creation and deep-time evolutionary theory are compatible forget that in biblical thinking, time is of the essence. God acts historically in human time and space. Biblical theology cannot fit the evolutionary version of historical development without losing its essence and truth. God’s works in history cannot follow evolutionary theory.

Any attempt to accommodate Adventist theology to deep time/macro evolutionary views must ensure that it upholds four principles: (1) It does not change the order of theological causes assumed in Scripture; (2) it does not change the biblical history of God’s acts; (3) it supports the pillars of the Adventist faith; and (4) it strengthens the historical understanding of redemption embedded in the sanctuary doctrine and the Great Controversy metanarrative.

Rewriting Biblical History

Those who invite us to read Genesis 1 theologically must recognize that theological interpretations spring from our conception of God’s nature and His actions in created time. Usually, theological readings assume that “ultimate” reality is timeless, that God does not act within a historical sequence. Thus, historical events do not belong to what is properly theological. This is why for most Christian theologians the evolutionary rewriting of history does not affect theological (religious) contents, allowing them to separate the theological (religious) content of Genesis 1 (its truth) from its historical wrapping (the story). The six-day, 24-hour period and the historical process described in the text are dismissed as non-theological: God’s creative action is displaced from the historical to the spiritual realm.

Yet Adventists read Scripture from the biblical understanding of God’s being and actions. When they read the text theologically, they see God creating our planet in a historical sequence of six consecutive 24-hour days. This sequence forms part of the history of God, and, therefore, of the interpretation of Creation that the text conveys. It also forms part of the history of our planet. God is performing a divine act in a historical sequence within the flow of created time.

Harmonization of theology with evolution begins by accepting the evolutionary rewriting of the history of humankind. Paleoentologists, geologists, and biologists claim to be describing the accurate story of historical realities. Because the Genesis story does not fit the facts as understood by evolutionists, some theologians seriously consider letting biblical history go. Because they accept that God’s act of creation does not take place in history, they classify the biblical history of Creation as myth or literary framework. Yet the inner
logic of theological thinking articulated by God’s acts suggests that letting go of the biblical history of Creation entails letting go of the biblical history of redemption and end times.

For instance, theologians working from the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation apply the same evolutionary pattern to the entire sweep of biblical history. They are willing to let go not only of the history of Creation but also of the entirety of biblical history, particularly when it presents God acting historically within the process of human history. This brings us to a central issue in any theological harmonization of Genesis 1 to evolution, namely, divine causality in evolutionary theory. Theistic evolution and progressive creationism are the leading intermediate models to harmonize creation and evolution theologically. Both understand divine causality in evolutionary theory spiritually rather than historically.

Theistic Evolution. Teilhard de Chardin, a French Roman Catholic priest, imagines a system of theistic evolution in which God works from the inside of nature and history, not from the outside. God works as spiritual energy, which to animate evolution in its lower stages “could of course only act in an impersonal form and under the veil of biology.” Thus, divine causality does not operate within history but as hidden energy from the realm of the spirit.

Progressive Creationism. Bernard Ramm, an American evangelical theologian, rejects theistic evolution because it springs from a pantheistic view of God. Instead, he suggests progressive creationism as the theory that is the “best accounting for all the facts—biological, geological, and Biblical.” He asserts that God created by a combination of instantaneous miraculous fiat creation and of a process of creation outside history. He suggests that several acts of fiat creation have occurred through deep evolutionary time, which helps to clarify the gaps in evolutionary theory that science cannot explain. Then, Ramm says, God “turns the task of creation over to the Holy Spirit who is inside Nature.” The Holy Spirit is seen as the energy that brings about the evolutionary side of God’s plan of creation.

According to these theories, God works out the events of natural and human history as reconstructed by the biological mechanism and laws of evolution. According to Scripture, however, God created our world by bringing about the evolutionary side of God’s plan of creation.

The difference between theistic evolution and progressive creationism consists in the way their proponents see God’s involvement in the process of evolution. Both, however, share the conviction that evolutionary science tells the true story of what actually took place in historical reality. Moreover, both views assume that God does not work historically within the sequence of historical events. Divine causality does not operate historically (sequentially) but spiritually (instantaneously).

A Conflict of Metanarratives

Both theistic evolution and progressive creationism share the conviction that evolutionary science tells the true story of what actually took place in historical reality. Moreover, both views assume that God does not work historically within the sequence of historical events. Divine causality does not operate historically (sequentially) but spiritually (instantaneously).

The way in which theistic evolution and progressive creationism deal with creation demonstrates that harmonizing biblical creation with deep-time evolutionary theory requires more than a theological interpretation of Genesis 1. God’s providential activities must also harmonize with evolutionary causal order so that it may fit the actual outcome of the biological mechanism of evolution.
conception behaves as an interpretative “template” shaping all theological ideas and doctrines of Scripture. Changes in the template of any theological system unleash changes in the understanding of its theological ideas, doctrines, and interpretations of Scripture. The template, then, ultimately controls whether we can integrate a new idea like evolution into the inner logic of the system of biblical theology.

Roman Catholicism and Protestantism share the same template from which they ground and develop their theologies. For them, the template is metaphysics, in which the notions of a timeless God, sovereign providence, and the immortal soul play a dominant role. Bernard Ramm recognized the defining role that cosmology—physics, they can harmonize it to Christianity without changing its theological structure and inner logic. Evolution does not fit the biblical template embodied in the Great Controversy metanarrative. Evolution is a metanarrative about the origins of human history that fits well in the timeless non-historical template into which Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies fit. By the same token, the evolutionary metanarrative collides with the Great Controversy metanarrative because both attempt to explain the same historical reality using different views of the causes involved in the process. Evolution and creationism are incompatible metanarratives.

The Role of Cosmology in Theological Interpretation

To understand the way in which deep-time evolutionary theory would affect Adventist theology and doctrines, we need to realize the over-arching role that cosmology—the study of the physical universe in time and space—plays in Christian theology. In theological thinking, cosmology is not a side issue but an issue that informs the understanding of all biblical teachings. Changes in these far-reaching ideas necessarily unleash changes in the entire theological system. To accommodate Genesis 1 to deep-time evolutionary theory, theologians implicitly modify the way they assume God acts in history. And this elicits massive reinterpretations of the entire system of biblical theology that articulates the history of God’s actions.

The Real Issue

From the theological perspective, the issue is not to decide between a literal versus a theological interpretation of Genesis 1 but between two different theological interpretations: a spiritual (philosophical), and a historical (biblical) understanding of divine activity in human history. Deep-time evolutionary theory and Genesis 1 are essential components of two incompatible metanarratives that attempt to explain the history of reality. Adventism cannot harmonize biblical creation with deep-time evolutionary theory without changing its essence and theological system. Harmonization with deep-time evolutionary theory affects the entire sweep of theological and scientific understandings.

Adventists who insist that our
the primary “textbook” of the Christian faith, the biblical canon, is at the crux of any discussion of science and faith. Considerations of scriptural authority and veracity ever continue to engage both scientists and theologians.

Of course, the Bible isn’t a textbook in the modern definition of the word. But its materials need to be studied closely, making sure to heed the wide variety of ways in which parts of Scripture relate and interact with one another. Such a study validates its sweeping claims of divine inspiration. One must deal honestly with the fundamental assumptions and parameters within which the Bible writers consistently work. Thankfully, these are fairly obvious.

None of the Bible writers, for example, ever attempts to prove the existence of God. Without exception, they all assume that He exists.
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BY JO ANN DAVIDSON *

The topic of the authority of the Bible is ever at the center of the confrontation between faith and science.

REFERENCES
3. Ibid., p. 116 (emphasis in the original).
4. Ibid., p. 292.

*Jo Ann Davidson teaches systematic theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.
Scripture does not teach that a prophet speaks about God. Rather, God speaks for Himself through His prophets. And human language is assumed to be capable of conveying divine communication. In the Old Testament, the formula "Thus says the Lord" or its equivalent appears thousands of times, proclaiming the source and authority of the prophetic messages.

They claim to have real knowledge of an infinite God. It was a knowledge God disclosed, not a spiritual insight they devised. They were absolutely certain that God was speaking through them.

Moreover, all the Bible writers affirm that God can do what He declares Himself capable of doing. God insists, for example, that He can foretell the future, and that doing so is a mark of His divinity: “...Present your case,” says the Lord. ‘Bring forth your strong reasons,’ says the King of Jacob. ‘Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter that we may know that you are gods. . . . I am the Lord, that is My name; . . . Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. . . . Indeed before the day was, I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?’” (Isa. 41:21-23; 42:8, 9; 43: 13, NKJV).

At various times in the ancient past, God announced prophecies concerning the history of nations and the coming of the Messiah. Some modern minds assume that God could not be so precise, and thus pre-determine that the prophecies were written as “after-the-fact” predictions. This denial of God’s ability to know the future, however, is never found in any of the Bible writers.

Furthermore, these modern minds are absolutely certain that, though infinite, God communicates with human beings. Biblical writers never concede that human language is a barrier to direct communication from God. They would denounce modernist contentions that deny any correlation between language and reality. In fact, the Bible writers record numerous incidents of God speaking directly to human beings in the Old Testament: Adam and Eve before and after the Fall (Gen. 1:28-30; 3:9-19); Job (Job 38-41); Abram (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:1-33); Elijah (1 Kings 19:9-18). The burning bush conversation between God and Moses is followed by other direct exchanges between them. The civil code in the Pentateuch is recorded as words spoken directly by God to Moses.

New Testament writers also knew it was possible for God to speak directly to people in human language: at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22); the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; 2 Peter 1:17, 18); the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4-6); instructions to Ananias, including street address (Acts 9:11-16); Peter’s vision (Acts 10:13); Paul on his missionary journeys (Acts 18:9, 10; 23:10); and the apocalypse (Rev. 1:11-3:22). Jesus Himself insists numerous times that He speaks the words of God: “The Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it” (John 12:49, NIV). Paul claims to have received revelation from God: “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor 14:37).

God is frequently referred to as speaking through the prophets. Elijah’s words in 1 Kings 21:19 are referred to in 2 Kings 9:25 as the oracle that “the Lord laid this burden upon him,” and Elijah is not even mentioned. The message of a prophet was considered equivalent to direct speech from God. In the Old Testament, to disobey a prophet’s words was to disobey God. When Saul disobeyed Samuel’s command at Gilgal, Samuel rebuked him: “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. . . . Now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you” (1 Sam. 13:13, 14).

