YLF advocates (see Mr. Hammond's most recent posting) will, I suspect, completely, either ignore because they don't understand the point, or entirely miss the point.

cb25 4 days ago

Trevor,

Me thinks I have not only read what you say, I used to believe it, so I asure you, I understand it.

Let's leave the piece of string mentality of how long is it and get back to a simple fact: There is geological data that can genuinely be called a "column" in a significant number of places in the world. Entire? Who cares?

Who said I was going to use expletives? I suspect words like "rubbish", and "drivel" would equally offend. Yes, I must admit to come back to the column issue did push my frustration button because I have come to the place (after decades of defending the belief) that I view that particular argument as having the same validity as arguments for a flat earth.
I did recheck the link you gave. I still await your response to Morton.

Trevor Hammond 5 days ago

Evolution, The Theory of / Has NOT Contributed To Science or Medicines.

Evolution is Not a Fact, it is a Myth, it is a Religion, and Not Proven
"Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, believed in Darwinism. In fact, she cited Darwinism to support her crusades for birth control. She was also a eugenicist. Call it pure happenstance, if you will, but Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of abortions in the U.S., and — coincidence or not — about 36% of aborted babies in this country are black. Blacks make up only 12-14% of the United States population."- Wes Vernon (Washington-based writer and vet. broadcast journalist), from his review of Ann Coulter's book, "Godless"

[Bounoure, Louis]
"Evolution is a fairy tale for grownups. The theory has helped nothing in the progress of science. It is useless."- Louis Bounoure [Dir. of the Strasbourg Zoological Museum]; The Advocate, March 8, 1984, p.17

[*Skell, Philip S.]
"I recently asked more than seventy eminent researchers if they would have done their work differently if they had thought Darwin's theory was wrong. The responses were all the same: No. I also examined the outstanding biodiscoveries of the past century: the discovery of the double helix; the characterization of the ribosome; the mapping of genomes; research on medications and drug reactions; improvements in food production and sanitation; the development of new surgeries; and others. I even queried biologists working in areas where one would expect the Darwinian paradigm to have most benefited research, such as the emergence of resistance to antibiotics and pesticides. Here, as elsewhere, I found that Darwin's theory had provided no discernible guidance, but was brought in, after the breakthroughs, as an interesting narrative gloss."-Philip S. Skell, Emeritus Evan Pugh Professor at Penn St. Univ., member of the Nat. Acad. of Sciences; Why Do We Invoke Darwin?-Evolutionary Theory Contributes Little To Experimental Biology; The Scientist 2005, 19(16):10; Aug.29, 2005.

[Agassiz, Louis]
"The theory of the transmutation of species is a scientific mistake, untrue in its facts, unscientific in its method, and mischievous in its tendency."- Louis Agassiz [ Harvard University professor and the pioneer in glaciation]

T

Trevor Hammond 5 days ago

Maybe just a few more fossils for thought:

[Bertalanffy, Ludwig von]
"The fact that a theory so vague, so insufficiently verifiable, and so far from the criteria otherwise applied in 'hard' science has become a dogma can only be explained on sociological grounds."- Ludwig von Bertalanffy, biologist
[Bierle, Donald A.]
"Like many high school and college teachers today, I held the viewpoint that evolution was based on solid scientific facts. But when I started looking for those facts, I couldn't find them. The evidence for the origin of life by spontaneous generation from chemicals, and for the intermediate fossils that allegedly prove the macroevolution of all major life groups, was simply not there." - Donald A. Bierle [biologist/zoologist], former evolutionist and skeptic

"I was still committed to evolution when I professed faith in Jesus Christ, but as I studied books and articles written by evolutionists, it became increasingly clear that they were committed to a philosophical and religious — rather than purely scientific — world view. They held to their 'faith' in evolution even though the crucial evidence for it was clearly lacking." - Donald A. Bierle [biologist/zoologist], former evolutionist and skeptic

