

# Baptizing Dinosaurs: How Once-Suspect Evidence of Evolution Came to Support the Biblical Narrative | BY RONALD L. NUMBERS AND T JOE WILLEY

Early in 1945, as World War II was drawing to a close, a small group consisting mostly of Seventh-day Adventists dedicated to furthering the “Flood geology” of George McCready Price (1870–1963) excitedly announced the discovery of gigantic fossil footprints of humans found alongside those of dinosaurs in the Paluxy River near Glen Rose, Texas.



**George McCready Price**

The Deluge Geology Society (DGS), as the band of creationists called themselves, was largely the brainchild of its secretary, a bumptious Seventh-day Adventist lawyer and sometime infantry captain, Benjamin Franklin Allen (1885–1960). The footprints were, he proclaimed, “one of the most spectacular challenges ever to come to us,” a find

that would “astound the scientific world!” Actually, the discovery had been made seven years earlier by Roland T. Bird (1899–1978), a paleontologist with the American Museum of Natural History, who had reported in *Natural History* his finding of “mysterious, 15-inch, man-like tracks,” side by side with dinosaur prints. Although Bird never doubted that the intriguing fossils were nonhuman, a writer for *Scientific American* facetiously predicted that “all the geologists will resign their jobs and take up truck driving” if such prints were found to be human.<sup>1</sup>

Allen had been talking about giant human tracks found elsewhere since at least 1939, and by the time of his public announcement the DGS had already established a Footprint Research Committee comprising Allen, Clifford L. Burdick (1894–1992), a consulting geologist with some graduate training in the science, and Everett E. Beddoe (1889–1977), an Adventist minister. It had also begun soliciting funds for “actual excavation” of reported sites. Even after Beddoe showed that Native



**Paluxy trackways** | Excavated by Roland T. Bird

FROM “ON THE HEELS OF DINOSAURS: A HISTORY OF THE PALUXY CONTROVERSY” | [HTTP://PALEO.CC/PALUXY/0NHEEL.HTM](http://paleo.cc/paluxy/0nheel.htm)

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Americans had “without question” carved some of the humanlike footprints, enthusiasm for the project never waned.<sup>2</sup>

In 1950 Burdick wrote an article for the *Signs of the Times* crediting Bird with the discovery more than a decade earlier of dinosaur and giant human tracks found together in the Paluxy River. When a friend of Bird’s sent him a copy of the magazine, he exploded at what he later called this “first rumble of approaching trouble.” How, he asked a friend in frustration, “did I ever get caught up in these persistent arguments . . . that hold that men and dinosaurs existed on earth at the same time?” Despite his unhappiness, he reasoned that “the small magazine had a limited circulation”—and that if the story “helped some in their worship of the Almighty, I could stand it.” But then a second friend mailed him a copy of *Man’s Origins, Man’s Destiny* (1968) by the European creationist A. E. Wilder-Smith (1915–1995), who had visited the Paluxy River site with Burdick—and repeated the story of Bird’s amazing discovery, gratuitously noting that “even Dr. Roland T. Bird admits that the tracks are perfect human ones.” Not long thereafter, to his utter disbelief, “the horrifying news came that a book now enjoying national circulation,” the psychic Jeane Dixon’s *My Life and Prophecies* (1969), had credited him with the discovery of giant human tracks with those of dinosaurs. “I almost fainted,” Bird recalled. The book indeed carried a prologue by the Dutch Adventist writer Rene Noorbergen (1928–1995), an occasional contributor to the *National Enquirer* who later wrote *Ellen G. White: Prophet of Destiny* (1972), reporting Bird’s alleged discovery.<sup>3</sup>

Though Bird apparently never saw it, John C. Whitcomb, Jr. (b. 1924) and Henry M. Morris (1918–2006) had featured the Paluxy footprints in their landmark *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (1961). Indeed, the revelation of humans and dinosaurs living together constituted, in one reader’s opinion, the book’s “real bombshell.”