Scripture does not teach that a prophet speaks about God. Rather, God speaks for Himself through His prophets. And human language is assumed to be capable of conveying divine communication. In the Old Testament, the formula “Thus says the Lord” or its equivalent appears a multitude of times, proclaiming the source and authority of the prophetic messages. With it, the Bible writers insist that what they say is to be received not as their pious pronouncements but as the very words of God.

The New Testament apostles claim the same absolute authority, insisting that they speak by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:10-12), to whom they credit the content of their teaching (1 Cor. 2:12, 13). Notably, the same Paul who
urges that believers seek to work together peacefully often employs harsh language to defend the absolute truths he has preached (Gal. 1:6-9).

In fact, apostolic teaching is very directive, issuing commands with the strongest authority (1 Thess. 4:1, 2; 2 Thess. 3:6, 12). The writer to the Hebrews expressed his sense of the absolute authority of the words of Psalm 95:7-11 and Jeremiah 31:33 by using the present tense when speaking of their divine origin, writing: “The Holy Ghost says” (not “said,” in the past tense), and, “the Holy Ghost bears” (not “bore,” in the past tense) “witness to us.” And Hebrews 12:25 insists, “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.”

Biblical writers are invariably seen as messengers sent by God to speak His words. The extravagantly repeated formula “thus says the Lord” or its equivalent clinches the full authority of prophetic words. In fact, a distinguishing characteristic of true prophets is that they do not speak their own words. Throughout the Old Testament, the point is repeatedly underscored that prophetic speech comes from God.

God is telling him to do. God seems to be contradicting himself and Jeremiah boldly points this out to God (vss. 23-25). Clearly this “word of the Lord” was not something that Jeremiah had calculated on his own. He obeyed, but he did not pretend to understand God’s reasoning.

Jeremiah does not tell us how he recognized the “word of God” when it came to him, but clearly it was something plainly obvious and unequivocal. He was certain that God had spoken. It does not seem to have occurred to him that he had any right to deny the validity of God’s instructions even though he objected to them.

Another instructive incident in the life of this same prophet is the occasion when Johanan, with the army leaders, asked Jeremiah to intercede with the Lord. They felt the need of divine guidance. The prophet listened, agreed to intercede with God on their behalf, and then promised, “I will tell you everything the Lord says and will keep nothing back from you” (42:4, NIV). Jeremiah waited for 10 days. He was not able to command the reply from God. Again this was not a case of a prophet devising a response through spiritual reflection. The text is clear: “Ten days later the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah” (vs. 7, NIV). These are but two instructive examples within the extensive canonical records that God does not just fill human beings with glorious feelings, but gives them actual information (Deut. 29:29).

Closely connected with God’s direct speech are numerous accounts of a prophet writing down the words of God, which are then received as fully authoritative: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua.’ And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord” (Ex. 17:14; 24:4); “Joshua wrote these words [statutes, ordinances, and the words of the covenant renewal] in the Book of the Law of God” (Joshua 24:26); “Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord” (1 Sam. 10:25). Even the recording process is divinely controlled with the penman...
The Bible was not verbally dictated by God. When the human messengers were instructed to record the words of God, they were divinely guided in the selection of apt words to express the revelation, and thus the prophetic writings are called the Word of God. The individuality of each writer is evident, yet the human and divine elements are virtually inseparable.

being “moved” (2 Peter 1:21, KJV). The writer is not merely deciding to create literary masterpieces, but writing under God’s directive. This written communication thereby has divine authority, as Moses testified: “‘Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you’” (Deut. 4:2, NIV).

The final chapter of the New Testament speaks similarly: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone takes words from this book of prophecy, and thus the prophetic writings are called the Word of God. The individuality of each writer is evident, yet the human and divine elements are virtually inseparable.

In describing these elements, Ellen White makes a striking comparison: “The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ John 1:14.”

God declares that He has manifested Himself through human language and ultimately in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is striking that one Person of the triune God is known as the WORD. The inspiration of Scripture is the genuine work of the sovereign God, whose operation cannot be subjected to human control or repudiation.

A close reading of the biblical texts also reveals a basic continuity and unity of both Testaments, as might be expected. Acts 17:11 does not say that the Bereans searched the Scriptures (the Old Testament materials at that time) in order to disprove Paul or to find ground to accuse him of heresy. They turned to the Word as the means of determining the truth. The extensive citations of the Old Testament in the New Testament also indicate that the earlier writings were considered divinely inspired: Isaiah’s words in Isaiah 7:14 are cited as “what the Lord had said through the prophet” (Matt. 1:22, NIV). Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24 as words that God said (Matt. 19:5). He also speaks of “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

Words of Scripture are said to be spoken by the Holy Spirit. In quoting “what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16), Peter inserts “says God” (vs. 17), attributing to God the words of Joel. Isaiah 49:6 is quoted by Paul and Barnabas, claiming that an Old Testament prophecy placed obligation on them also, declaring that the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah (Acts 28:25-27). Paul also quotes God’s speech in Exodus 9:16 as what “Scripture says to Pharaoh” (Rom. 9:16), indicating an equivalence between what Old Testament Scripture says and what God says.

The minds of the New Testament writers are saturated with the Old Testament. They refer to it regularly and quote it extensively to undergird their theological discussion. Furthermore, the four Gospels make it strikingly obvious that Jesus accepted the full authority of the Old Testament.
The fact cannot be evaded that Christ confirmed the absolute authority of the Old Testament. If one accepts the New Testament portrait of Jesus, one cannot cavalierly dismiss His high view of Scripture. And He expected others to have the same.

Old Testament prophecy was the pattern for His life. He declared often: “it must be fulfilled” or “as it is written.” He never rebuked the Jewish theologians of His time for studying the Old Testament, but rather for devising incorrect interpretations to cloud and even falsify God’s written word (Mark 7:1-13).

As one reads the four Gospels, it cannot be denied that Jesus Christ claimed divine authority for all He did and taught. “These things I have spoken to you,” repeated numerous times by Christ, was His emphatic way of drawing attention to the actual words He used in teaching. And regarding the Old Testament, Jesus urged, “Whoever reads, let him understand” (Matt. 24:15). The fact cannot be evaded that Christ confirmed the absolute authority of the Old Testament. If one accepts the New Testament portrait of Jesus, one cannot cavalierly dismiss His high view of Scripture.

And He expected others to have the same. Often He would inquire: “Have you not read what David did?” (Matt. 12:3) or “have you not read in the law” (vs. 5). When questioned on the issue of divorce, He answered “Have you not read . . .” (19:4). In response to a lawyer’s question about salvation, Jesus asked: “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” (Luke 10:26). The lawyer answered with a direct quote from the Ten Commandments, and Jesus declared: “You have answered right” (vs. 28). Responding to the Sadducees’ inquiry about marriage in heaven, He said: “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures. . . Have you not read what was spoken to you by God?” (Matt. 22:29, 31).

The prominent Pharisee Nicodemus sought Jesus one night. After discussing His mission, Jesus questioned Nicodemus, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?” (John 3:10, NASB). When asked about last-day events on the Mount of Olives, Jesus urged His questioners to read Daniel in order to understand (Matt. 24:15). He expected that the Old Testament prophecies of Scripture would be fulfilled. He declared that Elijah had come, pointing to John the Baptist, and that he had been treated “as it is written of him” (Mark 9:13). When captured in Gethsemane, Jesus didn’t flee capture, but said, “I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled” (Mark 14:49).

After His resurrection, Jesus gave what is now called the “Great Commission: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:18-20). This divine imperative requires the proclamation of all that Jesus had taught to the whole world, specifically implying a cross-cultural communication of the words of God. Nor is this a command that merely secures nominal adherence to some group. Baptism was not the final goal. The new disciple is also to be taught all things Christ commanded.

The apostle Paul’s ministry exhibits just such a cross-cultural preaching of the words of God. He also intensifies the consistent biblical procedure of later canonical writers referring to earlier materials in the Old Testament, thus insisting on their authority. In the Book of Romans, Paul builds a powerful argument of the gospel built upon the Old Testament, thus insisting always presented as actual history to validate the certainty of future actions of God. “Perhaps it has not been stated emphatically enough that nowhere in the Old Testament or in the New Testament does any writer give any hint of a tendency to distrust or consider slightly unreliable any other part of Scripture.”

The aesthetic quality inherent in the inspiration of Scripture should not go unnoticed. The exquisite nature of the ancient Hebrew poetry has long been extolled. “God needs prophets in order to make Himself known, and all the prophets are necessarily artistic. What a prophet has to say can never be said in prose.” Indeed, the prophetic messages are regularly couched in poetry.

In the last quarter-century, the literary quality of the biblical narratives has finally been recognized. It is now acknowledged that these stories were not written primarily for children, but are sophisticated theologi-
In the last quarter-century, the literary quality of the biblical narratives has finally been recognized. It is now acknowledged that these stories were not written primarily for children, but are sophisticated theological writing voiced within a distinctive literary expression. God utilizes aesthetic values to intensify His revelation. Under inspiration, Bible writers masterfully record God’s orderly action in human history.

Within the canon we are consistently reminded to deny the false dichotomy that argues that literary writing precludes historical accuracy. In spite of the fact that to narrate is already to explain, it is significant that the biblical narratives often include specific external referents that can be checked. It is as if the writers were urging the reader to verify the facts for themselves.

For example, Luke couches Christ’s birth narrative in public historical details: “In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. . . . Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God” (Luke 1:5, 8, NIV).

Luke had already argued for the veracity of his historical narratives: “Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught” (vss. 1-4, NIV).

It must be repeated that it is a false assumption that literary writing precludes historical accuracy. “The uniqueness and the scandal of the Christian religion rests in the mediation of revelation through historical events.” There is no divergence between history and theology. The Scripture record is rooted in real events of history.

What one might surmise as the correct view of the text should not override what the original authors had in mind. When speaking of the author of Genesis, Julius Wellhausen writes: “He undoubtedly wants to depict faithfully the factual course of events in the coming-to-be of the world; he wants to give a cosmogonic theory. Anyone who denies that is confusing the value of the story for us with the intention of the author.”

