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editorial : creation



Jonatan Tejel
Editor

CREATOR | CREATED | CREATION

I have long been a student of nature and creation. I always enjoy the vastness of space with its innumerable stars. I love to observe the smallest creatures that live just beneath the soil. I enjoy dendrochronology—tree ring dating—it tells me how long the tree stood there before it was hewn down. I've climbed huge mountains, and believe me, the view from the top of a mountain is unimaginable. As a certified, international diver, I have dived into the Mediterranean waters surrounded by hundreds of fishes, and I don't have words to express how wonderful it is. Nature is wonderful and full of contrasts.

Marvels are all around us. The most impressive one is the human being itself. It astonishes me not only how we have been created physically, but how we relate with other human beings. I enjoy talking with kids; they are lovely and they listen to you, absorbing every single word you say. I love to talk with young people; for the most part they are transparent and honest. They are not afraid to ask you anything, and their openness and searching for truth may even put you on the spot. I look forward to my talks with seniors; they are like an encyclopedia—their pages filled with experiences and wisdom—and I continue to learn so much from them. “How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Psalm 104:24).

How wonderful is the human being, created in God's image (Genesis 1:26).

I guess you can say I am a nature enthusiast. Since I was kid I remember my parents taking me to the mountains near where we lived in Madrid, Spain. We spent time in nature, admiring the trees, the flowers, the birds, the butterflies, the caterpillars and so I've learned from my younger days that everything has been put in place by God. There is no doubt about it “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Recently my wife and I bought a microscope, which completely captivated our two girls, Astrid and Edera. Every week we would look at different nature slides, opening our eyes to a completely different world—through the lenses of the microscope. There are so many beautiful things to see and learn about creation every day.

The quietness of nature. I love to spend time just looking at a sunset or a beautiful sunrise—sometimes I take a walk and talk to God in prayer. There is something serene in the sound of the birds in the quiet of the early morning that makes me think about the Garden of Eden. I think of how God might have walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. Eden was no doubt more spectacular than the earth's present condition, but still, God reminds us of His wonderful creation in nature.

When you see a beautiful painting, you want to see the signature, the name of the painter.

Creation is so good. But it means nothing without the Creator. I know there are people who love nature, ecology, geology... and yes, many of us want to help protect our planet, but for me, it's not enough just to think about helping the planet. Nature has to drive me to the Creator. When you see a beautiful painting, you first look on the canvas for the signature, the name of the painter. God is the Painter, the Master Artist, the Potter, and we are the clay, the material in His hands.

“Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands” (Psalm 119:73).

The very grandest marvel of all is knowing *The Creator*. Please meet with Him every day. ●

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DINOSAURS?

WHAT WE CANNOT EXPLAIN DOES NOT NECESSARILY LACK EXPLANATION. THE BIBLE SAYS NOTHING AND THAT PROVIDES POTENTIALLY FAS

BY RAÚL ESPERANTE, PH.D



Raúl Esperante, Ph.D. Dr. Raul Esperante has a degree in Biology from the University of Valencia in Spain, and a doctorate in paleontology from the University of Loma Linda, California. Since 2001 he has been working for the Geoscience Research Institute in Loma Linda in research and teaching. He is interested in studying the processes that lead to fossilization and how they relate to depositional rates and time. He currently conducts research on marine mammal fossils in Peru and Spain. He has given lectures at universities and museums in the United States, Europe, Central and South America, Australia and New Zealand. He is a member of several scientific societies, including the Geological Society of America, Geological Society of Spain, Spanish Society of Paleontology and SEPM.

Some years ago, after I had lectured to Adventist university students and young professionals, a pastor approached me and asked, “Could you please talk to my wife and convince her that dinosaurs really did exist?”

This request was not a joke. The pastor’s wife was a school teacher and she refused to teach her students that dinosaurs had ever existed. Right away, I realized that behind her denial of dinosaurs was a struggle to understand the mystery that perplexes some and fascinates others: how do we explain the past existence (and extinction) of dinosaurs within a biblical context?

Unfortunately, this denial of the existence of dinosaurs has become more widespread than we would like to admit, even taking into account our scientific society with highly advanced research in all fields, including geology and paleontology. These specific sciences seem out of place in our schools and colleges and are hardly considered by our Adventist youth when choosing a profession. As a Christian and a paleontologist, I must daily face the widespread notion of a biological evolution involving millions of years, and I can understand that some people fear becoming involved in a philosophy that may prove to be contradictory to Scripture.

However, it is possible to study fossils, rocks, and evolution without renouncing our faith. If we are to appreciate the beauty and mystery of earth’s Creation and subsequent history, a great deal depends on how and what our teachers and pastors transmit in our schools and churches. In this article, I outline ways for students, teachers, parents, and pastors to productively think about the place of dinosaurs within a biblical paradigm in a faith-affirming way.

BLE SAY ABOUT DINOSAURS?

CK EXISTENCE, BUT IS SIMPLY ANOTHER MATTER, AMONG OTHERS, ABOUT WHICH THE
FASCINATING QUESTIONS FOR US TO STUDY USING THE FOSSIL RECORD AND OTHER DATA.

This article was first published in the December 2009 issue of Ministry magazine.

THE MUSEUM DINOSAUR

If you have ever visited a natural history museum, you probably saw spectacular and massive dinosaur skeletons. In other places, you can see animated reproductions of dinosaurs which, in the case of television documentaries, seem to be alive and real. When viewing these animations, the visitor should take into account several details.

First of all, we should accept that dinosaurs did exist for a period of time on earth and that, in certain places, they seemed to be numerous. Paleontologists have found evidence of their existence in sediments on every continent, including Antarctica. This evidence includes bones, eggs,

nests, and footprints. These dinosaur footprints and tracks are abundant and cannot positively be associated with any other creature except what we now call dinosaurs.

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN THE PAST EXISTENCE (AND EXTINCTION) OF DINOSAURS WITHIN A BIBLICAL CONTEXT?

Secondly, we should be aware that skeletons found in museums are typically not actual bones, but rather replicas. The original bones are too valuable and delicate to be exposed to the general public, and therefore, are usually stored in safe places within the museum. Furthermore, “complete” skeletons in museums are often assembled

from replicas of bones from various specimens, which, on occasions, come from very distant places. This does not mean the skeletons are just cobbled together. Paleontologists are able to piece together the body architecture of dinosaurs even though they might not have all the skeleton elements of the same creature, and thus, the replicas we see in museums are reasonably trustworthy.

Some nearly complete specimens unearthed, including the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, are exhibited in Chicago’s Field Museum. The animations seen on television, however, are much more speculative, especially regarding skin color, physiology, behavior, and so forth.

