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
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.

May 16, 2011

May 17, 2011