[*Cohen, I. L.*]
"Any suppression which undermines and destroys that very foundation on which scientific methodology and research was erected, evolutionist or otherwise, cannot and must not be allowed to flourish ... It is a confrontation between scientific objectivity and ingrained prejudice - between logic and emotion - between fact and fiction ... In the final analysis, objective scientific logic has to prevail - no matter what the final result is - no matter how many time-honoured idols have to be discarded in the process ... After all, it is not the duty of science to defend the theory of evolution and stick by it to the bitter end -no matter what illogical and unsupported conclusions it offers ... If in the process of impartial scientific logic, they find that creation by outside intelligence is the solution to our quandary, then Let's cut the umbilical chord that tied us down to Darwin for such a long time. It is choking us and holding us back ... Every single concept advanced by the theory of evolution (and amended thereafter) is imaginary as it is not supported by the scientifically established probability concepts. Darwin was wrong... The theory of evolution may be the worst mistake made in science." - I. L. Cohen [Member of the New York Academy of Sciences; Officer of the Archaeological Institute of America], Darwin Was Wrong - A Study in Probabilities PO Box 231, Greenvale, New York 11548: New Research Publications, Inc. pp 6-8, 209-210, 214-215

T

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cb25 4 days ago

Wow. Trevor,

You know so much! Just tell me two things:

1. Is it salt lying to a depth of kms in the Rift Valley?

2. Have you read the Morton link?

---

pat harve 4 days ago

I would like an answer to these questions:
What was God doing over the millions of years you say this earth took to evolve - a Matrix move that lasted that long? Couldn't He be considered a fraud if He watched while people and animals developed in the primordial stew? If God could not have created this earth in a week, then how could He be God - omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent - and what sense would it make to serve Him?

Hi Pat,

Rather philosophical questions, that others may do better on, but a point or two to think about:

What was God doing? Does/should time matter to an eternal God?

Would he be considered a fraud? There are many who consider Him fraud for sitting back watching some of the stuff that goes on in this time in history. Primordial stew? What about the disasters and tragedies that happen every other day? Where was God when 15000 people in Japan drowned in horrific circumstances? Banda Aceh? etc etc

My God is just as "non interventionist" as one posited by a primordial stew. Yes....I suspect he works a miracle now and again, but to most observers the world runs pretty much as it would if He did not exist

If God could not create in a week how can He be God? Oh, your God takes a week?! A God like most of us Christians describe should have snapped his fingers! Really, what difference does time make. The world I look at is still pretty impressive however it got here.

What sense would it make to serve Him? What does your heart say?

cb25.

pat harve asks very pertinent questions which quickly get categorised in the philosophical department by cb25.

That's ok; but one should also put this whole blog in its rightful place too: in the philosophical department together with the Geological Column HYPOTHESIS. The link cb25 advocates above is basic'ally the 'other' camps philosophical views which try and POSE as empirical sciences. What the Geological Column 'hypothesis' DOES show though and strongly suggests, IS THAT A CATASTROPHIC FLOOD of Biblical proportions did in fact take place. Maybe that's the part where cb25 may dosed off whilst watching those Walter Veith Tapes. Readers can see that many in the scientific Community in my posts above are not DECEIVED by such hype-potheses as sci-fi evolution theory. Back later ...

T
Trevor,

I don't understand your reaction. Describing Pat's questions as philosophical was not a put down. It was in fact the opposite. I was implying he had thought about things and was asking some hard questions.

Sure, my response had a bit of tongue in cheek about God snapping his fingers, but they were fair enough questions.

Cool down a little mate. I see you plan to be back later...pleeeeeeaaase ...keep it brief, I don't think any of us want the volumes of stuff you've been pumping out.

Editor

Comment deleted as off-topic & inappropriate. This is a discussion forum, not to be used as a crusade to convert anyone to a particular belief system. Accepting others as they are, is part of the great admonition and all are asked to show this spirit in discussing topics here. A topic not of an individual's particular belief does not make it necessarily wrong. Discuss, learn and disagree civilly, please. CH

David

Thomas

There is a big difference between historical events and biological facts.
To ask to reproduce historical events to give credibility is beyond absurd.
But if you read very careful the argument of Mr. Barrett, he is judging the past by present observations. So I used the same argument. Mutations in us are deleterious and lethal, therefore that also happened in past. Therefore is reasonable to conclude that the fundamental piece of evolution (mutations) disproves the theory.