Unfortunately, Burdick proved to be an embarrassingly unreliable authority. To bolster his declining credibility, he returned to Texas in the summer of 1968 to confirm his earlier observations. “I believe all reasonable doubts have now been removed, and the evolutionary geologists will be backed into a corner,” he assured a leading creationist after reviewing the evidence. “One hundred million years collapsed from geologic column, since man and dinosaurs were evidently contemporary.”<sup>4</sup>

But doubts, even in the creationism community, remained. In 1975 the Adventist geneticist Berney R. Neufeld (b. 1941) carefully reviewed Burdick’s evidence and concluded that it did not hold up under scientific scrutiny. Extensive field and laboratory studies led him to conclude that the Paluxy River yielded no “good evidence for the past existence of giant men.” Nor did it “provide evidence for the coexistence of such men (or other large mammals) and the giant dinosaurs.” Despite discrediting Burdick’s fabulous claims, Neufeld did not publicly question the legitimacy of Flood geology. Responsible creationists soon followed his example, rejecting the spurious evidence from the Paluxy River while insisting that antediluvian humans and dinosaurs had once coexisted.<sup>5</sup>

**B**efore the shocking discoveries in the Paluxy River, Seventh-day Adventists, like most evangelical Christians, paid relatively little attention to dinosaurs. When they did, they tended to view them as highly suspect evidence of evolution. As with so many other issues related to science and religion, much hinged on a few statements by Ellen G. White. The closest she came to mentioning dinosaur-like creatures was in the fourth volume of *Spiritual Gifts*, published in 1864, less than a quarter-century after paleontologists first named the prehistoric creatures: “There were a class of very large animals which per-

ished at the flood. God knew that the strength of man would decrease, and these mammoth animals could not be controlled by feeble man.”<sup>6</sup> That same year she wrote a controversial passage that some commentators thought might apply to dinosaurs:

*Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals, and in certain races of men.<sup>7</sup>*

The first explicit reference to dinosaurs in Adventist literature seems to have appeared in 1878 in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, not long after Americans were introduced to the strange creatures. In a news note titled “Antediluvian Monsters,” the editor, presumably Uriah Smith, drew attention to a recent *Scientific American* report about the discovery of the “remains of a new and gigantic species of antediluvian animals, the



O. C. Marsh

Dinosaur, the largest ever discovered, and the largest known land animal . . . fully sixty feet long.” Shortly thereafter, a young John Harvey Kellogg (1852–1943) noted in his periodical *Good Health* that Yale’s O. C.

Marsh, America’s leading authority on dinosaurs, had “received a number of new fossil reptiles from the Rocky Mountains,” which the New Haven zoologist classified as dinosaurs. One measured at least 80 feet in length.<sup>8</sup>

In 1900 the *Signs of the Times*, edited by Milton C. Wilcox, first raised the theological implications of dinosaurs. Reporting the recent discovery of three “giant antediluvian animals known as the dinosaur,” the editor observed that “the finding of these remains of the mon-

# ADVENT REVIEW,

# AND SABBATH HERALD.

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"Here is the Patience of the Saints; Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus."

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vent Sabbathkeepers might become a popular people, but it is the necessities of the cause which have driven me to make the propositions that I have. I need not repeat them. In my travels east and west I find many people who are very aged or infirm, who have a few hundreds or thousands, and have no heirs. They wish this property to go to the cause of God, but do not feel at liberty to have it pass out of their hands while living; and it would be a great relief to them to make a will to a Publishing Association of this people, so that if they should be suddenly taken away, it could be secured to the cause. This is one reason for the adoption of the item before us. Again I have become satisfied that the Review should not be the individual property of any one man or number of men. Our great reason for this is, the enemy is always ready to attack us, and no matter how pure the motives of those may be who are carrying on the publishing department, there are enough to stir up jealousy and evil surmising. Our present arrangement, so far as it has advanced, contains nothing particularly legal. I have been placed by the Publishing Committee, as Publishing Agent, and the business having been done in my name, I am the only one that the law would recognize as the owner of the property there. I am anxious to place this in the hands of the church. But this they

ter into all the minutiae of advancing the cause of truth.

**Bro. WAGGONER.** I have but a word to say. I would choose not to speak on the subject at all; but the Conference is aware, by my expression, that my feelings have been against any organization whatever of a legal nature; and the difficulty in my mind has been the objection that I have presented to the plan proposed in this Conference, that there was a seeming difficulty in disconnecting the legal holding of property, from the legal organization of the church. The committee have taken this into consideration, and have endeavored to make a schedule which would be free from that objection; and I think they have succeeded. Upon the plan we have proposed to the Conference, I see no difficulty, and shall therefore vote for the adoption of the first item.