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dinosaurs disappeared
dinosaurs and humans
behavior,
dinosaurs and the Bible



PHOTO: RAÚL ESPERANTE

The skull of a Daspletosaurus, a carnivore dinosaur

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GRI Web site: www.grisda.org

SWAU: <http://dinodig.swau.edu/>

Discovery Institute: www.discovery.org

Access Research Network: www.arn.org

DINOSAURS DISAPPEARED

In the geologic column, dinosaur remains appear in rock layers that paleontologists call Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous. These layers of sedimentary rock, stacked one on top of the other, show specific characteristics, including those of certain fossil species such as mollusks, reptiles, fish, dinosaurs, and microscopic organisms (diatoms and algae, among others) that once filled the oceans. Some paleontologists believe that dinosaurs, as well as other groups of animals and plants, suddenly disappeared as a consequence of a gigantic meteorite impact 65 million years ago. Others doubt this model for a variety of reasons.

Most creationist scientists believe that dinosaurs disappeared, together with other species, during the worldwide Flood described in the book of Genesis. This scenario could include meteorite activity resulting in gigantic tsunamis, volcanic activity, and the emission of carbon dioxide, sulphides, and other chemicals harmful to plants and animals. Therefore, the idea of a meteorite impacting the earth is not necessarily incompatible with the biblical model of the Flood.

In spite of a lack of consensus among scientists about what made dinosaurs disappear, the media and pseudoscientific press have decided that the meteor impact theory is

the only valid explanation. This is far from reality. Dinosaurs did disappear, but we do not know exactly when or why. However, the possibility of their extinction during the Genesis Flood (with or without the associated impact) can be viewed as a plausible scientific hypothesis and deserves consideration.

DINOSAURS AND HUMAN BEINGS

Much has been written and argued regarding certain evidence that supposedly shows dinosaur and human remains together. The evidence includes what are interpreted to be human footprints together with dinosaur footprints, as well as prehistoric pictures in caves and on pottery where human figures appear together with exceptional creatures very similar to current reconstructions of these giant reptiles. However, rigorous scientific study has shown that these features have been misinterpreted.

Let us analyze, for example, the alleged “human” and dinosaur prints found in the riverbed of the Paluxy River in Texas. A few decades ago, some enthusiastic scientists proclaimed that this was sure evidence against the theory of evolution and proof for the occurrence of a worldwide Flood. Intrigued by these statements, more than one evolutionist and creationist scientist

studied in detail the marks found on the rocks. In that particular place, the riverbed and bank have many marks due to water erosion. We can tell the true dinosaur tracks from the *pseudoprints* due to the marks left on the rocks from the circulating water. With a little imagination, we can make out prints similar to those of almost any animal.

Laboratory studies have been done also. If a print is authentic, we would expect to see the layers of sediment in the rock depressed under the print, from the weight of the animal. To test for this characteristic deformation, the scientists cut the print crosswise and observed that no such deformation was present. They concluded that the shape was not a real human footprint but instead the result of erosion, either by nature or by a human forger. Later studies showed that certain “prints” and drawings had been deliberately placed by fanatic defenders of the human-dinosaur coexistence idea. This kind of unfortunate forgery may have been produced by those who are overeager to present irrefutable evidence to support their belief in Creation and the Flood; others may do it simply to

exploit believers in some way or to make money.

On other occasions, disbelievers in the biblical account of history were the ones to take advantage of the naïveté of these fanatics to create false proof and, thus, cause mockery and rejection among the academic world. Faking fossils and other “evidence” harms the true research among creationist scientists; most of these researchers have learned to be careful in the accuracy of their statements.

DINOSAURS AND THE BIBLE

The story of Creation in Genesis 1 tells of a God who created sea life as well as birds on the fifth day and the rest of the animals on the sixth day. Although reptiles are listed

among the animals created, dinosaurs are not specifically mentioned. This should not surprise us, because in Moses’ day (the author of the book of Genesis), the word *dinosaur* did not exist, nor was he under the obligation to specifically mention them; he didn’t mention numerous other groups of animals either. For example, Genesis does not mention beetles, sharks, starfish, moss, algae, or any number of other groups of organisms.

The fact that, in the Bible, dinosaurs were not mentioned by name does not prove that God did not create them—nor does the strange appearance that they have in museum replicas. Currently, there are many animals just as strange in appearance as dinosaurs—consider deep-sea anglerfish, platypuses, and kangaroos—and they don’t draw that much attention. Some people believe that dinosaurs appeared as the result of the curse after Adam’s and Eve’s sin, but the Bible does not shed any light on this, nor does it explicitly identify which animals changed as a result

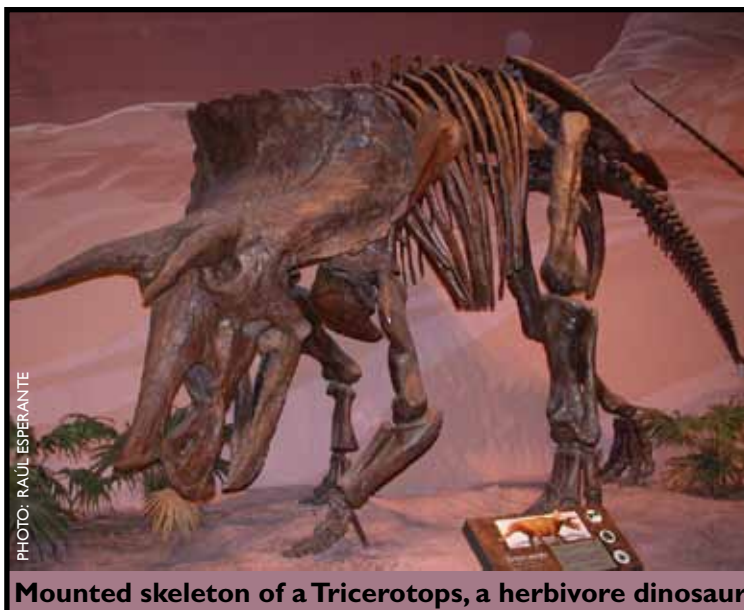


PHOTO: RAUL ESPERANTE

Mounted skeleton of a Triceratops, a herbivore dinosaur

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dinosaurs and Ellen White
conclusion

of sin and about what kind of changes these might have been.

Most creationist scientists believe that dinosaurs disappeared during or shortly after the Genesis Flood. Again, the Bible does not give us a clue regarding the fate of these animals. The fact that dinosaurs disappeared during a worldwide catastrophe that we call the *Flood* is a hypothesis that we should seriously consider but only through scientific research, and that's because of the silence in the Bible on the matter. The demonstration of this hypothesis should come from geological and paleontological data, not by forcing the Bible to say what it does not say.

Last of all, there are people who think dinosaurs survived after the Flood and disappeared a short while later because they could not adjust to a new environment. This is also a possibility, since some dinosaurs could have been inside the ark, then disappeared during the postdiluvian colonization. The Bible mentions two strange creatures, behemoth (Job 40:15–18) and leviathan (Job 41:1), which some interpret

as possible examples of postdiluvian dinosaurs. However, most Bible scholars do not accept this explanation, and the words *behemoth* and *leviathan* are usually translated as “hippopotamus” and “crocodile,” respectively, and therefore, are not related to dinosaurs.