Thomas "Vastergotland"

As I already said, mutations are not the fundamental piece of evolution.

Also, may I point you to Popperian falsification theory. To give the classic example; All swans are white. No amount of white swans can prove that this is a true statement while one black swan will prove that it is false.

It seems to me that the branches of biology to which you object are at least partly historical in nature.

Trevor Hammond

Well I think the Editor has clearly displayed a bias against my posts and has continued to delete them yet others are allowed to freely engage their views. This cements the Fundamentalist attitude displayed by so-called progressives so I guess it's Farewell to all in 'progressive' AToday land. I was not off topic and was exchanging my views in an appropriate manner. Goes to show how some schools of thought will favour one group over the other. Editor, go ahead and delete all my posts on this website and delete me off the AToday
registration too. This reminds me so much of the satire by George Orwell called 'An Animal Farm'. Talk about Investigative 'progressive' Judgment. Go ahead Editor CM - make my day! Going, going, ...
♥T

--

cb25
3 days ago

Hi Trevor...

if you're still around. Don't take it too hard, I had some stuff deleted too:( I'm still here, and I think, even though I have to agree some of us were getting wound up, there is still room for us to move ahead with respect of each other and what the Editor sees as fair based on the rules.

Enjoy your day whatever you choose to do..

cb25

--

Horace Butler
3 days ago

Don't give up so easily, Trevor. There needs to be a few of us to stir up trouble and be thorns in the sides of the skeptics and revisionists.

We know that all this business about an old earth and a flood that was much earlier than a few thousand years ago is pure poppycock, but we have to keep trying to get through to the unenlightened. They may not have had the advantages that we have.

--

Ervin Taylor
3 days ago

Might I ask Mr. Butler what "advantages" he and Mr. Hammond have had? I am curious as to what kind of education one might have had to be able to say with a straight face that "all this business about an old earth and a flood that was much earlier than a few thousand years is pure poppycock." (By the way, I just love the sound of the word "poppycock." It has such a poetic quality.)

--

Horace Butler
3 days ago

Even though we disagree on this subject, we both agree on the sound of the word "poppycock." Almost makes me wish I was British, old chap.

I was speaking somewhat in sarcasm. What I might consider to have been advantages, could easily be interpreted as disadvantages by those with whom I have disagreements on this subject. If I have had any advantages they have been in the realm of having studied this issue off and on for most of my life. I was a biology major, and had professors who clearly articulate the creationist position in a time when there was much less information available then there is now. What convinces others that the earth is old, has had an opposite effect on me. There are explanations that satisfy both camps. I accept the explanations that are in harmony with the Bible because I have more faith in the Bible than I do in fallible scientists. When all the dust settles both camps must excercise a great degree of faith.
I happen to believe that there is more reason to believe the Biblical version than the scientists' version. Only by twisting Scripture ("Scriptorture") can one make the Bible agree with current scientific theories on origins. "Faith is the . . . evidence of things not seen."

Ervin Taylor
3 days ago

Might I ask Mr. Butler if he has faith in fallible theologians?

Horace Butler
3 days ago

No, only in the inerrancy of Scripture, which was not written by theologians, but by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Bereans ran Paul's teachings through the filter of Scripture. I try to do the same. If something appears to be contradictory to Scripture, I'll go with Scripture, all the while trying to understand it better. When someone (as was stated here on this forum) says that there was death before sin, I reject that because it is opposite of what the Bible clearly teaches.

Ervin Taylor
2 days ago

You say you believe in the "inerrancy of Scripture." Just to be clear, you believe that every statement in the Bible must be taken as literally true?

David
3 days ago

Trevor in the last days i was given lectures to a group of physicians in Acapulco (nice place) I did not see your deleted comments. Your participation in AT is vibrant, fun and though provoking. If the editor deletes you from AT will be sad, and the seriousness of open debate will be damage.

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago

Actually, it does not seem that any special education in the sciences is necessary if the Bible is the final answer. Anyone can read the Bible and be fully informed on most any subjects by eliminating anything that appears to disagree with the Bible.