Herman Gunkel concurs: “People should never have denied that Genesis I wants to recount how the coming-to-be of the world actually happened.”

But no one speaks to this issue stronger than Ellen White: “The assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years, strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods. This is unlike His method of dealing with His creatures. It makes indefinite and obscure that which He has made very plain. It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence more dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible. . . . There is a constant effort made to explain the work of creation as the result of natural causes; and human reasoning is accepted even by professed Christian, in opposition to plain Scripture facts.”

The “textbook” that Christians hold with the highest authority is self-authenticated extensively. The Christian canon testifies that God does not exist in unbroken silence. He has communicated. He has expressed Himself. As the many biblical writers, along with Martin Luther and the various Reformers insist, the Christian experience of God is acoustical. Indeed, in all the Bible there is not a single example of God appearing without saying something. If there is a vision without spoken words, it is not from God. Moreover, God orders the written transcript of His words. As the prophet Habakkuk recounts, “The Lord answered me and said: ’Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it’ ” (Hab. 2:2).

Yet, to some readers, the Bible appears as an enigmatic collection of seemingly unrelated materials: narratives, poetry, legal codes, sermons, letters, prophecies, parables, royal annals, and genealogies. The nature of God’s revelation is diverse.

In addition to speaking directly
with human beings and commanding those words to be recorded, God employed other supernatural methods of communication: such as with angels (Daniel); theophanies (Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Moses, Paul, John); dreams (Joseph, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar); supernatural writing (of the Decalogue on stone two times [Ex. 31:18] and at a feast in Babylon [Dan. 5:5]); and a voice from heaven (Ex. 19:9; Matt. 3:17; 2 Peter 1:17).

All these divine manifestations were then recorded and brought together under one cover. But how does one make sense of it all? The issue of interpretation (hermeneutics) is a continuing topic in theological studies. Canonic writers are helpful in this regard as they exegete earlier biblical materials. They also regularly warn that it is possible to misread and misinterpret Scripture. Even Christ Himself warns against false teachers and false teaching. The use of earlier Old Testament materials by later Old Testament writers and then subsequently by the New Testament writers presents a working hermeneutic, undergirded with the presupposition of the complete veracity of the words of God.

Today some suggest that portions of Scripture are of unequal value. No modern writer addresses this issue more forthrightly than Ellen White: “[W]hat man is there that dares to take that Bible and say this part is inspired and that part is not inspired? I would have both my arms taken off at my shoulders before I would ever make the statement or set my judgment upon the Word of God as to what is inspired and what is not inspired. . . . Never let mortal man sit in judgment upon the Word of God or pass sentence as to how much of this is inspired and how much is not inspired, and that this is more inspired than some other portions. God warns him off that ground.”

God Himself expresses the same sentiment: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ says the Lord. ‘But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word’” (Isa. 66:1, 2).

The God of heaven has ordained that His Word be contained in a Book. But truly, it is more than a book. Through its many writers we are confronted with an omnipotent God who is in earnest to communicate His will and His ways in human history, and who loves human beings more than He loved His own life.

“Every time I think I am losing my faith,” writes Fleming Rutledge, “the biblical story seizes me yet again with a life all its own. No other religious document has this power. I remain convinced in spite of all the arguments that God really does inhabit this text. With Job, I say yet again, ‘I had heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee; therefore I despise my words, I melt away in dust and ashes’ (42:5-6).”

The assumptions of the biblical writers about God and the historical grounding of divine revelation are clear. Seventh-day Adventists even affirm two critical acts of God in history—one past and one future—in our very name: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.

“God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrine—will Seventh-day Adventists be among them?”

REFERENCES
1 Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible texts in this article are quoted from the New King James Version.
5 Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 9.
8 Ibid.
9 Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 111, 113.
12 White, The Great Controversy, p. 593.
For a Christian, what are the implications of the raging public controversy over creationism versus evolution?

Much of the Christian world no longer believes Genesis 1 and 2 as a literal account of creation. Since Darwin, natural processes are thought to explain the origin of life, and Christian scholars have attempted to accommodate science by interpreting the Genesis record in the light of the current scientific worldview. So, for example, the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church views the Genesis creation account as symbolic.

Carl Henry said, “The Bible does not require belief in six literal 24-hour creation days on the basis of Genesis 1–2,” and Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest believe that “the most probable conclusion is that the six consecutive creative acts were separated by long periods of time.”

Prior to Darwin, some theologians referred to Creation days as literal because of the literal Sabbath, or referred to the Sabbath in Creation week, or supported the literal days as described in the biblical account of Creation. In 1998, Robert Reymond presented seven hermeneutical principles for interpreting the days in Genesis 1 and 2:

1. The dominant meaning of a term should be maintained unless contextual considerations suggest otherwise. The Hebrew word for day, yôm in the singular, dual, or plural, occurs 2,225 times in the Old Testament, and the overwhelming majority designate a 24-hour period. No contextual demand is present in Genesis 1 to do otherwise.

2. The recurring phrase “evening and morning” (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) occurs in 37 verses outside of Genesis (e.g., Ex. 18:13; 27:21) and always designates a 24-hour period.

3. The ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd) used with yôm (same texts as above) occur hundreds of times in the Old Testament (e.g., Ex. 12:15; 24:16; Lev. 12:3) and always designate a 24-hour period.

4. The creation of the sun “to rule the day” and the moon “to rule the night” (Gen. 1:16, 18, KJV) on the fourth day suggests literal 24-hour days for days 4–7, and nothing in the text suggests that days 1–3 were different.

5. Scripture best interprets Scripture, where a less-clear passage is interpreted by a clearer passage or passages. The fourth commandment of Exodus 20:11 (cf. 31:15-17) reflects the Genesis account of Creation, assuming the fact that the biblical Creation days were literal.


7. If Moses intended to mean day-age, instead of a 24-hour period, he would have used the Hebrew term ‘ôlam.

Opposing Worldviews

What effect might theistic evolution have upon our understanding of the goodness or love of God? In 1991, scientist David Hull of Northwestern University evaluated the evolutionary process as “rife with happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, death, pain, and horror. . . . The God implied by evolutionary theory and the data of natural history . . . is not a loving God who cares about His productions. He is . . . careless, indifferent, almost diabolical. He is certainly not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray.”

It should be kept in mind that Darwin’s Origin of Species is, at least in part, a worldview conceived to explain evil in nature; whereas God created the universe through Christ (Col. 1:15, 16; Heb. 1:1, 2), who later revealed God as love (John 14:9; 17:23), and both were as selfless and loving in creation as They are in sal-
viation (John 3:16; Heb. 13:8).

In stark contrast, Satan is self-centered (Isa. 14:12-15; Eze. 28:12-18). It was he who launched a war against God in heaven (Rev. 12:3-8) and on Earth, which affected the natural world (Gen. 3:1-19). Christ called Satan the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11, KJV), and Paul called him the “god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4, NKJV). Thus evil in this world (moral and natural) must be credited to him, for “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16, NKJV), and His love defeated Satan at the Cross (Rev. 12:9-13; John 12:31, 32). Theistic evolutionists, those who believe God used evolution to create, do not discern the radical difference between these two worldviews.

Why would God use an unjust “survival of the fittest” method to create when justice is the foundation of His throne (Ps. 89:14)? Why would God, who asks that “all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40, NKJV) do the opposite in the torturous processes of mega-time? How is such a model possible in view of His divine providence in history (Rom. 11:36; 8:28-30)? Why would God use death to create humans in His image (Gen. 1:26, 27) when He is love? If He used death to create, then why did He warn Adam of the evil of death (Gen. 2:17) and expose the depths of that evil through dying to save humans from the penalty of death (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23)? If death is the last enemy to be destroyed at the end of the controversy (1 Cor. 15:26), then how could God use it to create before and after the beginning of the controversy?

Because a “particular doctrine of God is a prerequisite for evolution’s success,” theistic evolutionists unwittingly promote a view of God that distorts the Bible’s overall view of God as a loving Creator.

**Distorted Truth About God**

If God chose to create through the natural evolutionary process, in which the horrors of torture and death over billions of years were necessary to create humans, this would be the longest and cruelest holocaust ever. At least Calvary was a holocaust that others brought upon Christ, but this would be a holocaust that He brought upon the animal kingdom.

One must look at all biblical truths in the light of the revelation of God at Calvary. The revelation at Calvary was made in history. It had witnesses. As such it provides empirical (historical) evidence of how loving God is, even asking His Father to forgive those who heaped cruelty upon Him (Luke 23:34). Assuming that this same Christ, by utilizing a systematized way of creating life, heaped cruelty on animals, not for part of a day, but for billions of years, is not a historical datum, but a metaphysical assumption that a belief in Calvary can rightly question.

The fact that the onlooking universe shouted for joy at the creation of this world is inexplicable if Christ involved animal suffering for billions of years. Christ called creation “very good,” and that’s worth singing about. After Christ’s ascension, beings in heaven worshiped God as worthy and deserving of glory because He created all things.

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The fact that the onlooking universe shouted for joy at the creation of this world (Job 38:4-7) is inexplicable if Christ involved animal suffering for billions of years. Christ called creation “very good,” (Gen. 1:31, KJV), and that’s worth singing about. After Christ’s ascension, beings in heaven worshiped God as worthy and deserving of glory because He created all things (Rev. 4:10, 11). That would be impossible if He created through eons of cruelty.

Christ’s warning to Adam about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, stating that eating its fruit would bring death (Gen. 2:17), indicates that death was not yet a present reality. Here evil and death are associated with disobedience to the Creator. When Christ re-creates the earth, there will be no more curse (Rev. 22:3). Clearly curses and death are linked to disobedience and have nothing to do with Christ’s method of creation.

That’s why Scripture says Adam introduced sin and death to the world (Rom. 5:12). It was Adam and not his Creator who brought death into the world. It was Christ who came to die to put death to death and liberate a fallen race (Rom. 4:25). It was the one act of the first Adam that caused this death-consummation, and the one act of the Second Adam’s death that provided salvation (Rom. 5:18).