DINOSAURS AND ELLEN WHITE

The term *dinosaur* was first used by the British zoologist, Richard Owen, in 1842, to name a group of reptile fossils then recently discovered. The use of the term spread as new discoveries took place throughout Europe and North America. Around the time Ellen White wrote her first statements on Creation, the Flood, science, and faith (in 1864), the term *dinosaur* had already found its way into scientific books and newspapers. However, Ellen White never used this term or any other similar word referring to these extinct reptiles.

In a brief declaration in 1864, she wrote, “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.”¹ This has become a favorite statement for some Adventists who believe it explains fossils with intermediate characteristics² and other extinct organisms, including dinosaurs. Many people read into these words what we know as genetic engineering, indicating that in prediluvian times people practiced crossbreeding, including animals and human beings, resulting in strange biological hybrid forms.

However, this interpretation presents various problems. The first rises from the difficulty of defining what Ellen White meant by “amalgamation.” Thorough studies on this statement have not shed a definitive answer, and we conclude that we do not know exactly what the prophet wanted to say in her statement.

A second problem arises in the application of “amalgamation” to real cases in the fossil record.

If “amalgamation” meant “hybrid,” how could we recognize them among fossils or among modern day plants and animals? How could we determine which species are hybrid before the Flood, if they actually existed at all? Some have answered this question by saying that hybrid species did not survive the Flood, precisely because God didn't want them to. But this sort of reasoning is a circular fallacy because the criteria we use to differentiate hybrids (extinction) is precisely the same as we use to define what we would like to differentiate (hybrids). In other words, amalgamations explain their own disappearance, and their disappearance defines what they are.

After the previous statement, she goes on by saying that “since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals.”³ In the first place, it is important to emphasize that White says amalgamations of and not between man and animals, as some have chosen to read.

Secondly, if amalgamation means intermediate forms, hybrids or strange-engineered creatures, what are the criteria to recognize them? If these were formed after the Flood, they likely became fossils, and others would have survived up to now. How can we differentiate one from the other fossils and living organisms that are not the result of hybrids? White gives us no clues on that.

Further on, in the same text, White states that she was “shown that very large, powerful animals existed before the flood, which do not now exist.”⁴ In another text, she states that “[t]here were a class of very large animals which perished at the flood. God knew that the strength of man would decrease, and these mammoth animals could not be controlled by feeble man.”⁵

This statement, among others, regarding life before the Flood suggests that the prophet was referring to the existence of a wide variety of animals that did not survive in the ark. However, we are not sure of the meaning of

this statement; we do not know what these “very large, powerful animals” were. However, her statements are not really far off from the scientific description of dinosaurs. Biologically speaking, they are somehow confusing, not only because some of them are gigantic, but also their body parts (legs, neck, tail, brain, and so forth) are, in some cases, out of proportion. Even paleontologists do not agree on whether the dinosaurs were warm or cold-blooded.

The truth is that many people have struggled to find in White’s statements support for the idea that dinosaurs were not created by God, but rather the result of hybrids before the Flood, and thus, condemned to disappear in the worldwide catastrophe. This might be a possibility, but, after a thorough study of her writings, we find no unequivocal support for such conclusions. We do not know for sure what White wanted to express, and we should wait until we reach a better understanding of her statements.

CONCLUSION

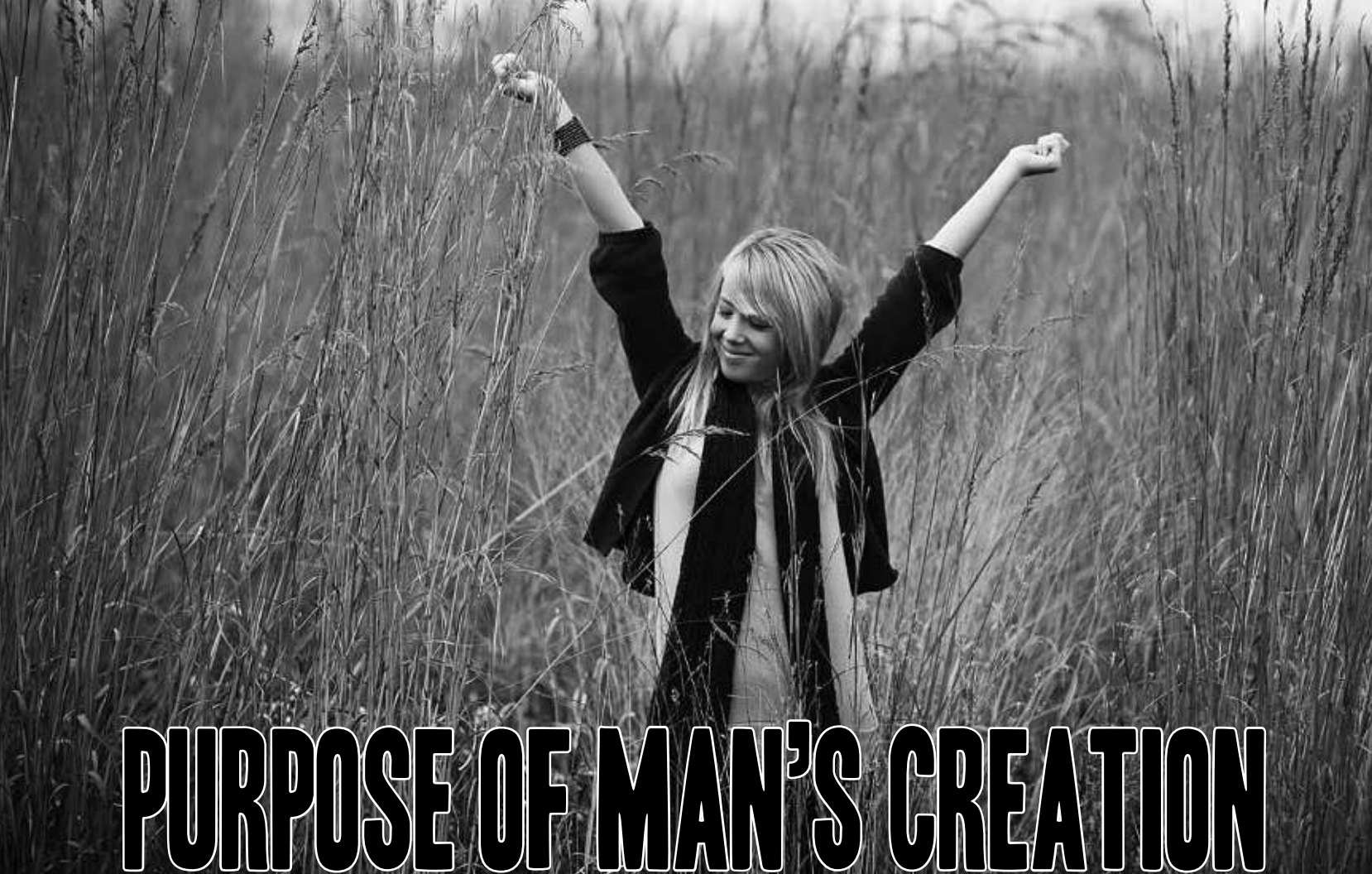
Scripture does not mention the existence of dinosaurs—at least not as we now understand them—neither before nor after the Genesis Flood. Ellen White also does not mention them, and we are not sure of the meaning of her statements regarding “large animals.” Neither the Bible nor Ellen White say *why* they do not mention them. This is very important, since the fact that the Bible probably does not mention dinosaurs is not evidence that they never existed. What we cannot explain does not necessarily lack existence, but is simply another matter, among others, about which the Bible says nothing and that provides potentially fascinating questions for us to study using the fossil record and other data.