**Bro. PEOPLE.** Who is this association to be subject to, provided they prove recreant to their trust?

**Bro. ANDREWS.** It is understood on the plan we have proposed, that the present body of brethren, shall select the first seven, or whatever number may be chosen instead of seven, men of integrity, and in whom we have the fullest confidence, and that these men shall apply to the legislature of Michigan, for an act under which they can hold the REVIEW Office; and that this association, thus

sters of old is regarded by many as a refutation of the Bible record of creation, and is used to substantiate the theory that animal life has been going on upon this earth for millions of years.” Attributing the disappearance of the dinosaurs to Noah’s flood, the editor observed that “had the mastodon and dinosaur been allowed to continue their existence while mankind was retrograding through the effects of sin, they could have stamped out the race.” Thus “the cutting short of their existence was in mercy to man.”<sup>9</sup>

For the next three-quarters of a century, *Signs* became the chief venue for bringing dinosaur news to the Adventist community, publishing approximately 40 articles on the topic. In part, this reflects the influence of Francis D. Nichol (1897–1966) and Alonzo L. Baker (1894–1985), two callow apologists who became co-editors (with Asa O. Tait) in the early 1920s. At the height of the anti-evolution crusade in that decade, the enterprising young editors publicly debated the relative merits of creation and evolution with the prominent evolutionist Maynard Shipley, who had recently founded the Science League of America.<sup>10</sup> In 1937, Arthur S. Maxwell, another vocal anti-evolutionist, joined the editorial staff.

In 1902 *Signs* published the first of numer-

**The Paluxy  
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giant men.”**





A black-tie event celebrated the arrival of Andrew Carnegie's replica *Diplodocus* at the British Museum in London, March 1905.

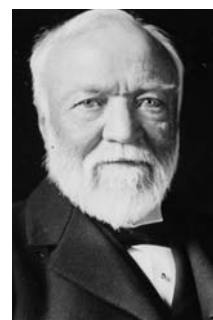
ous articles by the Canadian creationist George McCready Price (1870–1963), the founder of so-called Scientific Creationism, who that year witnessed the appearance of his first book, *Outlines of Modern Christianity and Modern Science*.<sup>11</sup> Although Price ignored dinosaurs in that book, more than anyone else he introduced readers of *Signs* and other Adventist periodicals, such as the *Review and Herald*, to the extinct giants. In contrast to the beliefs of conventional scientists, who taught “that the fossils belonged to ages long before man came on the stage of action,” Price insisted that such ancient animals had been contemporaries with antediluvian humans—outrageously claiming that this “is now everywhere acknowledged.”<sup>12</sup> In *Illogical Geology: The Weakest Point in the Evolution Theory* (1906), his first book to mention dinosaurs, he further developed the “common-sense” notion that these “gigantic” animals had shared the earth with humans before the Flood.<sup>13</sup> Price never seems to have doubted the authenticity of dinosaurs; indeed, he enjoyed regaling readers with data about the size of these monsters. “They were the most gigantic creatures that ever walked the earth, some of them having been seventy or eighty feet long,” he wrote in 1918. “Several cars—almost a whole train—have sometimes been required to transport the bones of *one* of these monsters to the Eastern museum.”<sup>14</sup> In a piece for *Review and Herald* in 1920, Price mentioned that the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh displayed two of these “huge, unearthly looking monsters,” but neither here nor elsewhere did he give any indication of being aware

that these fossils had been discovered by the famed dinosaur hunter G. Earl Douglass (1862–1931), an apostate Seventh-day Adventist.<sup>15</sup>

Rather than appearing threatened by dinosaurs, Adventist writers, including Price, typically welcomed their discovery and rarely questioned their existence in print—though, as we shall see, some had their doubts. As one appreciative contributor to *Signs* put it, “God designed that the discovery of these things in the earth should establish the faith

of men in inspired history.”<sup>16</sup> For Price and his fellow Adventists, Noah’s catastrophic flood solved the biggest problem facing evolutionists: “*how these animals became extinct*.”<sup>17</sup> In 1924 Roy Chapman Andrews (1884–1960), a paleontologist with the American Museum of Natural History, who was then leading an expedition to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, announced his sensational discovery of the first dinosaur eggs, some measuring up to seven or eight inches long. Covering the story in *Signs*, Price celebrated their discovery, describing them as “only another confirmation of that record of the extinction of the ancient world by the waters of a universal deluge.” About the same time, the editors ran a sidebar quoting the Baptist fundamentalist William Bell Riley. “Our refusal to cackle with every discovery of dinosaur eggs ten million years old, or to enthuse over ‘science, falsely so-called,’” he cracked, “has led some men to name us as ignoramuses.”<sup>18</sup>

Another exciting discovery for creationists came from the Doheny Scientific Expedition to the Hava Supai Cañon, Arizona, in 1924, headed by Samuel Hubbard: “The drawing of a dinosaur made by prehistoric man,” as Price described it in his ill-fated London debate with the