BTW, if humans are fallible, is the Bible, written by humans, infallible? Is that now the position of the SDA church that the Bible is both fallible and inerrant?

Ella M.
2 days ago

Does anyone really believe that the uses of numbers the Bible are literal? It would seem to me they are more symbolic. With most of them being symbolic as in Revelation's 144,000, how could we decide where to draw the line between literal and symbolic or just a wild guess. The use of numbers over a million isn't used in the early civilizations as far as I can find. We know the chronologies are not written to be literal as they are different and have other points to be made. The parables the same thing--it is what they mean and
not that they actually happened as stated (i.e., the richman and Lazarus).
I would say the Bible writers were of a different mindset than today and certainly not science oriented. Maybe they were post-modern, a term that scientists just hate!

Horace Butler
2 days ago

So, if I understand you correctly, you're saying that the 6 days of creation were symbolic? How about the 40 days and 40 nights that it rained during the flood? 3 days and 3 nights that Jesus was in the tomb. 50 days from the resurrection to Pentecost? Where do you draw the line? Context is the key word. So many of the numbers in Revelation are symbolic that it's logical to take the 144,000 as symbolic. But in the narrative sections of Scripture, it is also logical to accept numbers as being literal, unless the context requires otherwise. Nothing in Genesis hints at symbolism when it comes to the parts that are simple narratives. Gen. 3:15 is one clear exception, and it isn't concerned with numbers.

Elaine Nelson
2 days ago

What are the mathematical odds of the number 40 that is used so often in the Bible, a truly accurate number? Long before humans developed mathematical skills the body digits numbered 40 and that may have been as far as they calculated. The moon had fixed schedules of 28 days (marked by the sun) and there were seven visible stars where the number 7 could be used.

As an aside: sabbaths were calculated by the moon and the Jewish calendar indicated that: from the first new moon, seven days were counted which was sabbath, etc., making every sabbath dependent on the moon. If such a method were followed, sabbath would fall on a different day of the week in a short time. The new moon and sabbath are mentioned together at least six times in the Bible and there is evidence that the new moons as well as sabbaths were observed by the Israelites. The well-known verse in Is.66:23 connects the two events as the worship time in Israel and the new earth. Why is the new moon completely ignored but sabbath is to be a continual ceremony?

The 144,000 could be 12x12: remember, there were 12 tribes (12 gates of the Holy City?) and the number twelve is used more than three dozen times in the Bible. Could it be that it was one of the largest numbers to which they could count? Hundreds was also used many times, but probably meant a "large number" and merely an estimate of a bigger group. If the Exodus was 600,000, as has been estimated, the time to cross the Red Sea would have been far longer than the story; which is why most numbers in the Bible are not considered factual. Actually, the Bible writers recalled a time which was both pre-modern, and pre-literate.

Horace Butler
2 days ago

Elaine, do you ever read any other theologian's perspectives other than the liberal ones? The new moon was used to calculate when various feasts started--notably the Passover. The only sabbaths that were calculated by the new moon were the ceremonial ones. That all pointed forward to the Messiah and had no further significance after Messiah came. The weekly Sabbath was never calculated by the moon, and did not point
forward to anything. There are those on the fringe who are trying to insist that the weekly Sabbath be calculated that way, but since it is a memorial of creation, and is clearly tied to the creation week in Exodus 20:8-11, one must reject that position.

Humans did not "develop" mathematical skills. The antediluvians were far superior mentally than we are, and I'm sure they could count beyond the digits on their hands and feet.

It is more likely that there were well over a million people crossing the Red Sea when you factor in women and children. Calculate all you want, but I don't think the time factor is the problem that so many liberal theologians make it out to be.

Now, how do we tie this into the flood? 40 days and 40 nights. Yes, 40 was used symbolically in the Bible, but to take the number 40, when it is in the middle of an historical narrative, and try to make it symbolic, goes against the normal rules of exegesis.

Timo Onjukka
1 day ago

""Calculate all you want, but I don't think the time factor is the problem that so many liberal theologians make it out to be."