We should teach our students and church members that dinosaurs *did* exist. We have clear evidence: we have dinosaur bones, teeth, eggs, footprints, and even impressions of their skin.

Furthermore, at some point in history they disappeared. Their extinction could have taken place before, during, or after the Genesis Flood. Like the rest of the fossils, the origin and disappearance of dinosaurs are wrapped in mystery. For this reason, they require careful and rigorous study, something Christians with the interest and talent should be encouraged to do. Dinosaurs do not challenge or compromise our faith in the Bible’s teachings. ●

References:

1. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3 (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), p. 75.
2. Intermediate fossils, also known as transition fossils, are those which, according to the theory of evolution, show mixed characteristics between two groups of animals or plants that are considered consecutive in time. An example of this is reptiles that look like mammals, which are considered as an intermediate step in evolution from the first towards the second. These transition fossils are the source of much debate among scientists.
3. White, p. 75; emphasis added.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
5. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), p. 121.



PURPOSE OF MAN'S CREATION

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

This article was previously published in the *Review & Herald*, February 11, 1902.

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth. They were to live in close communion with heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives.

Satan determined to defeat God’s plan. He began by bringing jealousy into the heavenly courts. To many of the angels he communicated his disaffection, and there was war in heaven, which ended in the expulsion of Satan and his sympathizers.

Thrust out of heaven, Satan determined to set up his kingdom on the earth. Through him sin entered the world, and death by sin. By listening to his misrepresentations, Adam fell, and the flood gates of woe were opened on the world.

There was no excuse for Adam's transgression. All his wants were generously supplied. Only one prohibition was laid upon him. God said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

This prohibition Satan used as a means of insinuating his suggestions. "God doth know," he said

And God said to Adam, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground;

He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

This lesson is for all mankind. By it God teaches that His word is to be sacredly respected, and His commands implicitly obeyed.

Through the ages that followed the expulsion of Adam from Eden, Satan strove to instill his evil principles into the minds

blind, they made no effort to receive enlightenment, choosing rather to remain in darkness.

Christ's miracle of restoring the sight of the man who had been born blind was a convincing evidence of the divinity of His mission. When the people saw the transformation in the man, they said to him, "How were thine eyes opened?" He answered, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine



The Lord calls upon His Church to arise and shine amid the moral darkness.

to the woman, "that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And the Lord God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So

of men, till, when Christ came to the earth, He found His chosen people filled with the selfsame jealousy that led Satan to stir up rebellion in heaven. The Jewish leaders would not receive Christ, because His coming and His work were not in harmony with their belief. And they were jealous of Him; for they saw that His influence over the people was greater than theirs. Spiritually

eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not."

Then they brought him to the Pharisees, and "the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed; and do see."

But with hearts hardened by prejudice and unbelief, the Pharisees said, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

And the man answered, "Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were

not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

So the Pharisees made themselves even more blind than they already were; and not content with closing their own eyes, they tried to close the eyes of the man who had been healed. They saw that Jesus was working wonderful miracles, and they hated Him, fearing that He would be honored above them. Their hatred grew until they crucified Him, and mocked Him as He hung on the cross.

Can we afford to tamper with jealousy,—the cause of so much of the misery in the world today? Is it not best to work on Christ's plan,— the plan outlined in the words, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"?

In the condition of the world today we see the terrible result of living for self. God's Spirit is being withdrawn from the earth, which in its moral pollution is as it was before the flood,

and as it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. So great is the corruption of the cities, that the moral atmosphere is as poisonous as the atmosphere of a pesthouse. From generation to generation sin has demoralized society, bringing a continual increase of depravity and degradation. Soon, from the highest authority in the universe will come the word, Shorten the days, lest no flesh be saved.

The world is becoming more and more devoted to the service of sin. Each age, as it passes, bequeaths to the one following its accumulation of contamination. Satan is the god of the world. With despotic power he rules in palace and temple, working with intense earnestness to overthrow every plan set in operation to counteract the increasing disregard of God's law. The destructive power of his agencies is dedicated to bringing destruction and death into the world. In his hands temptation has become a science. Under his control, men sin by rule.

THE ENEMY
WORKS WITH GREAT
POWER THROUGH
CHILDREN OF
DISOBEDIENCE
WHO ARE CHURCH
MEMBERS. THE
LIFE OF ONE WHO
IS A PROFESSED
CHRISTIAN, AND
AT THE SAME TIME
AN INSTRUMENT IN
SATAN'S HANDS, IS
A TERRIBLE POWER
FOR EVIL.

Is it not time for those who claim to believe the truth to awaken? Shall not the people who have had great light depart from all iniquity? Shall they not set a more Christlike example? Shall they not show with greater distinctness the power of the truth to sanctify? The Lord calls upon His Church to arise and shine amid the moral darkness. His people are to

be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

If we realized the solemnity of the time in which we are living, if we realized how greatly the world needs to see Christ's grace revealed in His followers, we would work more earnestly and diligently for the Master. Let those who claim to believe the truth put their belief into practice. Let all unite in carrying out God's will. All are to work in perfect harmony, receiving from the same source their influence and their power.

Many who profess to love God and keep His commandments are making void His law. God is greatly

dishonored by the failure of professed Christians to reveal the unity that should be seen among His children. No one can enter the heavenly portals who fails at practicing the great principle of love. Those who love God will love one another. They will show by a Christlike life that they are members of the royal family.

It is the plan of God that every conference, every church, shall cherish the spirit of sympathy and helpfulness. We are to build one another up in the most holy faith, seeking the impartation of the Holy Spirit, that in clear, bright rays we may reflect the light

of heaven. Shall we allow the enemy to enter to cause discord and separation, to rob families of happiness and the Church of usefulness? Shall we allow him to use us to prevent the great and blessed work of reformation? Who can say, "It is well with my soul," while evil-thinking and evil-speaking are allowed to rule in the heart?