Christ did not use death to create humans in Eden. Instead, the record is that He died to save humans at Calvary. Given a cosmic controversy in which Satan hates Christ and has engaged in a process of disinformation about God (Eze. 28:15, 16), it makes sense that a natural method of creation through horror is something he (Satan) would promote, for it effectively destroys the drawing power of Calvary. Creation through horror is compatible with Satan’s hatred against Christ at the Cross and not compatible with a loving Creator-Redeemer who dies for others rather than inflicting death upon them.
What a Nonliteral Creation Does to the Sabbath

In Genesis 1 there is a correspondence between days 1–3 and days 4–6, wherein the first three days give the areas filled by Him. The Sabbath is in reality the crown of creation. “6th day is the crown of creation. “6th day the Sabbath is in reality the crown of creation.” The climax is not the creation of humans, as it is in theistic evolutionary theory, but the gift of the Sabbath. For the narrative ends with the Sabbath in Genesis 2:1. (It should be remembered, of course, that chapter divisions came into being long after the time of writing.) Karl Barth says that the Sabbath “is in reality the coronation of His work” for “not man but the divine rest on the seventh day is the crown of creation.”

God’s blessing (Hebrew, barak) was given only to the seventh day. It was set apart from the other six, and in this way it was made holy.

The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew word sábado, meaning to “cease” or “desist” from a previous activity. On day six, Christ judged creation as “very good” (Gen. 1:31, KJV), and hence complete (2:3). “In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested” (Ex. 31:17, NIV). Therefore His “works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. 4:3, NKJV). Clearly the work of Creation was finished on the sixth day of Creation week, contrary to an ongoing evolutionary process.

Moreover, the Genesis creation record differentiates between God as Elohiym (transcendent, omnipotent), who creates (bara) by speaking things into existence in Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, from the added name Yahweh (immanent, covenant) God who forms (yasar) humans in Genesis 2:21, 22. Yahweh Elohiym is only introduced in Genesis 2:4, where He is always Yahweh Elohiym (11 times). Here is God-up-close creating humans in a way distinct from His creation of all the rest of created reality in Genesis 1, and in contrast to theistic evolution where humans are the product of random mutation. To say God intervened in the process isn’t evolution, nor does the process agree with Genesis 1 and 2.

In Scripture the Sabbath is a celebration of the finished works of Christ in Creation (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11), in the Red Sea deliverance (Deut. 5:15), and on Crucifixion Friday (John 19:30). Christ created Adam on Creation Friday, and on Crucifixion Friday He became the Second Adam for the world in His death (Luke 23:44–24:6).

Crucifixion Friday, like Creation Friday, was a beginning for the race. The Sabbath celebrates: (1) Christ’s finished creation for Adam and Eve; (2) Christ’s finished deliverance for a nation; and (3) Christ’s finished sacrifice for a world. The first finished work of Christ is as literal as the other two finished works.

Those who deny a literal seven-day Creation week, attempting to found the Sabbath in the Sabbath-keeping practice of Christ, overlook the fact that the preincarnate Christ, who gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Sinai, inscribed the following revelation in stone: “In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Ex. 20:11, NIV).

God created all things through Christ (Heb. 1:1, 2). Christ as “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28, NKJV) made the Sabbath for all humans (vs. 27). In keeping the Sabbath during His life on Earth, Christ endorsed the six-day Creation account. In His death, Christ’s followers “rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment” (Luke 23:56, NIV; cf. Ex. 20:8-11). So it is not possible to justly ground Sabbath keeping only in Christ’s incarnational practice and teaching without reference to the Creation week, because He began His practice of Sabbath keeping at the end of Creation week and presents the Genesis creation account as literal history in His preincarnate teaching—because He was there. No wonder the incarnate Christ speaks of the creation of Adam and Eve as a literal fact (Matt. 19:4, 5).

Further Evidence for the Literal Genesis Creation Account

The whole Book of Genesis is structured by the word “generations” (toledót), so the statement, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth” (Gen. 2:4, KJV) is as literal as “These are the generations of Noah” (6:9, KJV) or as literal as God’s promise to establish His covenant with Abraham, “and thy seed after thee in their generations” (17:7, NKJV).

Scripture presents Creation as one of the mighty acts of God. The phrase “God said” for each of the six days of Creation reveals the power of His creative word. For all but one of the days, “God said” is followed by “and it was so,” proclaiming the power of His commands. Theistic evolution needs to take God’s creative word seriously, as well as His written Word that widely supports a literal interpretation.

The awesome power of God’s creative word is further demonstrated by the speed with which His commands were fulfilled, for the Creation days were literal, continuous, contiguous, 24-hour periods of time. The Hebrew word for “day,” yôm, when used with ordinals (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) is always a literal day. His commands had instant response. That’s why He could say each day the new created reality was “good.”

On the sixth day, “God saw everything that He had made, and
Discussion of creation often focuses on profound contrasts between the theory of naturalistic evolution and the biblical model of a recent, six-day creation. These contrasts identify such issues as whether the universe and human life were purposefully designed, what are the nature and extent of God’s actions in the universe, and what conclusions can be inferred from nature and from Scripture.

For the purposes of this article, the following definitions will apply:

**Creation.**
The concept that God acted directly and personally to bring into existence diverse lineages of living organisms. He may have created the first individuals of each lineage ex nihilo (Heb. 1:2, 3), from non-living materials (Gen. 2:7), or in some combination. Creation in this sense does not suggest that God created new life forms through secondary processes, such as evolution. Nor does it include the appearance of new individuals through reproduction. God did create the entire universe ex nihilo, but this article is concerned primarily with the origins of living things on this planet.

**Evolution.**
The concept of universal common ancestry, whether naturalistic evolution and the biblical model of a recent, six-day creation. These contrasts identify such issues as whether the universe and human life were purposefully designed, what are the nature and extent of God’s actions in the universe, and what conclusions can be inferred from nature and from Scripture.

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**Evolution.** The concept of universal common ancestry, whether natu-
indeed it was very good” (Gen.1:31, NKJV). We are dealing with a literal record that gives one method God used in creation: He commanded, and it was so.

Genesis is only one of five books Moses wrote under God’s guidance. Do his other books interpret the Creation week as literal?

All subsequent references of Moses to Creation week are given a literal interpretation. For example: (1) manna fell for six days but not on the seventh-day Sabbath (Ex. 16:4-6, 21-23); (2) the Sabbath in the fourth commandment is based on the seventh day that God blessed after six days of Creation (Ex. 20:8-11); (3) The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people, “‘for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed” (Ex. 31:17, NKJV). To interpret the Creation record as nonliteral does not make sense in these subsequent references.

What the Evidence States
The overwhelming evidence in the Genesis creation record, in the other books of Moses, and in the entirety of Scripture leads one to conclude that God created during a literal, contiguous period of six days, followed by a literal Sabbath. Any accommodation of the literal Creation week to an evolutionary worldview (theistic evolution) replaces God’s Word with the words of humans and concurs with the cosmic controversy at whose heart is the questioning of God’s Word and nature (Gen. 3:1-6). Such an accommodation replaces the love of God with a God who created through billions of years of suffering, which portrays Him in a way incompatible with Calvary and removes a literal Sabbath as the climax of Creation.

Any replacement of a literal Creation Sabbath by a day-age Sabbath makes no sense when Christ wrote in the fourth commandment that He created in six days and rested on the seventh day, and asked His followers to keep the seventh day as Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11).

It is no wonder that Christ Himself referred to the creation of Adam and Eve as literal (Matt. 19:4).

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1 Carl F. H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983), vol. 6, p. 226.
2 Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, Integrative Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), vol. 2, p. 44.
6 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), vol. 3, pp. 1, 223.
Probably the most significant distinguishing feature of long-age creation models is the interpretation of the word day in Genesis 1. Certain long-age creation models hold that the creation “days” are literal, sequential days of creation; other long-age creation models hold that the “days” are non-literal and/or non-sequential.

Theistic evolution is the theory that all organisms, including humans, descended from an original ancestor. “Variation” and “speciation” do not entail universal common ancestry, so they are not the same as evolution. The occasional definition of evolution as merely “change over time” is not adequate. Every individual changes over time, yet individuals do not evolve. It is populations that evolve. Change over time does not necessarily imply universal common ancestry.

Long-age creation. Any theory that includes the geological time scale and the idea of separately created lineages, especially the special creation of humans. Since all major forms of long-age creation involve a series of discrete creation acts, the term multiple creations is a synonym for long-age creation.

Theistic evolution. Those theories that accept the geological time scale and universal common ancestry, including humans, in a divinely guided process. The proposed extent of divine activity in nature provides a way to help distinguish the various models of theistic evolution. Theories that do not include any divine activity are beyond the scope of this article.

Long-Age Creation Models

Long-age creation models include any that incorporate the (1) geological time scale and (2) separate creation of humans and numerous other independent creatures. These models usually speculate that if a six-day creation or biblical flood occurred, they were not global events.

Probably the most significant distinguishing feature of long-age creation models is the interpretation of the word day in Genesis 1. Certain long-age creation models hold that the creation “days” are literal, sequential days of creation; other long-age creation models hold that the “days” are non-literal and/or non-sequential.

Multiple-Creation Models With Literal, Sequential Creation Days

Gap theory. The gap theory maintains that Genesis 1 refers to a recent creation in six literal, contiguous days, but that it was preceded by an earlier creation that had been destroyed. Proponents often claim that the phrase “the earth was without form, and void” (Gen. 1:2, KJV) should read “the earth became without form and void,” suggesting a change from its original condition (cf., Isa. 45:18). The destruction might have resulted directly from Satan’s activity in the world or a war between Satan and God.

The gap theory founders on both exegetical and scientific grounds. Exegetically, the gap theory is based on the supposition that Genesis 1:2 means that the world “became” without form and void. However, the Hebrew word (hayetha) does not have that meaning. The text states that the Earth was without form and void, not that it became without form and void.

Scientifically, the gap theory predicts a gap in the fossil record, with the rubble of the old destroyed creation below the gap and the record of the new creation above the gap. But there is no such gap in the fossil record, and most scholars abandoned this theory long ago.

Some have attempted to get around this problem by claiming that the animals and plants of the first creation closely resembled God’s work in re-creation. Thus, the gap would be undetectable. In this view some fossils that appear to be humans were actually human-like animals, while others were true humans with moral accountability. Fossils from the two creations are indistinguishable. This idea lacks any biblical, scientific, or philosophical support, and the idea of an invisible gap has not been widely accepted.