Andrew Carnegie



Henry F. Osborn

British skeptic Joseph McCabe. As far as Price was concerned, this almost equaled in significance “the finding of a human skeleton among the bones of a dinosaur,” which he admitted had not yet occurred.<sup>19</sup> These drawings prompted one of Price’s former students, Harold W. Clark (1891–1986), who in the early 1920s had replaced his mentor as the resident creationist at Pacific Union College, to write the first of many essays on dinosaurs. Adapting the title of a recent anti-creationist polemic by the zoologist Henry Fairfield Osborn, *The Earth Speaks to Bryan*, Clark titled his essay, “The Earth Speaks to the Evolutionists.” The subtitle read: “Recent archeological discoveries in the Hava Supai Canyon, Arizona, give the lie to the evolutionists’ idea of the age of man.” Accompanying a photograph of the drawings appeared the claim:

*Here is the “pictograph” of the dinosaur, which has caused all the furor in the camp of the evolutionists. Unquestionably made by a human artist, it proves that man and the dinosaur lived at the same time, whereas evolution has it that the dinosaur became extinct 12,000,000 years before man appeared.<sup>20</sup>*

Accompanying the Clark essay was an editorial by Nichol, “When’s a Dinosaur Not a Dinosaur?” Eager to assess scientific reaction to the pictographs, Nichol had written Hubbard for a response. In a letter reproduced in *Signs* Hubbard recounted:

*In the language of the “Range,” some few of them [other scientists] have “stood up on their hind legs and pawed the air”; but in the main their objections might be described as feeble. Roy Chapman Andrews gasped when I showed him the Dinosaur picture. Then he began to flounder. . . . He said it was a “kangaroo rat,” or a “Man with a tail” or a “Thunder bird.” All of this is just “school boy stuff,” and it tends to disgust one with the mental caliber of men holding high positions in our leading institutions, and supposed to be earnest seekers after the TRUTH.*

No reply could have delighted Nichols more. Mocking Andrews, he commented:

*To lay violent hands on a theory that to many has become a religion, would be nothing short of sacrilege, and so there was but one conclusion left open to him—to denounce the poor dinosaur as a fraud. “It is impossible,” he explains, “it can not be a dinosaur, because we know that dinosaurs were extinct twelve million years before man emerged.” . . . So, then, we draw as our conclusion that the answer to the question, When’s a dinosaur not a dinosaur? Or, When’s a fact only a freak? is, When it conflicts with the theory of evolution.<sup>21</sup>*

By this time, dinosaurs, now safely tucked into the creationist narrative, had become a staple of Adventist literature opposing evolution. Within a decade, dinosaurs were even being introduced to Adventist children. If, as some writers were beginning to claim, the public was becoming “dinosaur-conscious,” the same could also be said of Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>22</sup>

**I**n the wake of the Paluxy River brouhaha, as dinosaurs became increasingly prominent in popular culture and more and more Adventists obtained training in the sciences, additional voices joined the dinosaur debate—and inevitably disagreed.<sup>23</sup>

The elderly Price grew silent, as his former students Clark and Frank Lewis Marsh (1899–1992) became increasingly vocal. Clark, who had first written about dinosaurs in the 1920s with his accounts of the pictographs found in the Hava Supai Cañon, said little new except to evoke his ecological zonation theory to explain the appearance of dinosaurs before those of mammals in the fossil record:

*If the region inhabited by the dinosaurs also had a population of mammals, what would happen when the Flood waters began to rise? The reptiles, being sluggish and with a low degree of intelligence, as indicated by the small brains they possessed, and many of them dwelling in watery environment [sic],*

**Price insisted that ancient animals had been contemporaries with antediluvian humans—outrageously claiming that this “is now everywhere acknowledged.”**

would not be disturbed, and would remain where they were until swept away by the violence of the waves. But the mammals, aware of approaching danger, would naturally migrate to higher ground. Thus a separation between the two types would take place.