Perhaps to a "traditionalist" this holds equally true, as you unilaterally assert here regarding "liberals".

To state, with certitude either way, and deny the other possibilities is only ensuring one cannot know beyond his previous bias.
If i am certain of "truth", i am not afraid of someone questioning it, or suggesting another plausible resolution.
To use "irreducible complexity" vis-a-vis as science to disprove "science" and prove a purely faith-based belief (which precludes allowing science itself to answer) is far too common, and myopic imho.
I wonder why this chasm in reason and logic is so invisible.

Summarily to label the questioners as atheist/macro-evolutionist (and whatever other ism/ist we wish to label) seems far too many in haste desire to shut the door of salvation (and respectful discussion) upon.

Wonder what such a Kairos God, dealing with a chronos man....

Elaine Nelson
1 day ago

Truthfully, all the info on the relationship between the new moon and sabbath were largely from Jewish sites--they should be the experts on that subject since Adventists would not know of it except through Judaism, which I recall, gave us the Hebrew Scriptures.

"The emergence of the moon--from darkness to light--is a picture of God's salvation for the Jewish people. In
Talmudic times, the day marking the New Moon was fixed by actual observation by at least two witnesses. As soon as the new moon was visible as a waxing crescent, the Sanhedrin in Israel was informed (by the blowing of trumpets from mountain top to the next) and Rosh Chodesh was formally announced. This system was later discarded in favor of the fixed calendar developed by Hillel II (c360 C.E.), which has been in use to the present day. The entire Jewish calendar was dependent upon knowing when Rosh Chodesh began, and without this information the set times for the festivals and holidays would be lost. Therefore, during times of persecution, the Jews were often forbidden to observe Rosh Chodesh as well as Shabbat, in order to keep from them obeying God" (www.hebrew4christians-com).

Other sources: Encyclopedia Biblical, www.jewishencyclopeda.com (sabbath). According to the Jewish Encyclopedia.com under Calendar: "Every two or three years, as the case might be, an extra month was intercalated."

An additional problem: In Tonga, the SDA church worships on Sunday, because when a change was made to the International date line, Saturday became Sunday. In effect, man, not the heavenly bodies, determine when a day begins and ends. If this is so, then really man can establish or set apart which day Sabbath is, and when it begins and ends. In essence, man places himself in the place of God as the one who sets apart, or sanctifies a day.

Horace Butler

None of that new moon stuff changes the weekly Sabbath. It remains constant. Those living near the international date line do the best they can. If the line ran in a straight line from pole to pole, that would solve the problem. I'm sure God accepts the Tongan's solution as their best effort, just as He accepted the faith of the thief on the cross as his best effort—even though he was not baptized, never went to church, never went out to share his faith. Confusion caused by the International Date Line is no excuse for abandoning a core Biblical doctrine.

LaffAL

Tongan Adventists in the USA worship on Saturday... as Sabbath keepers... We had a Tongan group at our local church. And several of their evangelism meetins were led out by Tongan preachers who had come from the island... And Saturday was always the day they commemorated as the Lord's Day... Sabbath.

Elaine Nelson

If only sabbath were observed by the world calendar--which was accepted hundreds of years ago. But faithful sabbath observers, beginning with Judaism, have been told that sabbath is from sundown to sundown; a very difficult situation in the far northern reaches of the globe. From experiences of SDAs living there, Adventists often went to evening vespers then shopped until "sundown" around midnight. With the sun rarely seen during the long winters, there is another problem with adhering to the Bible rule. These adjustments were never considered when sabbath was given originally to the small area of Palestine, all in one time zone.
All the nine other laws of the Decalogue are "morals" that should be practiced always; sabbath is the only one that specifies a time when it is to be observed, and if it is called the "moral" law, is one who does not observe it, as described by God in the Torah, is he considered to be "immoral"? Stealing is illawful and doesn't depend on time; ditto for lying and all the other nine. A law that is only pertinent to one day in seven cannot be considered a "moral" law.