Intermittent Creation days (multiple gaps). A few scholars have attempted to preserve the idea of literal days in a long time frame by proposing that the days were intermittent rather than contiguous. Thus, there were actually six literal creation days, in the sequence recorded in Genesis, but they were separated in time by millions of years. However, the sequence of events in Genesis conflicts with the fossil sequence. To get around this problem, it has been suggested that each day of Creation begins a new creative period of time. The literal days are actually only beginning points of successive “overlapping ages” of creation. The successive creation events begin on specific days but are completed sometime later. This strategy effectively transforms the intermittent creation days theory into the overlapping day-age model.

Multiple-Creation Models With Sequential but Non-literal Days

Non-literal days. Various suggestions attempt to sever the relationship between literal days and the creation
process. One is the day-age interpretation (see below). A similar suggestion is the relativistic-day interpretation, which proposes that day means a regular day to humans but something much different to God.

A third suggestion is that the Genesis “days” are “days of proclamation” or “fiat,” in which God uttered the creative words in a series of six literal days. Each day might have initiated the creation process, but the events were completed sometime during the millions of years of the “age.” The latter proposal has the obvious problem of how one can have a first literal “day” before the Solar System (or even the universe) was created. Another problem is that Genesis records “and it was so” (1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30, KJV) before the conclusion of each day, suggesting that each day’s creative activity was completed before the beginning of the next.

Each of these interpretations attempts to retain the sequence of Genesis events. Hence, they are included with day-age models. In contrast, some models reject both the literalness of the days of creation and the sequence of creation events. One variant of this category suggests that the Genesis “days” are days of revelation, in which Moses received six symbolic visions about the creation, but the actual sequence is not revealed. Another proposal is that the “days” of creation are overlapping ages. Each age began when God uttered a command, but the actual creation events may have been completed during any of the “ages.” Again, the sequence of creation is unspecified.

The literary-framework interpretation is the best-known model of this type. In this view, the Genesis “days” are somehow “analogues” of God’s activity in heaven. Models that do not maintain the Genesis sequence are included in the non-literal, non-sequential days category.

Day-age theory. Any model that maintains the Genesis sequence of creation, and in which the events of a creation “day” are not completed in a literal day, but may extend over long, sequential ages of indefinite length. The following models should be included: the overlapping day-age theory; the intermittent-day theory; and the relativistic-day theory. The day-age interpretation can also be included in a model of theistic evolution. Since all sequence-based, long-age models of origins conflict with the order of the fossil sequence, the problems described here would also apply to any theistic evolution model that attempts to preserve the Genesis creation sequence.

The day-age interpretation has serious exegetical problems that include the biblical description of each day as literal, with an evening and a morning. The phrase “and it was so” precedes the statement “and the morning and the evening were the [nth] day,” and suggests that the action of each day was completed before the day ended. Also, the fourth commandment specifies a literal Sabbath day as commemorating the (by inference) literal creation days. It is widely acknowledged that the natural reading of the text is that the days were literal.

Scientific issues were probably more influential in causing the demise of the day-age theory. The sequence of creation events does not match the sequence seen in the fossil record. The primary similarity is that humans appear last in both lists, and that water creatures appear before flying or land creatures. Otherwise, the lists are quite different. These problems have led to the wide-scale abandonment of the day-age interpretation.

Non-literal, non-sequential days. Some scholars have proposed that the creation “days” are not literal, but refer figuratively to God’s creative activity. The best-known model in this category is the literary-framework hypothesis. This interpretation treats the “days” of Genesis 1 as neither literal nor sequential, but merely as a literary device to show that the world is a creation. No model of creation is offered, although the special creation of a personal Adam and his subsequent Fall are considered to be historical events.

A key concept of the literary-framework hypothesis is the two-register cosmology: the earth forms a visible “lower register” and the heavens form an invisible “upper register.” The two are related “analogically.” This framework is applied to Genesis 1 to explain the “days” as periods of time that belong to the invisible “upper register,” and not to the literal world in which the creation events took place. The authors insist that the creation “days” refer to something real and significant in the
The fossil sequence falsifies most of the clearly stated models of long-age creation. The historical setting of Adam and the effects of the Fall are problems for all long-age creation models. Scientific problems can be minimized only by trivializing important issues and denying the teaching of Scripture.

“upper register,” although it is not clear just what that means, since they deny the sequence represented in God’s “daily” activities.

The literary-framework interpretation is not truly a creation model but an exegetical hypothesis. It makes no predictions about the fossil sequence and is infinitely flexible in its application. Therefore, the literary-framework hypothesis is a non-scientific theory, and must be evaluated theologically: The narrative style of the text, the words used to describe the events, and the rest of Scripture, all combine to indicate the author’s intention to describe literal, consecutive days. And all New Testament writers appear to accept the Genesis story as literal.

The literary-framework interpretation explains away anything that challenges our conclusions by referring it to the invisible “upper register,” safely removed from the real world where its meaning can be as vague as we like.

The literary-framework interpretation suffers from the implication of a distinct separation of God’s activities in the “upper register” from the world of the “lower register.” God is continuously acting throughout the entire universe, and is not confined to an “upper register.” It also presents unacceptable theological implications for the character of a God who intentionally created a world of violence, suffering, and death.

Problems Specific to Long-Age Creation Models

All long-age creation models suffer from numerous problems. Many are shared with theistic evolution, but a few are unique.

First, all versions of long-age creation are essentially conjectural. They all lack direct support, either scientific or biblical. Nothing in the Bible or in science suggests that God created our world in a series of discrete, supernatural acts over long ages. Any observation in the fossil sequence can be “solved” with the statement that “God created it that way.” Though this makes the theory difficult to falsify, it also makes it difficult to defend.

Second, all forms of long-age creation that preserve the sequence of Genesis events conflict with the sequence of the fossil record. Thus, the intermittent-day theory and day-age theory are both scientifically untenable. Attempts to modify these theories to match the fossil sequence, such as the proposal that the “days” are “overlapping,” convert them into a different category of models: those that invoke non-sequential, non-literal days of creation. The chief example of this category, the literary-framework interpretation, does not explain anything in nature; it merely attempts to explain away the Genesis creation text.

Third, there is a troubling inconsistency in interpreting Genesis 1 in a long-age context: “[O]ld Earth special creationism, by its choice to accept the scientifically derived timetable for cosmic history, is in the exceedingly awkward position of attempting to interpret some of the Genesis narrative’s pictorial elements (interpreted as episodes of special creation) as historical particulars but treating the narrative’s seven-day timetable as being figurative.”

Fourth, a multiple-creation model is also a multiple-destruction model. The fossil record is a record of death and extinction, including numerous mass extinctions in which large numbers of species disappear simultaneously. The extinction of a species requires the death of every individual of that species. This can apparently happen if the species is confined to a small region, but it is difficult to explain the extinction of an entire order or class of organisms, especially if the group has a global distribution. Such extinctions require catastrophic events of global magnitude. What kind of god would repeatedly create and destroy on a global scale?

Models of long-age creation share two characteristics: acceptance of the long geological time scale and the separate creation of humans and other lineages. None of these models is free of scientific problems. The gap model predicts a non-existent gap in the fossil record. The intermittent creation day model and the day-age model conflict with the fossil sequence. The intermittent-day interpretation merely explains every observation in the fossil column with the words “God did it.” Neither the “days” nor the sequence have any literal, or even symbolic, meaning. Problems in interpretation are merely pushed off into some ethereal “upper register.” Overlapping-day-age models attempt to blend the sequence of Genesis days with a denial of the sequence of events of those same days. The fossil sequence falsifies most of the clearly stated models of long-age creation. The historical setting of Adam and the effects of the Fall are problems for all long-age creation models.
be minimized only by trivializing important issues and denying the teaching of Scripture.

It seems pointless to reject the obvious meaning of Genesis on scientific grounds to accept another model with serious scientific problems. Seventh-day Adventists cannot improve their position by adopting any model of long-age creation.

**Theistic Evolution Models**

Theistic evolution models include those based on: (1) universal common ancestry of all organisms, including humans; and (2) common descent of all organisms as the result of a divinely guided process over long ages of geological time.

Theistic evolution models differ among themselves primarily in how they propose that divine guidance is accomplished. The large number of minor variants of theistic evolution can be grouped into categories. One includes views that God created nature to be autonomous, so that continuing divine influence on nature is unnecessary. Another category is that God continuously interacts with nature in the regularities we recognize as natural law, yet He somehow influences the outcome for His own purposes.

*Theistic evolution through autonomous “natural law.”* One form of theistic evolution holds that nature is autonomous. In this view, God does not personally control any natural event. Instead, He designed the laws of nature so that evolution is the result. He established the laws of nature at the time of the Big Bang, and no further divine action is needed. He intended that consciousness would evolve in good time.

The emphasis here is on the sufficiency of natural law. God is not a participant in the evolutionary process, but merely an observer. This would be ordinary deism except that it does allow God to intervene occasionally in the lives of believers, but, apparently, not in the flow of nature. So the model is quasi-deistic.

The autonomous model of theistic evolution has some serious difficulties. In the Bible, nature is not autonomous, but totally and continuously dependent on God for existence. There is no biblical support for the idea of a God who does not interact with His creation, and much biblical evidence against it.

This model also has scientific problems. There are just too many apparent gaps in the “natural economy.” Some of the most glaring examples include: the cause of the Big Bang; the origin of life; the origin of gender and sexual reproduction; the origins of multicellularity, cellular differentiation and embryonic development; and the origin of consciousness, language, and morality in humans. No known natural law can explain the origin of any of these phenomena. The fact that they may operate in harmony with natural law says nothing about their respective origins.

Second, there seems to be too much evidence of intelligent design in nature. For example, the structure of the human brain appears to be designed for far more mental capacity than required for survival under the “law” of natural selection.

*Theistic evolution driven by God’s continuous interaction with nature.* Most versions of theistic evolution propose that God continuously interacts with nature. Nature is totally dependent on God’s sustaining activity as observed in the laws of nature. But as God sustains nature, He somehow acts providentially to bring about His will in ways generally undetectable to us. This raises the issue of how God can influence nature to accomplish His will without violating the regularity of His own natural laws to sustain the universe.

Some have proposed that God acts through chaotic systems that are unpredictable to us but predictable to Him. Another possibility is that quantum uncertainty may provide an opening for God to act in undetectable ways. However, quantum events, although uncertain individually, act statistically in predictable ways, which tends toward determinism rather than freedom of choice.