Christianity transforms the character, bringing the will into harmony with the will of God. The Lord's people are plainly distinguished from worldlings because they follow God's plan. To those who are inclined to sow the seeds of jealousy and

envy, Christ says, "Ye must be born again." God grant that they may be thoroughly converted.

When the truth is practiced, when God's people are obedient to all His commandments, there will be no contention as to who is the greatest. There will be no strife for the supremacy. Then will be cherished the love that brings peace and joy into the home, and usefulness into the Church. Then will the Redeemer be honored. Then will be obeyed the injunction: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." ●

LEADERSHIP

[>>ministries>>adventist youth>>discussion questions](http://www.gcyouthministries.org)

Howard Gardner, in his book *Leading Minds*, suggests that there are both direct and indirect forms of leadership. Whereas Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin wielded direct influence over others, thinkers such as Albert Einstein exercised indirect influence over people that in many ways was more profound and long-lasting than direct leadership. Thinkers lead with their minds. They cut new paths through traditional ways of thinking and solving problems. They envision new paradigms. They break through stereotypical, limiting traditions and offer fresh insights into organizational effectiveness.

Consider Jesus, the perfect model of leadership. This is how he led. Although he had a small coterie of disciples, he exerted tremendous influence through his teaching. Jesus spent great amounts of time studying Scripture and praying. Jesus told his disciples, "All things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). As a result, Christ radically challenged the commonly accepted beliefs and customs of his day. He presented a profoundly different view of God and of salvation than was commonly held. In his Sermon on the Mount, he put forth a standard of living that was breathtakingly fresh and different than anyone had ever imagined. Jesus commanded no armies; he controlled no organizations; he had no access to large treasures; yet his influence has endured and multiplied for over two thousand years.



IDEAPAC

TOOLBOX

14 The Contest

by Scott Fogg

Focus: Creation

16 Love

by Scott Fogg

Focus: Creation



A graduate of Southern Adventist University's film school, **Scott Fogg** has been writing skits and plays since he was in seventh grade. He wrote the book *Power Skits for Youth & Young Adults*, and co-wrote the screenplay for the feature film *The Secret of the Cave*, as well as the feature-length play *Nighthawks*. He has a passion for writing and is always looking for new and interesting ways to get the gospel message to those who would rather sit in a movie seat than a church pew.

THE CONTEST

CAST

Host, Charlie, Chuck, 3 Stagehands

PROPS

Two trays, three flashlights, balloon, bucket of dirt, pin, watch, air horn, bottle of water, paper bag

BIBLE TEXT

Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3

Aim: To challenge people to continue searching for the truth, and once they've found it, continue to examine it that they might know as much about it as possible. We need to dig deeper than the clichés and the one-liners. We must also understand “the other side” of every argument. Knowing the opposition will not only challenge us to find a way to reach them where they are, but will teach us about ourselves and our own beliefs.

The host enters the stage.

Host: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. We have prepared something a little special for you this evening. A contest. Faith and science have been at odds for years now and while there are some—such as myself—who believe

that two could be just swell friends, it seems most people would rather pit them against one another. So tonight we shall cater to your whim and have them face-off. Representing the Creator of the Cosmos, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, we have Charlie.

Charlie enters and stands at stage right.

Host: And representing the godless, the faithless, and the empirical, we have Chuck.

Chuck enters and stands at stage left.

Host: Charlie, Chuck, you understand who or what you're representing and what that means?

Charlie: Yep.

Chuck: Sure do.

Host: Very good! Because the challenge we're setting before the both of you is to recreate the origin of life.

A stagehand enters, carrying the two trays. (S)he sets one tray in front of Charlie and one tray in front of Chuck—and then exits again.

Chuck: What?

Host: You have five minutes! And begin!

Chuck: Um . . .

Charlie: Okay, could I get some light? So I can see what I'm working with?

The three stagehands rush onto stage, armed with flashlights. They shine their lights on Charlie's tray.

Charlie: Ah. Good.

Chuck: Um . . .

Charlie: I need dirt (gestures to Chuck)—would you like some?

Chuck: I'm fine, thank you.

One of the stagehands hands his flashlight to one of the other stagehands and the runs off stage. Chuck, on stage left, pulls out a balloon and begins inflating it. The stagehand that left re-enters with a bucket of dirt. Charlie sifts his fingers through it. He dumps into his tray.

Charlie: Very good. Now I need water.

A different stagehand, the one holding the two flashlights, hands them to the empty-handed stagehand. Then he pulls out of his pocket a bottle of water and hands it to Charlie. Chuck, on stage left, ties off his balloon and sets in his tray. Chuck pulls out a pin and stabs the balloon, popping it.

Host: Whoa, do we have a winner already?

Chuck: Nope. Now we wait.

Host: For how long?

Chuck: Could I borrow your watch?

As the host relinquishes his watch, Charlie opens his bottle of water and pours it into the dirt (for the sake of the play, the dirt should be slip or some sort of clay).

Charlie: Very good!

Charlie works the dirt into clay. He then rolls a ball of clay into a long, thin

“rope.” He cuts it in two and holds them up.

Charlie: A snake and a worm!

Charlie goes back to the clay. He attaches larger clumps of clay to the “snake”, adds some legs to the clumps and then holds it back up.

Charlie: Giraffe!

Chuck starts to get nervous. He pulls out a paper bag, inflates it, and pops it over his tray. Nothing.

Charlie: (holds up his next creation) Duck-billed platypus!

Chuck pulls out an air horn and blows it at his tray. Nothing. He tries again. And again. Still nothing.

Charlie: Weiner dog!

Chuck blows the air horn into his tray again.

Charlie: Could I borrow your hand for a second?

Chuck: Sure.

Chuck approaches Charlie, who hands him some clay.

Charlie: Hold that.

Host: Aw, look at them work together.

Chuck: Quiet, you.

Charlie attaches some arms and legs to the lump of clay Chuck's holding.

Chuck: What are we making?

Charlie: You don't know?

Charlie puts a head on top.

Charlie: We've made man.

Host: And . . . done!

Chuck: Wait, that's not fair! The theory of evolution is one that is grounded in scientific fact! This little charade doesn't prove anything! It's not my fault that it takes millions and

millions of years for life to come from nothing and then evolve into something substantial!

Charlie: It might not “prove” anything but it shows us that you're more comfortable with having absolutely nothing tray—and asking us to believe in you and your theory—than believing in Someone who could fill your tray with the snap of His fingers. I was willing to let you help me, but you were completely unwilling to let me help you. It's become a cliché but it's still so true that it deserves repeating: To believe all life came from nothing, with nothing to guide it, takes just as much faith as it does to believe in a Creator. I would go so far as to say that the debate over creationism versus evolution is not one over how the earth got started, but man would rather not be indebted to a higher power. People want to forget “the impossible.” It makes them feel safer.

