Walter Veith Visits La Sierra

Walter Veith spoke Thursday and Friday afternoons to over 130 students and faculty at La Sierra University, invited by student creationist club Sci-Fai to address topics related to creation and evolution. (Read more)

New Book: 'Understanding Creation'

Educate Truth
May 15, 2011

The ANN Highlights LSU’s Dr. Lee Grismer – An Evolutionary Biologist

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May 5, 2011

Clifford Goldstein: ‘A Safe Place’

Adventist Review
April 30, 2011

A big reason why so many people are leaving the church

Educate Truth
April 21, 2011

The following article from Press Enterprise is from 1999, but has been archived online at the request of Educate Truth because it demonstrates LSU has had a history of undermining church beliefs and that students have tried in vain to change things.

La Sierra students criticize core classes
Purpose & Goals

Find out what Educate Truth's purpose and goals are about.

The History

Educate Truth hundreds of documents related to the conflict at La Sierra University. In order to help people navigate to the most important documents that have been published, we have complied a list of the most relevant documents in chronological order.

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Walter Veith spoke Thursday and Friday afternoons to over 130 students and faculty at La Sierra University, invited by student creationist club Sci-Fai to address topics related to creation and evolution. The lectures took place at Hole Memorial Hall and Cossentine Hall. The most notable attendees were LSU Provost Steve Pawluk and Research Professor of Philosophical Theology Fritz Guy. According to event organizers, Lee Greer attended Friday’s presentation. Students from the chemistry and physics departments were encouraged to go, with credit being given them for attending; however, it appeared as though there was no such encouragement from the biology department.

Thursday Veith discussed the adaptation of animals from a plant-based diet (Gen.1:30) to a meat-based diet. Assuming what the Bible says about the diet of animals is true, it “seems ludicrous if you look at everything in the world today,” Veith said. He discussed several examples of animal transformation caused by environmental changes. Veith’s article on the same subject is referenced below for the sake of summary:

- Thorns and spines are really just stems and leave that have modified growth processes. There is no new information here, just a modification of the existing pattern.

- Transformation could have occurred in bacteria, causing the development of disease organisms. Originally, bacteria could all have had highly specific roles to play in assisting numerous processes in the body and in the environment, just as useful bacteria still do today, and their original role could have been only beneficial.

- Sacculina, a parasite of crabs, has no digestive tract. Instead of maturing into a normal barnacle, it is transformed into a blob of cells. The loss of organs is not necessarily the result of mutations, but could just be the result of deactivation of the gene systems that are not required under the new circumstances. The venom of snakes and spiders may simply be modified digestive proteins.

- Carnivores are equipped with the necessary weapons to kill and catch other animals, but this equipment need not necessarily have been designed for that purpose.

What we see today is merely an adaptive condition that points to degeneration rather than evolutionary advance. Veith showed evidence of these adaptations occurring within a short period of time, influenced
significantly by diet. One example he referenced was the Kea parrots of New Zealand:

Kea parrots in New Zealand ordinarily dig for roots, but dwindling food supplies encourage them to attack sheep. The parrots use their sharp beaks and claws to tear open the backs of the sheep so that they can eat the fat around the kidneys. If their food source is restored, the parrots will go back to eating roots.

Kea parrots have the same sharp talons and powerful beaks as birds of prey, but use them for harmless purposes. Lack of food often leads to aggression, and this could be one of the reasons why they aggressively attack a creature that cannot defend itself.

“I’m not here to indoctrinate you, but give you a choice,” Veith said. “This is a Christian institution, one that believes the Lord made heaven and earth. You have a choice, believe evolution or what God says.”

When asked about an LSU biology professor’s statement that said evolution was the best explanation for life as we see it, he responded, “Natural selection is a pathetic deity, because it can’t create anything. It can only choose between two options, so if evolution is the best reason anything exists, their driving force is a negator of evolution.” He then elaborated on other reasons why evolution was not the best explanation.