This model is widely held among scientists, and is the primary object of criticism by the intelligent design group. If natural law is sufficient to explain evolution without God’s intervention, why insist that an invisible, undetectable God is somehow acting to influence events?

Some versions of theistic evolution are open to the possibility of occasional direct divine intervention, as in miracles. Miracles are uncommon, special acts of God. Miracles for the benefit of believers are often accepted by theistic evolu-
Theistic evolutionists often deny any individual Adam, asserting that Adam was a generic representation of the evolutionary advance from primate to human. Another view is that Adam was a divinely selected individual in whom God implanted a soul. Some accept the reality of Adam as a Neolithic farmer with emergent self-consciousness rather than a soul. This Adam was not the ancestor of all humans, but the “federal representative” of the race.

Fifth, the possibility of human freedom seems difficult to harmonize with the view that the human mind arose through natural processes in which chemical reactions are driven by natural law. Natural law does not seem capable of producing a brain with freedom of choice. Most humans believe they actually have freedom of choice, and they hold other humans accountable for their behavior. This would not be logical if natural law and/or God were directing every atom and every chemical reaction, rather than some reactions being subject to human will.

Sixth, the “fall” of Adam is difficult to explain in the context of theistic evolution. In evolution, humans are on an upward trajectory rather than the downward trajectory described in the Bible. This implication of theistic evolution introduces theological problems by undermining the biblical teaching of Calvary and the atonement.

Seventh, theistic evolution tends toward the idea that all things exist within God, who permeates the entire universe. The proposal that God is somehow acting “within” the creation, continuously influencing its directionality, blurs the distinction between Creator and creation in the minds of some theistic evolutionists.

**General Problems With All Intermediate Models**

Certain problems are inherent in all intermediate models of origins. The origin of humans in the image of God and the relationship of natural evil to the fall of Adam are perhaps the most interesting of these.

The problem of Adam and the origin of humans. All intermediate models of origins have a serious practical problem with the origin of humans. Where do Adam and Eve fit in a series of increasingly human-like fossils stretching back more than a million years?

Theistic evolutionists often deny any individual Adam, asserting that Adam was a generic representation of the evolutionary advance from primate to human. Another view is that Adam was a divinely selected individual in whom God implanted a soul. Some accept the reality of Adam as a Neolithic farmer with emergent self-consciousness rather than a soul. This Adam was not the ancestor of all humans, but the “federal representative” of the race.
tence. These purported groups are the “pre-Adamites.” Yet another proposal is that language is a defining capability of humans, and evidence indicates the existence of language at least 400,000 years ago.

What, then, is the origin of the “pre-Adamites”? Multiple-creation theories would answer this differently from theistic evolution theories, but both would share the problem of locating Adam in history.

Placing the creation of Adam less than 10,000 years ago raises the question of how his sin could affect the rest of humankind, since many groups of humans are not genetically related to him. It also seems to imply that the atoning sacrifice of the “second Adam” does not benefit most races of humans, since they are not descendants of the first Adam. On the other hand, extending the time for Adam’s creation back several millions of years to include all hominids means that the image of God is present in the australopithecines, or at least in the erectines. This is as difficult to accept on scientific grounds as on scriptural grounds.

The problem of the effects of Adam’s fall on nature. The fall of Adam is identified in the Bible as a major turning point in human experience, with serious effects on nature as well as on the human condition. Integrating the Fall into a long-age chronology poses significant challenges.

Interpretations of the Fall that propose a significant change in nature when Adam sinned run into scientific trouble since evidence of disease, predation, and mass extinction are found throughout the fossil record.

On the other hand, interpretations that attribute no physical changes in nature at the Fall run into theological trouble with the relationship of moral and natural evil. Attributing natural evil to God’s intentions does not fit with the biblical revelation of God’s character, and seems contrary to biblical redemption and restoration.

Theistic evolutionists often reject the story of Adam’s fall, interpreting it as symbolic of the fact that we are estranged from God in a less-than-ideal world. Some claim there was no Fall, but that “we appear to be rising beasts rather than fallen angels.” Such views conflict with the most fundamental teachings of Scripture.

One theory offers a contrasting position: There was a real Fall, which was a failure in responsibility by Adam and Eve. The result of the Fall was the negative ecological effects of the abuse of nature by humans. However, if ecological problems are a moral evil, who was responsible for them before Adam sinned?

The problem of death and suffering before sin. The problem of death and suffering is related to the problem of the effects of the Fall. All long-age models entail the idea of death and suffering before—and thus independent of—Adam’s sin. The fossil record thus becomes a record of God’s activity, not a record of the results of Adam’s sin. But repeated episodes of mass extinctions in the fossil record do not seem to reflect the behavior of a caring Creator.

It is commonly claimed that the “death” that resulted from Adam’s sin was only a “spiritual” death; physical death was already in force. But death resulting from Adam’s fall must have been physical, since it involved returning to dust and was facilitated by preventing access to the tree of life. Furthermore, restoration involves resurrection of the body. Indeed, physical death is the sign of spiritual death.

The claim that death and suffering are the price God had to pay in order to bring about His desired ends is neither intellectually satisfying nor consistent with Scripture. Some have even suggested that God was inexperienced as a Creator and had to learn by practice.

The existence of disease and suffering is another aspect of natural evil. Yet there is good evidence that animals suffer now, and that they suffered from disease, injury, and perhaps even emotional trauma in the past. A common response is to speculate that somehow suffering is part of God’s plan. This leaves the problem an unresolved theological challenge to long-age models of origins.

Some have attempted to clear God of responsibility for evil by removing Him from direct control over nature. But ironically, this criticism strikes its own preferred view, theistic evolution, just as strongly. God is equally responsible whether He directly causes every evil event or whether He simply established the laws that cause them to happen and then withdrew.

A superficially more attractive, but entirely conjectural, answer to
the problem of death before sin is the claim that pre-Adamic death and suffering are the result of Satan’s rebellion. This is a strange way for a God of love to entertain Himself for billions of years. This idea also runs into serious difficulties with the problem of the lack of distinction in the fossil record between the supposed works of Satan and those of God. It is quite unsatisfactory to state that, within what appears to be a single species, some individuals were actually the product of Satan’s work while others were the product of God’s work. This becomes an especially onerous idea when applied to the human species. Most, but not necessarily all, theistic evolutionists seem to reject the existence of Satan. Thus, this explanation is primarily limited to advocates of long-age creation who generally do believe in a personal devil.

Numerous theological problems are associated with long-age models of origins. The seventh-day Sabbath, the nature of the atonement, the character of God, the nature of inspiration, the nature of humanity, the basis for marriage, the nature of the future life, and other doctrines are logically related to the story of origins.

This article began with the question of how alternative models fare scientifically. The answer is: not very well. All of the models described here suffer from serious scientific problems, or are entirely ad hoc and conjectural. There is truly no way to find harmony between the biblical view of origins and current scientific thinking.

Biblical creation also suffers from serious scientific problems, but this does not distinguish it from the other models and seems a poor reason to prefer one of them instead. One may adopt an attitude of agnosticism, but this hardly seems appropriate for a Christian.

Only one family of models enjoys biblical support: the literal interpretation of Genesis. This is the model on which the biblical story of redemption is based, and the model on which Seventh-day Adventist theology is based. Although many questions about the biblical model remain unanswered, abandoning it in favor of one of the intermediate models is like jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire.

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1 A more comprehensive treatment of this topic appears on the Website of the Journal of the Adventist Theological Society at http://ats-jats.org.
IN THE BEGINNING

We can’t know the mind of God, but we can know the essentials.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1, NKJV).

The Book of Genesis, along with many other of the 66 books of the Bible, brings into sharp focus one of the most important realities of religion—the origin of life—creation!

Genesis 1 is a battlefield for old-time controversies between Bible-believing Christians on the one hand, and scientists, skeptics, atheists, and various shades of rationalists on the other. Many of the latter, who seek in different ways and in different degrees to explain the universe, some with, some without God, argue that matter is eternal. Speaking contrary to this point, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary says, “If this be true, and if matter has the power to evolve, first into the simplest forms of life and then into the more complex, until man is reached, God is indeed unnecessary.” But if God—a personal God—is unnecessary in creation or the origin of life, who is to take His place: an idol made of wood or stone or a man-made theory, such as evolution?

The biblical view is represented by the following comment by Ellen White: “God spoke, and His words created His works in the natural world. God’s creation is but a reservoir of means made ready for Him to employ instantly to do His pleasure... Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences.” This planet and humankind upon it are a necessity in order to reveal God’s creation plan, but “the work of creation cannot be explained by science. What science can explain the mystery of life?”

Theories of Origin

Theories of origin of the Earth and of life on this planet are never held with any degree of satisfaction except by the Christian who finds security in Genesis 1 and the idea that life must come from a Life-giver, a heavenly Creator-God.

The Creator was not indebted to pre-existing matter (e.g., Adam and the beasts were formed of the earth, and Eve was made from Adam’s rib [Gen. 2:7, 19, 22]).

Literal 24-Hour Days

The first day and all the other days of Creation week were literal 24-hour periods, not symbols of long time periods (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:1-3). Morning
equals day; evening equals night. The two periods together equal a 24-hour day.

“The tenacity with which so many commentators cling to the idea that the days of creation were long periods of time, even thousands of years, largely finds its explanation in the fact that they attempt to make the inspired creation record agree with the theory of evolution. Geologists and biologists have taught men to believe that this earth’s early history covers millions of years, in which the geological formations were slowly taking shape and living species were evolving. Throughout its sacred pages the Bible contradicts this evolution theory. The belief in a divine and instantaneous creation is the result of words spoken by God stands in instant creation as the result of words spoken by God. The belief in a divine and instantaneous creation as the result of words spoken by God is consistent with the Bible. Throughout its sacred pages the Bible contradicts this evolution theory. The belief in a divine and instantaneous creation is the result of words spoken by God stands in instant creation as the result of words spoken by God. The belief in a divine and instantaneous creation as the result of words spoken by God is consistent with the Bible.

But science has come up short with its evaluation of life’s origins and development. Unaided by divine revelation, it must still theorize and guess, and its views are continually changing.