Host: I think we're done here. Good night, everybody!

THE END

LOVE

CAST : Joe (or Jill) Adventist

BIBLE TEXTS : 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 1 John 4:16; and Genesis 1:1

For this monologue, JOE ADVENTIST enters and stands at center stage.

JOE ADVENTIST:

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of the Species*, in which he hypothesizes that all life comes from a common ancestor and the differences we see in each species came from incremental steps and changes that occurred over millions and millions of years. “Survival of the fittest” is the phrase Darwin uses to explain how certain animals lived, certain animals died, and how other animals were able to identify the traits they needed to evolve if they were going to survive. There’s only one problem with “survival of the fittest.” **(pause)**

It does not take into account “love.” **(pause)**

Love. Ask anyone who’s ever had their heart broken. Love is a weakness. Sure, it can be a source of strength. It can embolden you to do things—incredibly stupid things.

Like asking a girl out—a girl you have absolutely no chance of actually dating. But you have to ask her out. You have to let her know. Just in

case. It’s a painful, awful thing, love. Something we should have evolved away from *millions* of years ago. If life, and all of existence, is survival of the fittest, what part does love play? **(pause)**

Ask any artist. Love is the source of every creation. Ask any parent. Love is the source of life. Love. Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not boast.

Love is not proud. Love is not rude. Love is not self-seeking. Love is not easily angered.

Love keeps no record of wrong doings. Love does not delight in evil. Love rejoices with truth. Love protects. Love trusts. Love always hopes. Love always preserves. Love never fails. **(pause)**

Whether we like it or not, we are beings of love. And there is no place for love in survival of the fittest. And God is love. In the beginning Love created the Heavens and the Earth.

THE END



THIS IS IT!

This is the year you’ll read your Bible through and then wonder why you’ve never read it all the way through before. Of course, it helps to crawl into Dwain Esmond’s head and watch how things play out from his inimitable perspective (go ahead, look it up!), which makes it almost painless!

Seriously, you’ll encounter some people in the Bible who act just like people you know. People who asked hard questions and dealt with some of the very same issues you struggle with. And through it all, God’s tough decisions reveal a Creator deeply invested in His creation. (Yeah, God’s faced some pretty hairy situations too. Remember, He’s working with humans here.)

So carve a few minutes out of your hectic schedule to spend some time in God’s Word every day. You’ll be blown away by how not boring it is!

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YOU CHOOSE

BY CÉSAR GONZALEZ

Luke 23:18-21 With one voice they cried out, ‘Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!’ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Jesus and Barabbas had a lot in common. They were both Jews about the same age living during the time of Roman rule. They were both leaders of a revolution that sought the freedom of the Jews. Jesus was the Son of God, Barabbas means “son of the father.” They were both arrested and brought to Pilate at the same time, just before the Passover feast.

On the surface, you might think that these two men might be alike, maybe even friends, but the two couldn’t have been more different. Although they were both trying to free the Jews, they were going about it in completely different ways.

The irony here is tremendous. Barabbas was an antagonist. A symbol of earthly ideals, he was an insurrectionist, revolting against the Romans and killing in his attempt to free the Jews. He is seen as a political savior for the earthly liberty of the Jews.

Jesus is a heavenly Savior. One who healed and resurrected people—the exact opposite of Barabbas. He offered eternal freedom from a much greater oppressor, and promised a home far superior than any political state could even propose.

When the crowd was given the opportunity to choose between the two, they chose the earthly, the passing. They sent to the cross the divine and eternal.

You have the same choice today. Before you are the temporal, the quick fix and the short-term gain. You can have what makes you feel good and safe for a moment. You can go along with the crowd, choose the cheap imitation.

Or you can choose the real thing—real peace, real love, real freedom. You can do the unpopular thing and stand on your own only to realize that God is holding you up in His arms, and that there is no stronger, safer fortress.

Today you get to choose Barabbas or Jesus. Who will it be? ●

32:8

FOLLOW THE LEADER

PSALM 32:8...I WILL INSTRUCT YOU AND TEACH YOU IN THE WAY YOU SHOULD GO; I WILL COUNSEL YOU AND WATCH OVER YOU.

Youth Week of Prayer 2010

Throughout the New Testament we find that leadership is not just the calling of the first twelve disciples, but our calling as well.

1st Sabbath : The Call

Sunday : The Passion

Monday : The Expert

Tuesday : The Gifts

Wednesday : In The Spotlight

Thursday : Along The Sidelines

Friday : The Torch

2nd Sabbath : Empowered



CREATION, EVOLUTION, CLONING

LEADERS NOTES:

See the notes contained in the study. The purpose of this study isn't to convince as much as to show young people the wonderful character of God, and let them fall in love with Him all over again.

Ice Breaker: God's Patterns

Have you ever look at an old-fashioned quilt and been attracted to the colors and patterns painstakingly sewn together? Or have you ever marveled at how light comes through stained glass and transforms the colors and patterns? If so, then you love pattern and color just like God does! Looking around, that's an easy conclusion to come to, isn't it? We see patterns everywhere we look. But have you taken a closer look at some of the things that even scientists marvel at?

For instance, there is a remarkable pattern in the hatching time of eggs. The eggs of a potato bug hatch in seven days. The canary eggs hatch in 14 days. The eggs of the barnyard hens hatch in 21 days. Are you beginning to see a pattern? Geese and duck eggs hatch in 28 days. The eggs of mallard ducks hatch in 35 days. Got it yet? Parrot and ostrich eggs hatch in 42 days. Can you see the pattern now? It's easy, isn't it? They are all multiples of seven—God perfect seven number.

God's wisdom is further revealed further in arrangements of sections and segments. Watermelons have an even number of stripes on their rinds. Ears of corn have an even number of rows on their husks. Oranges have an even number of segments. Stalks of wheat have an even number of grains. And this list goes on and on.

God has left us clues in our foods that tell us what part of the body they are good for, but we are sometimes just slow learners. A sliced carrot looks like the human eye. The pupil,

the iris, and the radiating lines resemble the human eye. And yes, science shows us carrots are great for the eye—both for function and blood flow! Think about a tomato. It has four chambers and is red. Is there anything in your body that looks like that? Of course! Your heart. And guess what scientists now know? Tomatoes are loaded with lycopines and are pure heart food! Think about a walnut. What does it look like? Your brain. Just look at the wrinkles and folds—the shell resembles both halves of

the neo-cortex. And what have scientist discovered about the walnut? It helps more than three dozen neuron-transmitters involved in brain function.

Dig-In

Consider the avocado. It resembles the womb. Scientists have shown us that eating this green fruit will balance hormones, help shed weight, and prevent some cervical cancers. But the neatest part is this—how long do you think it takes for the fruit to develop

from blossom to fruit? Nine months! How interesting is that?

