

CHANGING *Together*

BY BONNIE DWYER

In the very first issue of *Spectrum*, volume one, number one, Ariel A. Roth addressed the problems in Darwinism with a review of *Mathematical Challenges to the Neo-Darwinian Interpretation of Evolution*. In issue two, Richard Ritland wrote on “The Nature of the Fossil Record in the Rocks of Eastern Oregon.” Earle Hilgert addressed the “Theological Dimensions of the Christian Doctrine of Creation” in issue number three. By issue four in that first volume published in 1969, Ian M. Fraser was writing about “Problems of Creation and Science.” We’ve been writing about the subject of creation and evolution ever since. Search our journal archives and you will find seventy-five articles that have creation in the title; thirty-seven include the word “evolution.” Poetry and art about Genesis 1 have filled our pages. Kendra Haloviak Valentine and Gil Valentine even went through the Adventist Church hymnal to write about the songs of creation. We have published four books on the topic.

What is there left to say? Has the Adventist conversation about creation changed at all over the past fifty years? Having been designated as the originators of creationism within the scientific community, how are Adventists presenting our current understanding of creation to the world? Those were the questions that came to mind when I read a news note in the *Adventist Review* about an Origins Museum that was set to open in the Galápagos Islands in 2020. Curiosity about the museum, and wanting to publish a story about it, morphed into a journey to the islands that is featured in this issue of the journal. Because I was interested in the larger community



Boarding the plane to Baltra, Galápagos

conversation about creation, this spiritual journey would be an experience with a small representative community, meant to be shared with you, our readers.

On the plane from Quito, Ecuador to Baltra, Galápagos, the flight attendant concluded his instructions to the passengers with gratitude for their choosing Avianca Airlines, “where we are changing together.” The six of us on the back row of the plane looked at each other and said, “Yes, that’s our theme for the trip (and our challenge as a denomination).”

“How does change happen in Adventism?” is perhaps the pertinent question. Has our understanding of creation changed? Isn’t it all right there in Genesis 1? And if our understanding does change, does that mean that we don’t believe in a Creator God anymore? In this issue, Jerry Winslow and Larry Geraty speak eloquently about this aspect of our journey. James Hayward and Brian Bull show us the scientific story. Alita Byrd shares ideas from personal conversations with some of the trip participants. For me, one of the lessons from the various birds and animals that we viewed on the islands was adaptability.



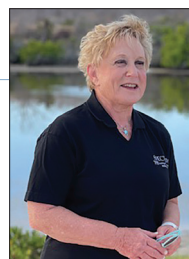
A group reflection of the Galápagos trip

Our guide, Omar Medina, emphasized the adaptations made by marine iguanas, for instance, to live on an island bereft of their normal food. They went into the water, and their bodies responded by exhaling the salt from the ocean, giving them white crested heads. Walking across vast lava fields that looked like moonscapes and then suddenly coming across a green oasis with a pool of water and flamingos, one saw the persistence of life. Such persistence and adaptation were the key to survival and how change happened. At the Origins Museum, we appreciated the positive approach of the displays, and the warm hospitality of the personnel. It seems to me that we do talk about creation differently now in some ways. We celebrate it more—we even have an official Creation Sabbath—and argue a little less, although our differences in understanding it are probably expanding, not contracting. We’re more generous in acknowledging the differences among us.

Change is a challenging word within our community, and not only in the conversation about creation and science. How about discussing changes in the way that we read the Bible? That is currently a hot topic. In this issue, Kendra Haloviak Valentine demonstrates how multiple kinds of readings can enrich our understanding of the biblical text. James Londis draws parallels between our discoveries about Ellen White and her writings and how the Bible was composed. Recognizing the role of the Holy

Spirit in our reading, our listening, our conversations, is the key to applying the text to the current context.

Finally, with this issue, I conclude my editorship of *Spectrum*. My gratitude to my supportive family, the board of directors, staff, writers, readers, members, and donors, overflows. Contemplating the past twenty-three years, and asking myself the question about how my mind has changed and stayed the same regarding Adventism, I’d have to say that I’ve come to love the Church in a way that I never thought possible in my youth, when every perceived blemish within the community hurt like a dagger. There are incredible, generous people/minds among us. I know that because I’ve met them and worked with them, developing copy and reporting stories. I’ve learned that forgiveness is how we move forward. Change comes slowly, almost imperceptibly, but it does come. Look for it in your heart. That’s where it begins. From there, when it is shared, we change together.



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