As a trusted scientific authority in Adventist circles, he assured his often skeptical fellow believers that dinosaurs were real. “Yes, they actually did live on the earth at some time in the past,” he wrote in *Signs*. “Even though some parts of them may be fabricated, the skeletons exhibited in museums are based on actual findings and not on imagination.”<sup>24</sup>

Frank L. Marsh, a student of Price’s at Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University), had gone on to become the first Adventist to earn a doctorate in biology. He said little about dinosaurs in his earliest books, but in *Life, Man, and Time* (1957) he ventured to offer a new explanation of the demise of dinosaurs. In contrast to the prevailing Adventist view that all dinosaurs had died out during Noah’s flood, Marsh suggested that although very large dinosaurs had probably perished during the Flood, “The dinosaur *baramin* [his term for the biblical “kinds”] was doubtless preserved in some of its smaller races such as the ostrich dinosaur, *Struthiomimus*, and *Compsognathus*, which was no larger than a rooster.”<sup>25</sup>

In 1958 the General Conference founded the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI), devoted to harmonizing the book of nature with the writings of Ellen G. White and the Bible. In 1960 the staff of the GRI, led jointly by the archconservative Marsh and the more open-minded Richard M. Ritland (b. 1925), a Harvard-trained comparative anatomist and paleontologist, began taking church leaders and teachers to the Rocky Mountain region, and occasionally to the Paluxy River, to see fossils for themselves. Dinosaurs, particularly those preserved in the Dinosaur National Monument, proved especially attractive, as did dinosaur tracks found in the ceiling of a coal mine in Utah. On one GRI trip in the

mid-1960s, not long before his death, the veteran evolution fighter and dinosaur-doubter Francis D. Nichol toured the mine. On emerging from the tunnel into the sunlight, he turned to a junior colleague and said, as if experiencing an epiphany, “There really were dinosaurs, weren’t there.” Surprised by this remark, his companion replied simply “Yes, F.D., there were.”<sup>26</sup>

By the 1960s, additional Adventists were joining the dinosaur discussion, adding little but, unlike Marsh, typically emphasizing the total extinction of dinosaurs during Noah’s flood. Among them were Ariel A. Roth (b. 1927), who obtained a doctorate in parasitology in 1955 from the University of Michigan, and Harold G. Coffin (b. 1926), who in 1955 had earned a PhD in invertebrate zoology from the University of Southern California.<sup>27</sup> In a required course on the philosophy of science for seniors at Walla Walla College, Coffin drew on Ellen White’s statements as evidence for the existence of “mammoth” antediluvian animals, which he was sure God had created on the sixth day of Creation. Although he believed that most dinosaurs had died during Noah’s Flood, he made an exception: for a few that may have survived on the Ark along with Noah’s family. At the end of his dinosaur lecture he raised the possibility that perhaps Satan had had something to do with the creation of dinosaurs or perhaps that they were a mere accident of nature and had to be destroyed to maintain the purity of God’s original creations.<sup>28</sup>

Satan, infrequently associated with dinosaurs before mid-century, appeared more and more frequently in works published afterwards. In 1957 Marsh raised the possibility that, between Creation and the Flood, Satan had been involved in developing dinosaurs from the divinely created kinds or *baramins*.<sup>29</sup> No Adventist, however, invoked Satan more actively than the influential Loma Linda physician-theologian Jack Provonsa (1920–2004). Arguing that Genesis provided

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only a “partial history” of Creation, he portrayed Satan as a “Universe-class” genetic engineer whose experiments, presumably before the Edenic creation, had produced dinosaurs and many other fossils. On viewing the specimens at the Dinosaur National Monument in Utah, he observed that they “really were much more appropriately termed demonic than divine.”<sup>30</sup>

Also embracing the devil was the bombastic TV evangelist Doug Batchelor (b. 1957), who believed that dinosaurs were “Satan’s counterfeit creatures from before the flood.” Jim Pinkowski, an artist associated with Batchelor’s Amazing Facts ministry, produced a dinosaur comic book that he hoped would counter Michael Crichton’s pro-evolution *Jurassic Park* books and movie. Pinkowski’s book included a memorable two-page cartoon showing “evil fallen angels stamped[ing] the dinosaurs toward Noah’s Ark, hoping to destroy it.” Fortunately for Noah and his family, “The angel of the Lord stopped and repelled both the evil angels and the dinosaurs!!”<sup>31</sup>

Another hypothesis of genetically engineered dinosaurs, with no role assigned to Satan, appeared in *Dinosaurs: An Adventist View* (2009), written by the attorney David C. Read—and enthusiastically endorsed as “compelling” by a former president of the General Conference, Neal C. Wilson (1920–2010). Drawing on Ellen G. White’s statements about pre-Flood amalgamation for theological justifi-

cation, Read proposed that “dinosaurs were the product of genetic engineering. The people who lived before the Flood created them by mixing the genetic elements of reptiles, birds, mammals, and probably a little of everything else, as well.” To lend legitimacy to his proposal, he noted that he was not the first Adventist to appeal to amalgamation. Indeed, Harold Coffin had tepidly done so in his *Creation—Accident or Design?* (1969), confessing that it was