Friday’s lecture consisted mostly of his personal testimony and discussion about the genome playing an instrumental part in his conversion to creationism. He couldn’t believe all the information at the level of genotype could have come about by random processes. “I started thinking, ‘I’ve been an idiot all my life. This thing was designed,’” he said. “You can believe it came about by chance, but it’s no longer science — it’s faith!”

During the question and answer time Friday, one graduate student said she had been a biology major at LSU and was raised Seventh-Day Adventist. She essentially asked Veith how he justified being a creationist when there was evidence coral reefs were millions of years old, and she also pointed out the similarities between the chromosomes of humans and chimps. She wondered if there was middle ground between creation and evolution, or if it was possible that God used the evolutionary process. Her question illustrates the core problem at LSU. Students have no idea what Seventh-Day Adventists believe, because the creationist view and evidence isn’t presented in the biology classrooms. They get one view — evolution.

Veith’s presentations and answers were videoed by It’s About God and will be made available online May 23. Sci-Fai was started by Louie Bishop in order to provide support and resources through lectures for students interested in creation. Veith also spoke at Loma Linda University. His presentations can be watched here.
New Book: “Understanding Creation”

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Educate Truth shares the following advertisement for a new book, Understanding Creation, as a service to readers:

Posted by Sean Pitman
Sunday, May15, 2011

Understanding Creation: Answers to questions on faith and science

From the Publishers:

Understanding origins is vitally important to Seventh-day Adventists. This is not just an issue relegated to the science departments at institutions of higher learning. Every Seventh-day Adventist needs a clear and uncompromising understanding of where we came from.

With the help of some of our church’s leading scientists, Dr.s L. James Gibson and Humberto Rasi present the latest information on the subject of creation in words anyone can grasp. Understanding creation: Answers to questions on faith and science is a must read for Seventh-day Adventists – especially Seventh-day Adventist leaders.

This authoritative and faith-affirming book includes such chapters as:
Are the Bible and Science in Conflict?
What is the Evidence for a Creator?
When Did Creation Occur?
Can I Believe in a Worldwide Flood?

This book provides answers, from a biblical-Christian worldview perspective, to 20 of the most commonly asked inquiries regarding Creation, evolution, the first chapters of Genesis, the Flood, dinosaurs, fossils, radiometric dating, and related subjects. Although carefully researched, the contributors use a language accessible to the common reader. It can be used by teachers and college students as well as by anyone interested in the relationship between the Bible and science.

Read More...
Cliff Goldstein: ‘A Safe Place’

As I have said numerous times: Adventism and evolution are mutually exclusive. If one is true, the other is false. Ergo, you can be an Adventist or an evolutionist, but not both. Our name, Seventh-day Adventist, implies a rejection of any creation story that’s premised not on the six days before the seventh but on eons of evolutionary hell. Honesty demands that those who call themselves Seventh-day Adventist ought to at least believe in what the name they claim stands for.

Because I’ve taken this unyielding position on what’s an unyieldable position, I’ve been accused—both in the flesh and in the fleshly androgyny of cyberspace—of advocating that anyone who believes in evolution ought to be thrown out of the church.

That’s false. What I’ve said is that it’s hard to see how anyone who believes in evolution would want to be in this church. Nothing Adventist makes sense with the neo-Darwinian synthesis as backdrop. To paraphrase a fundamentalist atheist, evolution is an acid that erodes everything it touches. That would include the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, which have the central theme of creation and redemption, two truths nullified by evolution, even a “theistic” kind. (Who’d want to worship a theos who created like that, anyway?)

To reiterate: be a Seventh-day Adventist or be an evolutionist, but let’s end the charade of thinking one can be both. (Read more)
Some may wonder why Shane, David and I, and many others in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, are so concerned over the fact that mainstream evolutionary theories are creeping into our schools? Why is it a problem that the theory of evolution is being promoted as the true story of origins, in our schools, in direct conflict with the Church’s position on a literal 6-day creation week? What’s the big deal? Who really cares? After all, isn’t it enough to know Jesus? Why is the Church’s stand on origins so critical? After all, as Eddie asks below, who has ever been converted from atheism to Christianity through apologetic arguments for creationism? – especially young-life creationism?