God has planted Himself all around us so that all we have to do is stop and take the time to look, and we won't be able to miss Him. That's not the same as the ever popular theory of God in all nature and the worship of it. That is called Pantheism. Rather, we are talking about finding the Creator in the created—something far different. Without a Bible or someone to tell you, it would still be possible to know your Heavenly Father by studying His second book—Nature!

Hot Potato: Theory or Fact?

Some people like to put on blinders. They look at the things God created and claim that they came from microscopic matter—non-living matter at that! Could we really have evolved from monkeys? Could visiting the zoo on a sunny afternoon be considered a family reunion of sorts?

Charles Darwin thought so when he set off on a voyage with Captain Robert FitzRoy on the HMS Beagle. Their mission was to chart the coastline of South America. Five years later,

Darwin returned with “evidence and celebrity” and furthered his theory in “natural selection.”

His book, published in 1859, *On the Origin of Species*, became the scientific textbook on evolutionary biology—the theory that populations evolve over the course of generations through a process of natural selection.

Scientists have been trying to tie up all the loose ends in Darwin's theory for years now. Their latest claim to addressing the “missing link” was announced at a huge press conference in May 2009: *Ida*—a remarkable fossil that resembles a lemur was their proof. Within hours of the conference the claims were shot down within the scientific community. *Ida* was just a well-preserved fossil!

Hot Potato Question

So how do you think man came to be on this earth? Did God create him or did he evolve from inorganic matter? Do scientists have a case for ‘natural selection?’ Why or why not? Scientists are able to take living cells and clone living things. Do you think that God likes what man is doing in this area? Why or why not? Won't cloning help cure diseases and provide cures for people in pain? Doesn't that make it a good thing? To get the DNA needed to clone new organs, embryos would have to be destroyed. What do you think of this? When do you think life begins? When do evolutionists think life begins? When do you think God says life begins?

Apply It/Bible Text Discovery:

Genesis 1 If the Bible is true, who created everything that is on earth? Do you believe this account of creation? Why or why not? Do you believe what the Bible says as truth? Do you think that God created the world in six literal

days? Would that make it the same cycle that we are using today for our week? What does this say about the character of God? If He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (see Hebrews 13:8), then doesn't that consistency speak of strength you can trust?

Gen. 1:26-27: By whose authority does the Bible say man was created? Who helped in the creation of humanity? In whose image was man created? Does this dispel completely the theory of evolution? Why do you think this way? If God is the author of life, do humans have the right to also create life, i.e. cloning? (See also John 1:1-3)

Gen. 1: 28-30: What responsibility did God give to man at creation? If man was to protect and nurture life, how would cloning fit into that responsibility? Would cloning put man in God's position of authority? Why or why not? God seeks a personal relationship with each individual. How would evolution change that thought if evolution was true? How about cloning? Do you think humans have the judgment required to govern cloning and the technology that would be created as a result? Would it be used only for good?

Psalms 139:13-16: When does King David say that God personally knew him? In these verses, do we see that God not only knew David, but already had a plan for his life? If God knew David before he was born, did God also know you and already have a plan for you before you were even born? Could David (or you) believe this is true if the theory of evolution were true? Why or why not? Does knowing this tell you of a loving Creator? (See also Isaiah 49:1-5 and Luke 1:8-20.)

Deuteronomy 10:17-19: What do these verses tell us about how God values each individual? Are we here to protect and defend life, or to live as we want to? Does God tell us to especially protect the vulnerable? What common factor do the fatherless, the widows, and the foreigners have? *(Leaders, help your young people see that widows and orphans have a common factor: a missing person from the family unit (parent/spouse.)* God established the first family in Eden, and used it as the basic unit for relationships. Could cloning undermine the family

relationship? Why do you think this way? Do you believe the Bible because some scientific proposals agree with it, or because the knowledge found in the Bible is God's Word?

Extra Gem

Ellen White lived during the period that evolution was being brought to the front of scientific study. Read what she wrote about the dangers of teaching it . . .

“In the study of science, as generally pursued, there are dangers equally great. Evolution and its kindred errors are taught in schools of every grade, from the kindergarten to the college. Thus the study of science, which should impart a knowledge of God, is so mingled with the speculations and theories of men that it tends to infidelity” (*Education*, p. 227.3).

Sharing Time

Your friends may ask you, “Where is there proof of God?” How can you answer them? Prepare yourself to answer this question, which you may be asked sometime in your life. Can you point them to specific things in nature that could never have occurred if life evolved? What evidence from your life has helped you believe that there is a God? Write your answer to this question down and add your thoughts to it periodically so that you will be able to defend your faith (1 Peter 3:15).

This Week's Challenge

Do some research on the patterns of God in nature this week. Find at least one other item that you can point to that shows God in His creation. *(Leaders, do your research before hand and help find clear examples. Look at things like an elephant (four legs that are fulcrums,) or a slice of cauliflower (looks like the brain and contains chlorine, shown to help memory.)* Another pattern is that creation happened in the order it was needed to sustain life. Everything man needed was provided before his creation. It gets to be a lot of *fun finding these, and should make the study a fun one for your youth!* ●



LEADERSHIP. . .

If God is looking to build relationships, can a spiritual leader take people to places they have never been? In what ways does your relationship with God need to be strengthened in order to further your leadership? Why is it so essential, then, that leaders are constantly growing and learning themselves? What do you need to do to lead people onto God's agenda?

<http://www.gcyouthministries.org/Ministries/AdventistYouth/DiscussionQuestions/tabid/176/Default.aspx>

BIBLE STUDY: senior youth/young adult

Contributor : Troy Fitzgerald, Ph.D.



Whether you are discovering what Seventh-day Adventists believe for the first time or re-discovering it again as young adult Christian, *Hope Full* will:

- 1.** Expose you to Christ as the source and center of every teaching of Scripture.
- 2.** Engage you in a thoughtful, personal study of the Bible.
- 3.** Invite you to think hard and feel strongly about the unique Adventist message.
- 4.** Deepen your experience with the Savior and His calling in your life.

HOPE FULL

The Scope of Truth, The Hope of Life **Young Adult Bible Studies on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs**

Editor's Note: This is the first of a second yearlong series of Bible studies that explore our 28 Fundamental Beliefs as Seventh-day Adventist Christians. The entire series of studies will be ready for purchase Summer 2010 and will be available at your local ABC, Advent-Source or online at www.gcyouthministries.org.

This journey is designed to prompt you to think and flesh out the message of Scripture for yourself and to integrate the truth you discover to your life. The 28 Fundamental Beliefs are postured for you clearly and unashamed. As you study, by yourself or in a small group, know that your earnest seeking will be rewarded with new insight and a rich experience through the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Each topic/teaching has four parts: **Engage, Discover, Relate, and Express**. Because everyone favors a unique style of learning, the different components allow you to customize and emphasize what works best for you.

● **Engage**

An open-ended introduction to The doctrine with stories, value shaping activities, and a personal, thought provoking connection to the doctrine.