*attractive to think that the now extinct bird called the Archaeopteryx . . . or the Permian amphibians . . . or the bizarre and confused assemblage of dinosaurs; or the so-called ape-men with what appear to be human and ape characteristics, were crosses between bird and reptile, fish and amphibian, different orders of reptiles, and man and ape respectively, but such suggestions are at present mere speculation.*

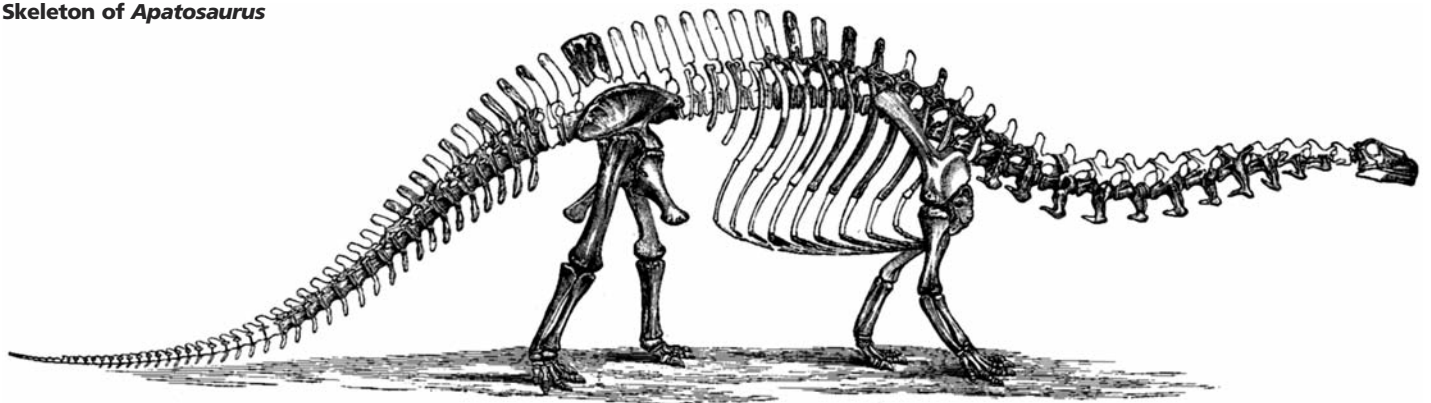
More surprising was Read’s finding, based on an informal poll of Adventists, that “about 75 percent of those who had a theory on the dinosaurs held the amalgamation theory.”<sup>32</sup>

Over the years, information about dinosaurs trickled down from the Adventist scientific community to young people in the church. In his high-school textbook *Biology: The Story of Life* (1950), the Walla Walla College biologist Ernest S. Booth (1915–1984) introduced generations of academy students to dinosaurs. Writing elsewhere, he called dinosaurs “probably the most interesting of all