“Since the monumental ‘Conference on Macro-Evolution’ was held in Chicago in 1980, there has been a re-evaluation of life’s origins and development. In regard to the Darwinian theory of evolution, the world-famous paleontologist of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Niles Eldridge, unequivocally declared, ‘The pattern that we were told to find for the last one hundred and twenty years does not exist. There is now overwhelmingly strong evidence, both statistical and paleontological, that life could not have been started on Earth by a series of random chemical reactions. Today’s best mathematical estimates state that there simply was not enough time for random reactions to get life going as fast as the fossil record shows that it did. The reactions were either directed by some, as of yet unknown, physical force or a metaphysical guide, or life arrived here from elsewhere. But the “elsewhere” answer merely pushes the start of life into an even more unlikely time constraint.”

“Random reactions,” indeed! “Directed by some . . . metaphysical guide.” Why not say “God,” as in the Book of Genesis?

God Himself made the earth, and God still lives.

He was more than the active party in creation. He and the angels were obviously eyewitnesses—the only eyewitnesses to Creation who live today. His testimony is needed, and it is recorded by Moses in Genesis.

Stephen Hawking’s book makes reference to God repeatedly. From the outset of the volume, he appears as one who sincerely is attempting a “wedding,” though he is not yet a real creationist. He wishes to unite the bride and groom; science and religion. He attempts in his own way to reconcile the discoveries in the fields of physics and mathematics, etc., with the age-long pronouncements of religion in the field of creation. His attempts at reconciliation, while noble and scholarly, leave much to be desired. Only by accepting a literal reading of Genesis 1 can the quest for truth about time and matter, the world and space, humans and their creation be positively understood.

The Creator as Eyewitness

God Himself made the Earth, and God still lives. He was more than the active party in creation. He and the angels were obviously eyewitnesses—the only eyewitnesses to Creation who live today. His testimony is needed, and it is recorded by Moses in Genesis. A subject as important as time and creation requires that a good God-Creator reveal the facts to the human race. Thus Moses tells us what happened when the earth came forth ex nihilo. Moses’ record has no ifs or ands about it. In the Book of Genesis, there are no such words as “seemed” or “implies” or “take for granted” or “it appears.” The word of God about creation is certain and sure. He speaks as One having authority.

The Week and the Sabbath

In the beginning, there was a seven-day week. There, as we have said, we have time encapsuled into 24-hour days and into a week of 168 hours. The Hebrew word translated “day” in Genesis 1 is yom. When yom is accompanied by a definite number, it always means a literal, 24-hour day (e.g., Gen. 7:11; Ex. 16:1)—another indication that the Creation account speaks of literal, 24-hour days.

So we have the seventh-day Sabbath recurring every seventh day to remind humans in every generation that God created the Earth and all
The healing of a wound, the restoring of health to the sick, requires the life-giving restorative and creative energy of God.

In Jesus Christ, creation and salvation and healing meet and embrace each other. The event of Creation resulted in a majestic and beautiful Earth spread abroad with the creatures of God's loving thought and care.

that is in it.

In the first angel's message, the Creator-God calls upon the whole world—standing on the brink of eternity—to worship “...Him who made heaven and earth” (Rev. 14:7, NKJV; see also verses 9-12). The Lord God invites all to observe the downtrodden seventh-day Sabbath, engraved by the finger of God in the heart and on tables of stone of His Ten Commandments. This is God’s call to the last generation of humanity. Will we respond?

“God established the seventh-day Sabbath so that we would have a weekly reminder that we are creatures of His making. The Sabbath was a gift of grace, speaking not of what we did, but of what God has done. He especially blessed this day and sanctified it so that we would never forget that, besides work, life should include communion with the Creator, rest, and celebration of God’s marvelous creative works (Gen. 2:2, 3). To emphasize its importance, the Creator placed the injunction to remember this sacred memorial of His creative power in the center of the moral law as an everlasting sign and symbol of Creation (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Eze. 20:20).”

Illuminated by the Spirit of God

To the secular mind, the Bible story of Creation and redemption through Jesus Christ is foolishness (see 1 Corinthians 1:17-21; 2:10-16). To the mind illuminated by the Spirit of God, it is received humbly as the one certain truth on the matter.

When He was upon Earth, Jesus Christ expressed His belief in the Creation story as recorded by Moses. He certainly knew what He was talking about because He Himself was the Creator-God, active in creation. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3, 14, NKJV).

Sustaining Power of God

That same creative energy exercised by Jesus Christ in the creation of this world and people—males and females—is daily exercised in sustaining life on this world—all life. There is no inherent power in the Earth or in the universe by which all things remain alive, by which movement and existence is possible. God the Creator preserves and sustains them. He “covers the heavens with clouds, ... prepares rain for the earth, ... [and] makes grass to grow on the mountains. He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry” (Ps. 147:8, 9, NKJV). He upholds all things by His power, and “in Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17, NKJV).

What would we do without God? We’re dependent upon Him for the function of every cell of our bodies. Every breath, every heartbeat, every blink of the eye speaks of the care of a loving Creator. “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28, NKJV).

But that’s not all. Creative power, as exercised in creation, is also active in the miracle of spiritual rebirth. “God’s creative power is involved not only in creation, but in redemption and restoration. God re-creates hearts (Isa. 44:21-28; Ps. 51:10). ‘We are His workmanship,’ Paul said, ‘created in Christ Jesus for good works’ (Eph. 2:10). ‘If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation’ (2 Cor. 5:17). God, who hurled the many galaxies across the cosmos, uses that same power to re-create the most degraded sinner into His own image.

“This redeeming, restoring power is not limited to changing human lives. The same power that originally created the heavens and the earth will, after the final judgment, re-create them—make of them a new and magnificent creation, a new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17-19; Rev. 21, 22).”

The healing of a wound, the restoring of health to the sick, requires the life-giving restorative and creative energy of God. In Jesus Christ, creation and salvation and healing meet and embrace each other. The event of Creation resulted in a majestic and beautiful Earth spread abroad with the creatures of God’s loving thought and care.

Years ago, a Quaker missionary entertained a wise old Indian chief in his home in New England. “Let me tell you about the best rule by which to live,” said the Quaker.

“You must let me decide that question,” said the wise old chief, “but tell me, what is that rule?”

The missionary said, “We call it the golden rule: ‘Therefore all things
Evolution teaches progression, but the facts of life itself, whether the flora, the fauna, or human life, inform us pathetically that there is no progression; we only live and die. The transition of one form into another form, of one species into another species, that is, the missing link, is still the great conundrum of evolutionary scientists.

whosoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The Native American rose to his feet and walked back and forth for at least three or four minutes, then sat down and exclaimed, "It is impossible! There is no man who can fulfill this rule unless," and then he paused and said, "unless the Great Spirit should create in him a clean and a new heart. Then it might be possible—only then."

The Indian chief had penetrated the truth of creation. God made the world; He made humans upon the world; He is able to re-create fallen humanity into His own image.

"Both the contrasts and the parallels between Creation and salvation are significant... At Creation Christ commanded, and it was instantly accomplished. Rather than vast periods of metamorphosis, His powerful word was responsible for Creation. In six days He created all. Yet why did it take even six days? Could not He have spoken just once and brought everything into existence in a moment?"

"Perhaps He took delight in the unfolding of our planet in those six days. Or perhaps this 'extended' time has more to do with the value He placed on each created thing or with His desire to reveal the seven-day week as a model for the cycle of activity and rest He intended for man.

"But Christ does not just speak salvation into existence. The process of saving people stretches over millenniums. It involves the old and new covenants, Christ’s 33 1/2 years on earth and His nearly 2,000 years of subsequent heavenly intercession. Here is a vast span of time—according to Scripture chronology, about 6,000 years since Creation—and people still have not been returned to the garden of Eden."

**Antediluvian Giants**

Speaking of persons who lived just before the Flood but long after Creation week, Moses wrote, "There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown" (Gen. 6:4, NKJV).

And long after the Flood, the Earth, in places, could boast people of great stature, the sons of Anak, for example, who dwelt in the south of Canaan. The two spies who returned from their 40-day searching out of the land testified: "‘There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight’" (Num. 13:33, NKJV). Real Goliaths!

Adam and Eve were of giant size, nearly twice as large as the average human today. Weight measures logarithmically as size increases. Accordingly, they must have been 800 pounds or more. Eve was shorter than Adam, beautifully formed and loveliest of all God’s creation.

Degeneration, rather than progression, is the testimony of the Earth’s creatures. The life of a human being itself teaches us that. There is a time in our existence when nature is building us up all the time. Then there is the stage when decline, loss of energy, the inroads of disease, and old age take place. Why is there this transition from a building-up process to a degenerative process? Certainly this never would have existed in Adam and Eve had they not sinned, because with sin came degeneration and death. This points up the vital truth that the fall of humankind as recorded in Scripture is to be blamed for the degenerative processes in the living creation.

On the other hand, evolution teaches progression, but the facts of life itself, whether the flora, the fauna, or human life, inform us pathetically that there is no progression; we only live and die. The transition of one form into another form, of one species into another species, that is, the missing link, is still the great conundrum of evolutionary scientists. Where is the convincing paleontological evidence that the species has changed? The names arbitrarily attached to skeletons, or parts of skeletons, project links in a man-made theory but no coercive evidence.

**Discover a Complete Theory?**

Steven Hawking is considered by many the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein, and his book confronts the question of the nature of time in the universe. Was there a beginning of time? Will there be an end? Is the universe infinite, or does it have boundaries? When confronting these overwhelming issues, like many scientists, he must theorize because he does not have the infallible Book to guide him.

Hawking asks the question, “Why
does the universe go to all the bother of existing? Is the unified theory so compelling that it brings about its own existence? Or does it need a creator, and, if so, does he have any other effect on the universe? And who created him?\textsuperscript{9}

He concludes his book by saying, “If we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God.”\textsuperscript{10}

But we do know the mind of God and the reason why the universe exists. “This is what the Lord says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: ‘I am the Lord, and there is no other’” (Isa. 45:18, NIV).

Again, John the apostle informs us: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:11, NKJV).

Do we know the mind of God? Not in everything, but in all essential things! God delights in sharing His life and truth with rational creatures. It brought great pleasure to Him to make Adam and Eve in the beginning. It brought enormous pleasure to Him to make Adam and Eve procreators with Himself—to be able to reproduce and have children of their own. Indeed, from their posterity came the Savior of the world, the Son of God, who came into the world to teach humanity what God is like, to show something of His love and wisdom and power, and to re-enact by His miracles the creative work of God.