Horace Butler

I see the arguments of desparation. There is no problem deciding what day is the 7th day. All Christians know which day is the first day, which makes it obvious which day is the 7th. Messing with the calendar doesn't change that. The fact that the hours of daylight and darkness create problems in the arctic zones is no reason to abandon the observance of the Sabbath elsewhere. I believe God honors those who do their best to come to a reasonable solution. In the summer at Barrow, Alaska, the Sabbath would obviously begin around midnight, and in the winter around noon on Friday. I don't know how they do it up there, but that's how I would do it if I were on my own.

So, now you're the authority on which laws are moral and which are not? The 10 commandments are a clearly a unit. To treat one differently than the others makes no sense. Our treatment of God seems to come under the category of morality just as much as our treatment of our fellow man. The fact that time is an element does not take away from the morality of the commandment, because it was God who made the rule, and from that fact alone it becomes a moral issue.

Elaine Nelson

Laffal, if Sabbath is "observed" on Sunday in Tonga, doesn't that indicate that it is a "feeling" or sentiment that does not require adherence to the calendar? Many European calendars a few years ago showed Monday as the first day of the week, making Sunday the 7th. If the command is to observe the "7th day" it all depends on when a first day is.

Stephen Foster

Remember that the commandment to “remember” a specific pre-sanctified day as a reminder (itself) of who created whom, was given so that at some point time all of mankind—to include all nations who would eventually be blessed through Abraham’s seed—would know both who created whom, and how.

Elaine Nelson

That is ONE version of the Ten. The one in Deuteronomy said, "It was not with our forefathers" which would indicate it had not been given previously, wouldn't it?

Also, in the same chapter (5) of Deuteronomy, the fourth commandment says: "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt....and because of this, God has commanded you to keep the sabbath day."

Just as there is a selective choice of stories (Gen. 1 preferred to Gen. 2) and the Ex. 20 version of the
covenant given, over the one in Deuteronomy, there are rejections of the earliest Christian writings, Paul, who wrote that no one should be judged about days and "Let everyone be convinced in his OWN mind." Christians were given a new covenant and not the one given with the Israelites; neither were Christians ever given a specific day of "rest" as were the Israelites. Except for believing in Christ, Adventism simply included Judaism with belief in Christ.

Horace Butler
22 hours ago

The drivel spewed out by theological "scholars" who reject the divine inspiration of Scripture seems to get better press here than the material produced by those who accept the divine origin of the Bible. It's easy to try to make the Bible argue with itself; it takes more scholarship, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit to detect the harmonious thread that exists from Genesis to Revelation.

Ervin Taylor
18 hours ago

I would certainly agree with Mr. Butler that it "takes more scholarship . . . to detect the harmonious thread that exists from Genesis to Revelation." Members of the Adventist Theological Society use a lot of their scholarship in the service of traditional Adventism to impose on the Bible a set of propositions that may or may not be obvious from a "plain reading" of the Biblical texts. One of these debatable propositions is a view that there is a "harmonious thread that exists from Genesis to Revelation." One should not object when someone---be it John Milton or Ellen White---does that, but please don't suggest that the "harmonious" thread is obvious. Any such "harmonious" threads are imposed on the Biblical narratives through "creative" interpretations that emphasize one set of texts and ignore others or take them totally out of their original context. Of course since a number of New Testament writers did that with Old Testament texts, I suppose any modern person can not object by saying that this practice is "non-Biblical".

Horace Butler
7 hours ago

If there is no harmonious thread from Genesis to Revelation, then the Bible is human, rather than divine in origin, and we might as well go watch the Yankees (pick your favorite sports/entertainment god) and forget about all this religion nonsense. There is no middle ground. The harmonious thread will be obvious only as the Holy Spirit enlightens the student of the Word. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. But, the skeptic will always find something to hang his hat on. That's not the fault of the inspired record.

JIMS Seven
12 hours ago

Dear Editor, (I would have posted my comment earlier but certain incidents in our country just took of all attention so here am I)

I regret to tell you that you have not lived up to the minimum norm of open discussion and debate. It is true and I don't hesitate to tell you and others that so far I have been blessed to have read Mr. Hammond's comments and have cherished his comments as from someone daring to take stand for his beliefs no matter how hard the opposite groups try to make fun of those beliefs. Editor Sir/Madam, in the place where I live there is this folk wisdom: 'Garden looks beautiful because of many different flowers there' (those who read
will understand).