**“There were a  
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—Ellen G. White

**Skeleton of *Apatosaurus***



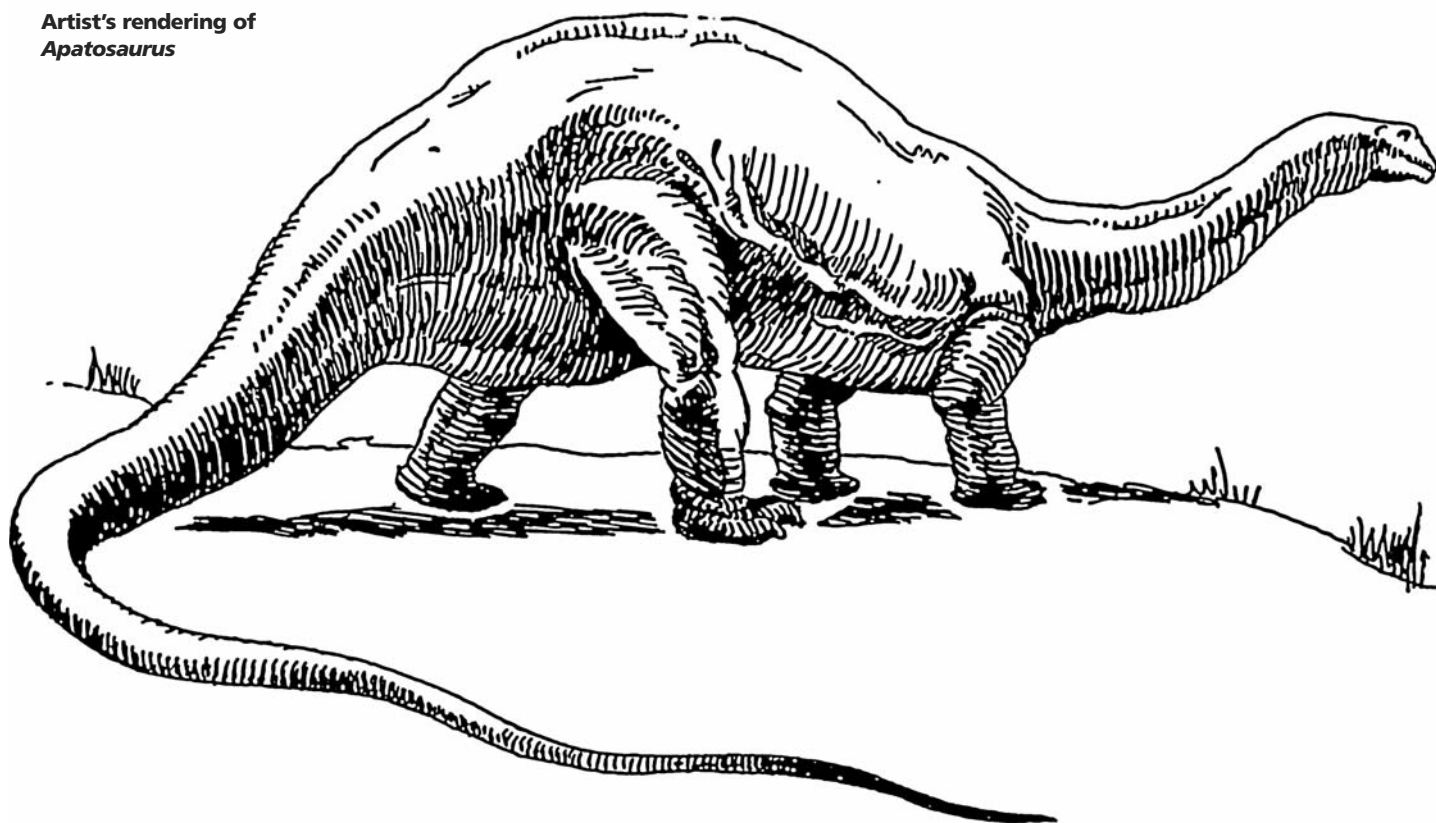
fossils” and urged Adventists to send fossil specimens to denominational college museums, “for by studying fossils we can help to show the world that the Flood came and destroyed man and animals.”<sup>33</sup> Among the colleges that created dinosaur museums were Pacific Union College, Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University), Southern Adventist University, and, most impressively, Southwestern Adventist University in Texas, where Arthur V. Chadwick (b. 1943) developed GPS technology “to measure and position bone and fossil placement within the dig areas.”<sup>34</sup> With Lee A. Spencer, a former colleague who subsequently joined the faculty at Southern Adventist University, Chadwick organized summer “Dinodigs” in Wyoming, which harvested thousands of fossils over the years.<sup>35</sup>

All the dinosaur enthusiasts mentioned so far worked within a Flood-geology paradigm. The only Adventist scientist to study dinosaurs without reference to the biblical deluge was James L. Hayward (b. 1948), a Washington State-trained zoologist who joined the faculty of Andrews University in 1986. An expert on gulls and other seabirds, he also studied, with occasional support from the National Science Foundation, dinosaur nesting ecology and eggshell fossilization in avian and

non-avian dinosaurs, and often published his research in such orthodox scientific venues as *Historical Biology*, *The Auk*, *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, and *Palaios*. More than any other Adventist scientist, he attempted to educate Adventists about the strengths and weaknesses of dinosaur research, nudging them toward accepting the scientific evidence. While recognizing that problems still remained for dinosaurologists, he questioned the continuing efforts of Flood geologists to squeeze the history of dinosaurs into the past 10,000 years or so, as most Adventists since Price had done. As an expert on dinosaur nests, he drew attention, for example, to the failure of Clark’s widely embraced ecological zonation theory to explain “the preservation of dinosaur nesting colonies,” noting that it “would have been impossible to float entire nesting colonies into their current position, one atop another, with eggs and young neatly arranged in ideally spaced nests.”<sup>36</sup>

With the emergence of dinosaurs as cultural icons in the years after the appearance of the book and movie *Jurassic Park* in the early 1990s, Adventist writers devoted increasing attention to informing children about the popular creatures. One of the most popular juvenile works was *Detective Zack: Danger at Dinosaur Camp* (1995) by