Eddie wrote:

“Many Christians have lost their faith because of the empirical evidence for long ages of life on Earth. Do you know of any atheist who became a Christian because of the empirical evidence for life on Earth being less than 10,000 years old?”

First off, there aren’t that many true atheists. Only about 1.6% of Americans describe themselves as atheists and 2.4% as agnostics (we won’t even talk about ‘atheists in foxholes’). And, when people do end up referring to themselves as atheistic, in a public manner, they’re usually pretty set in their ways, having passionately made up their minds against the idea of God. Because of this, it is pretty hard to convert a self-proclaimed atheist.

Yet, I know of a number of former agnostics or atheists who became Christians due in no small part to the evidence for creation – to include the evidence for a recent arrival of life on Earth: Walter Veith, Clifford Goldstein, Rick Lanser, Jerry Bergman, and John Sanford to name a few.

Really though, such examples are meaningless when it comes to my own basis of faith and a solid hope in the future… and the faith of many who remain Christians because of the evidence in support of the Biblical account of origins.
More to the point, as you point out, many many people do in fact leave the Church because the Church is not offering them good apologetic arguments to counter the prevailing opinions of mainstream science.

Various studies, to include one reported in the book, *Already Gone* (by Ken Ham and Britt Beemer) and the following report, by an evolutionist, on a pole taken by the Montana Origins Research Effort (M.O.R.E.) in 2011, support your argument:

“But let’s talk about a fact that we could both agree on: People are leaving the church because of the creation vs. evolution issue. It was stated several times during the conference that 66 percent of the young people in their church were not returning after college. When polled, the number one reason for leaving was because of their religion’s stance on evolution.”

(Read More...)

Obviously then, hiring scientists who promote the mainstream perspective, or offer nothing but blind faith to counter it, only exacerbates the problem. Flipping your argument around, if the Church were able to provide better empirical arguments for its position on origins, I think even you would agree that such evidence would play a big part in keeping people in the Church. After all, if they’re leaving in droves because of the empirical evidence against the Church, if this evidence is effectively countered, such an effort would obviously play a key role in keeping a great many people in the Church.

Sure, a few like you may stay in the Church in spite of the perceived weight of evidence against it or because of empirically blind faith alone. But, for many many people, blind faith arguments just aren’t good enough. They aren’t appealing to many rational people who will follow where they think the empirical evidence leads. The Church should be urgently trying to help such people, people like me, who actually need to see the weight of empirical evidence favoring the Church’s perspective as a basis for rational faith. The Church would only be contributing to the vast exodus from its own doors, especially among the youth of the Church, by failing to substantively address the arguments of mainstream scientists that are being brought against it – according to your own argument.

“Let me be transparent about my personal position: I believe in a young age of life on Earth, but not because of the empirical evidence. I see through a glass darkly and I’m not going to lose any sleep over it. Whatever happened in the past happened. Other matters are more important.”

Again, empirically blind faith must be a wonderful thing for you and others who share your view. The problem is that many like me don’t understand a faith that is not backed by empirical evidence as rational or personally meaningful. Simply choosing to believe contrary to what I understand to be the weight of empirical evidence would be, for me, a form of irrationality – kind of like living a lie.

I therefore remain in the Church because I actually see the weight of evidence as strongly favoring the Church’s fundamental goals and ideals – to include its position on origins (a position which I consider to be one of the most fundamental aspects of Adventism and Christianity at large).

This is why, if I ever became convinced of Darwinism or long-ages for life on Earth, I would leave the SDA Church and probably Christianity as well. I might still believe in a God of some kind, but certainly not the Christian-style God described in the pages of the Bible.

Obviously many people feel the same way. They simply cannot see themselves clear to be a member of any organization that is so fundamentally opposed to what they perceive to be rationally true. I, for one, strongly sympathize with this mentality and see a great need to meet the needs of this very large community – many of whom are our neighbors and close friends.