After your advice to keep our posts short and to the point I have been seeing that most (in fact all of us) of the friends here have complied with your advice. But your arbitrary declaration regarding the post of Mr. Hammond (I guess it's His you meant, seeing the conversation unfold in that sense in the comment thread) 'Comment deleted as off-topic & inappropriate'.

My take: If it was that so you would have better listed it for all of us to see here too. Did anyone complained to you about that? etc. Without that your declaration puts you and your team on weak ground. By the way if a person time and again claims that he has been wronged by you (with few more people coming on board and saying yes) then you got to think about your actions too (at least) in your area of operation. What in your opinion makes the post inappropriate Sir/Madam? Is it anything not sporting your view or camp? I read the post of Mr. Hammond explaining to you he was nicely complying with your advice but you thought otherwise. What baffles me is you not trying to acknowledge the fact that it takes time to search materials, read them and you just tyrannically delete them. That’s an utter disrespect to readers like us who are here to see and read the diverse opinions. You say 'This is a discussion forum, not to be used as a crusade to convert anyone to a particular belief system'.

My take: It would be foolish to think and an utter lie to not accept the fact that our beliefs and thinking upon which we act sums up as a person which equally applies to Progressives/Liberals, Evolutionists and Traditionalists etc. Genuine Adventists believe that the hearts are converted with the power of God's Spirit and not by fossils proofs and Church doctrines so my understanding here of you blaming a particular person coming to preach or conduct a crusade is nonsense. If you think of the intellectuals engaged here in this forum just that much then we as readers and commentators have all right to question as to what motive prompts your work regardless of your ‘Noble’ purpose. I come here to see and know how my opinion is criticized or appreciated etc rather than to think oh....‘it’s a time to preach’. Every sane mind engaged here might know this fact I guess. (Will continue in second post to comply with your advice to keep the post within limit)

JIMS Seven

12 hours ago

Dear Editor, (…Continued)

You say 'Accepting others as they are, is part of the great admonition and all are asked to show this spirit in discussing topics here.' My take: Mr. Hammond through his writing makes it clear that he strongly disagrees with some of the things presented here (I do disagree too) yet He has been displaying civil manner here more than you and your team and certain camps (Please go through the comments post and they will tell you the story). You say how? He though not sporting certain belief atleast would not be employing your tactics of censoring and trying to silence the voice of opposition. The tactics you employ are seen in many of the nations (by the political leaders) as well who want to cling onto the power (by hook or crook) making a life long effort to subdue the voice of different group not in agreement with them. Such people talk about democratic norms more than others but in reality the 'D' (first letter in word democracy) for them means dictatorship and nothing else. It is for you to do some soul searching as to where you fit in here.

Since the time I began posting comments here this is my second instance of trying to make a weak effort of drawing your attention to be more practical and transparent in your approach asking you not to corner certain individuals or groups (if that applies) just because they are not in agreement you but I see that my effort as a regular reader of AT is falling on deaf ears. I must confess though I was not new to what AT is about yet I
was keeping myself silent seeing everything from distant as a reader but it is through the comments of Mr. Hammond I was drawn to AT more and more (can you see the value of genuine writers there) and there might be many like me. His posts are filled with information, spirituality and importantly for a business like yours his posts have been able to generate much spark and that is helpful to you if not for anything at least for fund raising campaign to convince your donors telling them as to how helpful AT is in contributing to the conversation etc. Tolstoy once said this ‘How far does the light of a little Candle shines in darkness so does the good work in this naughty world’, personally speaking it is this person from another world whom I haven’t met physically, with whom I have no cultural similarity etc. whom you label as not being appropriate in his manner, he is the one who have motivated me to engage in your site. One man taking stand for right makes entire difference in this world. You say ‘Discuss, learn and disagree civilly, please’. Hey Editor you got to apply it to yourself first. Giving advice is always easy. Much harm have been done to this beautiful planet by people with such attitude as those who try to silent the voice of people with diverse opinion just because to them the opposite voice sounds to be the voice of Zealots, Crusaders, Legalists and outdated materials but then as I said earlier the folk wisdom in my country says 'Garden looks'……Mr. Hammond: I don’t have much to say to you except that you’ve been a blessing. Forget this Editor business (May be it’s a pressure/burden of SUPPORT they receive from those dear people and groups not sporting your ideas/actually mine too for which the Editors always feel it good to sacrifice the voice of the biblical Messengers on the altar of pseudo information business), take up your armor and keep on questioning ‘Who is this that defies the God of Israel’. Come back and let us be enriched with your biblical understanding. Theology is not limited to the ‘Elites’. Keep on becoming fool in the World’s eye, some more fools like me will always appreciate what you offer in the name of the ROCK of Ages.

