A “Christian Agnostic”?

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Ervin Taylor, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. He is also a long-time supporter, executive publisher, and contributor to the “progressive” journal Adventist Today and is a fair representative of the face of “progressive” Adventism in general. As an ardent progressive Adventist, he has been a fairly active antagonist against some of the historic pillars of Adventism to include the efforts of this website to support and promote the stated goals and ideals of the Adventist church as an organization – especially regarding the church’s position on origins.

It has never been a secret that Dr. Taylor is adamantly opposed to the Church’s position on a literal six-day creation week a few thousand years ago, promoting instead the mainstream evolutionary view of the origin of life over billions of years on this planet, or that he openly questions many of the other “fundamental” doctrinal positions of the Adventist Church. At one of his lectures a few years back he was asked what he would tell his own granddaughter regarding evidence for the existence of God, to which he replied, “I don’t know.” Just yesterday he essentially repeated this very same agnostic perspective in one of his comments within this forum:

I have always been attracted to the position of Christian agnosticism. (Many, many years ago, at PUC I gave a talk with that title, as I recall, during a week of spiritual emphasis.) (Link)

What does it mean to be a “Christian agnostic”? or an “Adventist in good and regular standing” who believes very little when it comes to the “fundamental” goals and ideals of the organized church? And, perhaps more importantly, why would our own Adventists leadership invite such a “Christian Agnostic” to come and regularly lecture our own young people, at schools like PUC and LSU, on the virtues of agnosticism?
Of course, when presented with specific questions regarding his various beliefs that directly undermine the fundamental positions of the church, Dr. Taylor, and others like him, argue that they believe in the “family model” of Adventism whereby one need not believe in or support the doctrinal positions of the church in order to be considered a good member or even official representative of the church. Evidently, one does not even need to be all to sure as to the evidence supporting God’s existence to be a good Adventist.

Yet, when pressed, Dr. Taylor says, perhaps for political reasons in certain settings, that he does actually believe in God and in Jesus as the Son of God, born into this world from a virgin woman and raised from the dead after three days to ascend to heaven to intercede for us with the Father. It seems strange to me, therefore, that Dr. Taylor and those like him seem so eager to accept the fantastic metaphysical claims of the Bible when it comes to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but reject much of the rest of what the Bible claims regarding historical realities which seem to disagree with their own understanding of mainstream science. How is the Bible remotely credible on the one hand while being so far off base on the other?

Dr. Taylor suggest that those who actually believe all of what the Bible claims about historical realities are living in Alice’s Wonderland.

If a belief in the what the Bible says about about historical realities is like living in Alice’s Wonderland, then so is a belief in the far more fantastic metaphysical claims of the Bible regarding the origin of Jesus, born of God the Father to a virgin woman, raised from the dead after three days, and taken to Heaven to commence with the rest of the Plan of Salvation for those who claim to believe in such fairytale nonsense! – like Dr. Taylor!

Why do those like Dr. Taylor claim to live within one Wonderland, full of irrational baseless nonsense, but laugh at those who accept all of what the Wonderland Book has to say about the place?

I suggest that such individuals, as brilliant as they think they are, aren’t being consistent with themselves. They’re trying to fit within two “incommensurate worlds”. It simply doesn’t work… Mr. Hatter.

*First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come... But they deliberately*
forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

2 Peter 3:3-6; Isaiah 5:21; Proverbs 26:5; 1 Cor. 1:18

4 Responses to “A “Christian Agnostic”?”

1. BobRyan October 23, 2011 at 7:09 pm

The “Christian agnostic” mind simply trades light in exchange for darkness – “as if” this is supposed to impress us. — “As if” they did something brilliant.

What part of that little dance on their part is supposed to be compelling?

I don’t see the attraction or need for it.

in Christ,

Bob

(Quote)

Like or Dislike: 4 3

2. Craigo October 23, 2011 at 11:55 pm

I agree, it’s hard for me to see why any Adventist would give him a platform to convey his disbelief.

(Quote)
3. Faith October 24, 2011 at 6:41 am

The term “Christian Agnostic” is actually an oxymoron. What it used to be called was sitting on the fence. It indicates that a person is not fully committed to Christianity, nor, for that matter, worldliness; he/she wants their cake and eat it too. But truth and error do not successfully mix. Thus they ascribe to a polluted, toxic theology.

The fact that this man is able to address any Adventist audience with the blessing of the church leaders is appalling. He has been allowed to lead young minds astray for far too long and it needs to be stopped now.

As far as his magazine goes, I personally can’t be bothered with it. It is misrepresenting Adventism entirely…just as Mr. Taylor does personally.

What these fence-sitters are going to find out to their dismay is that all you get from fence-sitting is splinters.

Sooner or later there is only going to be 2 camps…God’s or Satan’s. No one will be on the fence in the end.

(Quote)

4. Dale October 24, 2011 at 6:42 am

“Professing to be wise, they became fools” –Romans 1:22,NKJV
“They promise (academic) freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption” –2Peter 2:19,NLT

(Quote)