**Artist’s rendering of  
*Apatosaurus***





Jerry D. Thomas (b. 1959). In 2006 Elaine Graham-Kennedy (b. 1951), a trained geologist with an interest in dinosaur nests, published *Dinosaurs: Where Did They Come from and Where Did They Go?* (2006), with a foreword by Thomas, to inform Adventist parents and teachers about dinosaurs. “Years ago, some people were taught that dinosaurs never really lived,” she wrote. “They thought the dinosaur bones were fakes. Today, we know the dinosaurs really were alive because we find their tracks.” To promote her book, some Adventist Book Centers hosted dinosaur parties at which they distributed dinosaur-themed toys.<sup>37</sup>

By the early 21st century dinosaurs had been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Scientists, teachers, preachers, and administrators all welcomed them as real actors in the inspired history of life on earth. And yet . . . doubts remained. Addressing the “Questions Christians Ask” about dinosaurs, Graham-Kennedy, writing for a General Conference–published magazine in 2006, listed “Did dinosaurs really exist?” among the most frequently asked. To quell any doubts, she wrote:

*A few scattered bones would not be enough to conclude that dinosaurs really existed. However, the record of dinosaur bone material is quite extensive, and the variety of dinosaurs enhances our understanding of these creatures. Well-preserved tracks and eggs with embryos indicate that the dinosaurs were alive, walking around, and breeding. The tracks are the most powerful arguments for their existence. . . . By 1990, scientists had reconstructed 197 complete skeletons of dinosaurs. More have been found since then.*<sup>38</sup>

A few years later, Raúl Esperante (b. 1965), a vertebrate paleontologist working for the Geoscience Research Institute, addressed the same query in the widely read *Ministry* magazine. Denying the existence of dinosaurs had, he claimed, “become more widespread than we would like to admit,” especially given all of the scientific data available. His explanation:

fear that embracing dinosaurs would lead to accepting the unscriptural “notion of a biological evolution involving millions of years.” Thus for untold numbers of believers sitting in the pews of Adventist churches, it seemed theologically safer to continue denying their existence.<sup>39</sup> ■

**T Joe Willey** (below, right) received a PhD from University of



California at Berkeley. He taught neuroscience at Loma Linda University Medical School. Now retired, he writes on topics for Adventist progressive readers. His most avid

research deals with historical perspectives and science topics of special interest to Adventists, including evolution and the advancement of ideas.

**Ronald L. Numbers** (above, left) is Hilldale Professor Emeritus of the history of science and medicine and of religious studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he has taught for the past four decades. After earning his PhD in the history of science from the University of California, Berkeley, he taught briefly at Andrews University and Loma Linda University. He has written or edited more than thirty books, including *Prophets of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (3rd ed., 2008). *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design* (expanded edition, 2008), and *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion* (2008). He is past president of the History of Science Society, the American Society of Church History, and the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science.

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**The only  
Adventist  
scientist to  
study dinosaurs  
without refer-  
ence to the  
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was James L.  
Hayward.**

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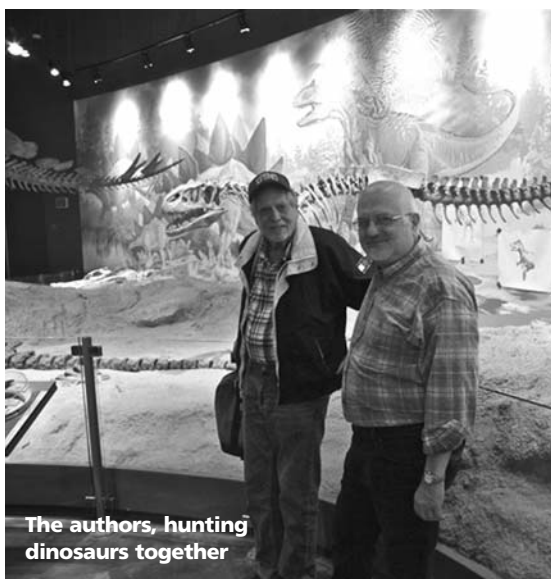
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**Coffin drew on  
Ellen White's  
statements as  
evidence for the  
existence of  
"mammoth"  
antediluvian  
animals.**



**The authors, hunting dinosaurs together**

PHOTO BY ROBERT BOND



**Satan,  
infrequently  
associated  
with dinosaurs  
before  
mid-century,  
appeared  
more and more  
frequently  
in works  
published  
afterwards.**

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