Cheers.

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American Congregations Reach Out to Other Faith Traditions: A Decade of Change

Submitted Sep 13, 2011

In the 10-year aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US, churches of nearly all denominations have increased their cooperation in interfaith ministry.

According to a report released Wednesday, September 5, to Adventist Today and other media by David A. Roozen, for Faith Communities Today 2010 (FACT2010), the study of more than 11,000 randomly sampled congregations has found interfaith activities during the 10 years following 9/11 doubled. This has been from about seven percent of congregations being involved, to approximately 14 percent today.

Seventh-day Adventist congregations scored near the very bottom for interfaith activities, with only three percent conducting interfaith services in the past 12 months, and a slightly higher eight percent participating in interfaith community services.

“Participation in interfaith activities is not a sign of churches coming together in doctrines or in ecumenism,” said Monte Sahlin, a long-time researcher for the Seventh-day Adventist church. He participated actively in the study and today serves as executive secretary of its parent body, Congregational Studies Partnership.

He says, “It's a measure of American churches' willingness to work together for the common good. Apparently the 9/11 attacks brought home a strong spiritual message that we should work more closely together to help solve persistent community needs.”

Sahlin noted a strong inverse correlation between a denomination's perception of self as conservative, and its willingness to cooperate with other faiths in ministry. The survey found 65 percent of Adventists interviewed saw their church as conservative. This was compared with members of the Unitarian Universalist Association who saw themselves as containing 0 percent conservative (the lowest of all denominations) and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who viewed their church as 90 percent conservative (the most conservative).

On the interfaith chart of activities, by contrast, Mormons rated very low (two percent of congregations having held interfaith worship services during past 12 months), compared with Universalists, of which 50 percent held interfaith services during that same period of time. Adventist churches reported three percent had conducted interfaith services.

"During these 10 years, Adventist churches did expand heavily into the arena of interfaith activities," Sahlin said. "I believe if a church wants to truly grow, it must be seen as relevant, and interfaith partnerships for the common good are excellent ways to gain that recognition."

He noted church growth is clearly associated with how active a congregation becomes in the community, and the relevance it appears to have to the general good of the people.
An abstract of the report is available [here](http://www.ato-day.org/article.php?id=845&action=print).

Jeff Boyd 1 week ago

I wasn't able to view the abstract. Is it available in a different format?

At our Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice board meeting last week, I was impressed with a report from a Jewish film maker, Laurie White, on an ICPJ delegation that had visited peacemakers and more militant actors in both Israel and Palestine. To bring the learning points home to Michigan, they are working on a three-part film series where each film will be posted in a different faith community's venue--Jewish, Christian and Muslim. She mentioned Encounter Point, Budrus, and her film, Refusing to Be Enemies ([http://refusingtobeenemies.org/trailer.html](http://refusingtobeenemies.org/trailer.html)).

Just a week or so earlier I had been talking with our local SDA head elder about how we should co-sponsor a film with Muslims in the area, featuring The Power of Forgiveness, Pray the Devil Back to Hell, and Encounter Point.

God, remove our feelings of both superiority and inferiority. God, help us be secure enough in our beliefs that we can cooperate with others without feeling like our faith is threatened. And at the same time, may we be open to the thoughts and experiences of others so we can really hear them, seeking first to understand and then to be understood.

Jeff Boyd 1 week ago

I can access the link now. Thanks.

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