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\textsuperscript{1} Vol. 1, p. 207.
\textsuperscript{2} Ellen G. White Comments, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1081; see also Psalm 136:3-9.
\textsuperscript{3} Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p. 414.
\textsuperscript{4} Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{7} Seventh-day Adventists Believe, . . . , p. 76.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., pp. 76, 77.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 175.
“[Evolutionary theory] is still, as it was in Darwin’s time, a highly speculative hypothesis entirely without direct factual support and very far from that self-evident axiom some of its more aggressive advocates would have us believe” (molecular biologist Michael Denton).

“We are now about one hundred and twenty years after Darwin and the knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter of a million fossil species, but the situation hasn’t changed much. . . . We have even fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin’s time” (David M. Raup).

“The origin of life appears to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to be satisfied to get it going” (Nobel Prize-winner Sir Francis Crick).

“More than thirty years of experimentation on the origin of life in the fields of chemical and molecular evolution have led to a better perception of the immensity of the problem of the origin of life on Earth rather than its solution. At present all discussions on principle theories and experiments in the field either end in stalemate or in a confession of ignorance” (biochemist Klaus Dose).

“A theology that marries the science of today may well be a widow tomorrow” (biochemist and theologian Arthur Peacocke).

“‘Don’t take science too seriously.’ Its consequences are too serious for that. Sometimes, even often, you may rely on scientific statements about the world. But do not believe in science itself. In particular, do not rely on science as a solution to societal, relational, personal, or existential problems. You may well use it, but do not rely on it. The scientific world is impressive and even important but not sufficient. There are also solutions other than scientific solutions” (theoretical astrophysicist Bengt Gustafsson).

“I stand in awe of God because of what he has done through his creation. . . . Only a rookie who knows nothing about science would say science takes away from faith. If you really study science, it will bring you closer to God” (nanoscientist James Tour).

“Prominent evolutionist William Provine of Cornell University candidly conceded that if Darwinism is true, then there are five inescapable implications: there’s no evidence for God; there’s no life after death; there’s no absolute foundation for right and wrong; there’s no ultimate meaning for life; and people don’t really have free will” (Lee Strobel).

“Anyone who has kept up with the news lately could hardly have overlooked the recent rekindling of interest in matters related to how science and religion tend to come together in the debate over origins. Not that it has ever been laid to rest, but the recent resurgence of discussion is owed in large part to the efforts of a group of scientists who are lending their influence to a movement called Intelligent Design (ID).

This movement argues that the complexity of the mechanisms that make up living organisms and permit them to survive and adapt to their environments, even to thrive, is such that it so far exceeds the bounds of statistical probability that it can only be explained as a product of intelligent design, as opposed to purely materialistic and random, accidental evolution. One has only to consider a few small examples of this complexity, such as the metabolism of proteins, DNA, the function of the eye, or the human reproductive system, to imagine what the odds are against the whole living ecosystem having developed and remained in balance purely by chance mutations. The ID movement studies this improbability in a wide range of specialized features of life and uses scientific statistical calculations to assess the odds of these features developing by random, accidental evolution.

Despite the fact that their theory is supported by scientific data and studies, it is being widely rejected by materialistic scientists as “religion in the garb of science.” It does not matter that most leading ID proponents are well-qualified scientists and that many do not support the biblical account of a recent six-day fiat creation. The idea of bringing God into the picture of origins scares the materialistic evolutionists because it comes from science rather than religion, and it strikes a scientific blow at the heart of their own theories. If it were accepted as genuine science rather than as religion, it would be devastating to materialistic evolu-
tion; therefore, it is imperative to label it as “religion in the garb of science.”

Listen to the network news. Read the newspapers and news magazines. Notice the lack of content in describing the ID movement, and notice the labels being applied. There is a lot of fear and negative labeling without letting people know what the real issues are. Yet people are intelligent and want to be able to make decisions for themselves, if only they can have access to the facts.

A very recent poll conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and reported in the New York Times on August 31, 2005, revealed that nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of Americans now say that creationism should be taught alongside evolution in public schools, even though only 42 percent hold strict creationist views (down from 47 percent in a Gallup poll reported by Newsweek on December 23, 1991). This clearly does not mean that 64 percent of Americans support a biblical creation, but it means that Americans value open, honest discussion of different viewpoints and do not want their children to be subject to only one point of view in such an important matter as the origin of life. It means also that they are not entirely afraid of religion as an influence in the discussion, though they want to see the arguments for and against each theory of origins discussed on a level playing field.

The Christian has to evaluate what becomes the foundation of authority in arriving at decisions in such areas. What are the respective roles of science and the Bible as authorities for the Christian? Once one surrenders faith in the authority of Scripture in favor of scientific evidence that may appear to be in conflict with it, what are the implications for the whole set of doctrinal beliefs that one once held? Can one surrender confidence in the literal understanding of the Creation account in Genesis 1–2 without surrendering confidence in the whole of Scripture? Does not the rest of Scripture—including Jesus Himself—treat the Genesis account as literal? Is not the Creation account integrally tied to the account of the Fall into sin and death?

What happens to our theology about the origin of sin and its consequences if we accept the view of materialistic evolution, which places death before sin and posits a long history of upward progress in the complexity of life and intelligence rather than a deterioration as a result of sin? What happens to our view of a God who acts within history, as the Bible claims, as opposed to a God who is timeless and cannot act within history, as even many Christians believe, based on philosophy? Is there room for supernatural events like prophecy, miracles, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Second Coming, and so forth? What happens to our understanding of the purpose of the plan of redemption, the Incarnation, the atonement, the judgment, and the new creation? What happens to our understanding of God’s plan for marriage, for human dominion and stewardship, and for the Sabbath, which is explicitly enshrined within the Decalogue?

These theological issues have their origin in the account of Creation and the Fall as recorded in Genesis 1–3. Can we somehow blend with our theology a theory that is fundamentally at odds with biblical theology? These are pressing questions.

This issue of PD addresses some of these questions. The answers are not always easy, but as we ponder the issues in the debate, we may be enriched by probing their depth and scope. We trust the reader will at least be stimulated by the discussion.
whether you’re an athlete or not.

That is what the apostle Paul was referring to when he pointed out that God chooses the “foolish things of the world to shame the wise” (1 Cor. 1:27, NIV). The world has its absolutes all wrong: It considers Christianity to be foolish.

Consider the white-hot confrontation between faith and science that is currently addressed daily in the media. What once was no more than a battle among the most highly educated in academia has erupted into the streets, so to speak, as local school boards clash over what will be presented as truth to our children.

And ironically, science is exercising tyranny of thought in much the same way the church dealt with Galileo. Science may not be going to quite the extreme that the church did through the offices of the Inquisition (i.e., putting him under house arrest for the rest of his life), but its impact is vastly more powerful—and devastating. There are, apparently, far more effective means of suppressing ideas nowadays.

In popular culture today, evolution’s proof is considered a fait accompli. In its overview of the second millennium, Time magazine reverently observed: “Darwinism remains one of the most successful scientific theories ever promulgated.” For the past century, science has been doing everything it can, with the aid and abetment of the popular media, to marginalize and discredit those who would like to see the issue of creation and evolution discussed openly.

The modernist worldview perceives faith and science as mutually exclusive. They are not: “All true science is in harmony with [God’s] works; . . . Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. . . . [T]he book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other.”

Faith and science are not at odds. Faith is at odds with those who have hijacked science and turned it into an intolerant juggernaut. Even some scientists are aware of this and have expressed discomfort over it. Swedish professor of theoretical astrophysics Bengt Gustafsson has described his concern over “the commercial interests behind what I fear has become the religion of our time—belief in science.”

Today science has become the establishment. It is dominated by the so-called authorities who accept evolution as a worldview and who declare anyone else merely “unscientific.” But science, in its truest, purest definition, is not unanimously anti-creationist. It’s just that you won’t hear much of this idea in the media.

At the end of the day, it all comes
down to this: When you sit down to your microscope or telescope or whatever scientific instrument you’re utilizing, on what absolute will you base your conclusions about the data you’re collecting? What, for you, will be the final authority? Because no absolute can ever be proven conclusively, the basic question is: On what have you fixed your faith?

“It is now recognized, even in science,” writes theologian Robert E. Webber, “that one needs to bring to ‘fact’ a framework of thought that is based on faith. The assumption that there is no God is a faith-commitment as much as the assumption that there is a God.”

For a Christian, this “framework of thought” is spiritual. “We fix our eyes,” wrote the apostle Paul, “not on what is seen, but on what is unseen” (2 Cor. 4:18, NIV). This is one of the many elegant paradoxes of the Christian worldview: How do you fix your eyes on something that you cannot see? Take a moment, just as a “scientific” experiment, and give this a try. See if you can focus on something that is unseen. Preliminary scientific hypothesis: Attempts to focus one’s physical vision on something that is invisible induces headaches.

But the apostle Paul, of course, was considering a completely different process. He was not discoursing on the physical realm, but on the spiritual.

The established scientific community will claim that they rely solely on the physical realm, on what they can observe physically. What they don’t want to admit, however, is that they are interpreting all that physical data that they are collecting on how they answer a spiritual question: What is truth? And that is a spiritual question.

The greatest—the eternal—truth is something that simply cannot be measured. The apostle Paul addressed this in another way: “What is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18, NIV). For this and other reasons, informed people are coming to the conclusion that science is only one among many implements in the toolbox they use to search for eternal truth.

And Christians know that whatever project is produced by the implements of that toolbox, it must ever be true to the plumb line of God’s Word.

REFERENCES

2 Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 115.

Out here in Arizona, where I’m visiting, my Indian friends just loved the butterfly cover on Perspective Digest No. 3. And they agree: Butterflies don’t just happen, they are designed.

There are thousands of them here. And Little Cute Flower (standing by me) says she’s just glad they weren’t designed to fly on gas!

When she saw PD’s cover, she asked me how much a subscription cost. When I told her only $9.95 for a year’s subscription, she told Chief Gottem Whammo to “Get the lead out and write April Younker before treasurer Ed Zinke hears about the price of gas!

AND YOU WON’T EVEN HAVE TO STAND IN LINE!