- **Discover**

The simple doctrinal statement, as embraced by the Adventist Church, with the verses that support that teaching listed for you to read or look up in your Bible. A brief focusing question prompts the seeker to practice studying the text carefully and personally.

- **Relate**

A look at how the storied life of Christ and others in Scripture flesh out each doctrine in a relevant way. This section offers a narrative connection to the doctrine as well as a few devotional points to think about.

- **Express**

A set of questions for personal or small group use that engages the student to not only experience the major tenets of a particular truth, but to find ways to express it to others and live it out in their daily life.

Because a study on the *28 Fundamental Beliefs* will be used around the world in a variety of settings, the following section offers various ways to use this resource. You can use *Hope Full* in a **small group** or for your **personal study**.

Hope Full attempts to urge young adults to experience a life of devotion to Christ as their Savior and the Head of His church. Young adults are not called to simply obey commandments, but rather, the Risen Christ. They are not compelled to mindlessly keep a day of the week but to become loyal to the Lord of the Sabbath. The long awaited hope of the Second Coming is not simply an awareness of last day events, but a deep desire for Christ to come and personally take His children home. May God bless you and bind you close to Him as you lead others to “love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and strength.”

LESSON SIX

Creation

Engage

Why do you think unbelievers reject God as the Creator of this world?

- ___ God as Creator is undermined by those who reject His existence.
- ___ God as Creator is overlooked because it is too familiar, religious and not scientific.
- ___ God as Creator is obscured by the press of life.

In what ways have you seen *the Creator* undermined, overlooked, and obscured?

Galileo, through a new telescope he invented, observed four moons revolving around Jupiter. (Copernicus told him this might be true.) After analyzing this phenomenon he reasoned that the planets revolve around the sun, which seemed to contradict the Bible. For this view he was taken to the inquisition. Threatened. Forced to recant his spurious heresy. He didn’t mean it, “the recant” that is, because he later published a book that conveyed his observations. Galileo was hoping to convert church leaders not away from the Bible but toward a more accurate understanding of the word and the world. He was arrested, questioned, and forced to recant, again. He recanted publicly, but again, didn’t mean it and so the church imprisoned Galileo anyway. His penance was to recite seven Psalms of penance everyday for three years. The Psalms were of a category that spoke of sorrow for sin: Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130 and 143. He probably missed Psalms 32 and read Psalms 33 by accident, which declares, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.” Instead, he had his sister, who was a nun, do his recitations

in his stead while he continued to study.

Galileo loved his church and the Holy Scriptures. This timely thinker believed that the Scriptures could not err and the truth of Scripture was infallible—it was people who read it that made mistakes as they interpret God’s word. Galileo stood in awe of God’s creation and sought to observe and understand it more fully and accurately. He began with God.

Discover

The Bible is not a textbook on scientific methods or a catalogue of experiments for the natural world. The Bible declares the truth, the hope, and the story of God and his creation. From beginning to end it starts with God and His people and ends with God and His people. Read the statement of belief and highlight or underline what you think are the most pressing truths that should be discussed today.

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic

account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made “the heaven and the earth” and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. —Seventh-day Adventists Believe, Chapter 6

Read the passages in Scripture that lead you through the overwhelming testimony that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all life. Consider the order and the style in which He made the world. Reflect on what might be different in our world today if humanity would paid more attention to the beginning and the end.

Texts: Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:8-11, Psalm 19:1-6, Psalm 33:6, 9, Psalm 104, and Hebrews 11:3.

Relate

Today, there are many who make the mistake of not beginning at the beginning. Instead, many begin with the mind and might of humanity’s thinking rather than starting and ending with God. Pharaoh modeled this way of thinking when you hear the king of Egypt front up to God saying, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go?” (Exodus 5:2). Clearly, the proud ruler wasn’t present when God showed Himself to Moses in Exodus 4. But the miracle in Pharaoh’s court with the stick and the snake was the same as when God came to Moses in the burning bush. What was the difference? Pharaoh did not begin and end with God. Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel 3:15 asked, “what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” Good question. Good answer. Read how Nebuchadnezzar discovers in Daniel 4 what Pharaoh and many others ail to see today. You must begin and end somewhere.

Is it possible that our world today is a lot like the world in Paul’s day when

he confronted people about their idol bearing an image to the “unknown God”? Read the whole story in Acts 17:16-34 where Paul addresses some very religious people with real knowledge about their “unknown god.” Paul also writes to believers in the Book of Ephesians that creation is not an accident or an afterthought. The whole of human experience was planned and paid for before it was ever lost (Ephesians 1:3-6).

So, where you choose to begin really does make a difference. Furthermore, who you begin with also shapes the outcome as well. Throughout Scripture there are several references to Christ being the Creator. In Colossians 1:15-17 Paul states, “all things were created by him and for him.” The first moments of John’s gospel make the same claim (John 1:1-3, 14).

As everyday people walked and worked with Jesus, they were touched by the reality that Jesus was more than just a great teacher or a compassionate healer. When the disciples feared for their life out

on the stormy lake they looked upon the face of Jesus who stared down the elements and silenced the weather. All that these bewildered men could say was, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him” (Mark 4:35-41). And as you read about God’s people living at the end of earth’s history the will have, as a primary focus of their good news to world, a message to worship God as Creator (Revelation 14:6,7).

So here it is: From the beginning in Genesis to the end of the Bible in Revelation, the Creator and creation are non-negotiable realities (Genesis 1). As well as how the world will end as well (Revelation 21-22). In case you missed the first Creation, one thing is sure, you do not have to miss the next time God demonstrates His creative power.

Express

How does the doctrine of Creation affect other core truths of the Christian life? Marriage. Sabbath. Work. Environment. Sanctity of Life.

What are some activities you do that deepen your experience with the Creator?

As you reflect on the complexity and order of creation, how do you think the New Earth will be similar to Eden and how do you think it might be different?

When have you experienced being confronted by a world that refuses to believe in the existence of God as our Creator? How do those experiences shape your walk with God?

In your mind, what percent of the people you know believe that God created the world versus the people that believe in evolution or some other philosophy about the origin of the world?

What does Creation show you or impress upon you about the nature of God?

What is the most unique or fascinating truth about the Creation story?

James Sire, in the book *Naming the Elephant*, tells the story of a boy who observed the globe and asked, “What is holding up the world?” His father answer, “a camel.” The boy mused, “What is holding the camel?” The father had no idea the trouble he was getting into. He answered (hoping this would end the inquiry), “a kangaroo.” But the young man was relentless in his pursuit of understanding.

The boy asked, “What is holding up the kangaroo?” The father chose the biggest animal he could think of, “An elephant, son. An elephant is holding everything up.” The little boy asked after thinking for a moment, “Dad, what is holding the elephant up?”

The father, exasperated explains, “It’s all elephant all the way down.” The point is that whether you believe God created the heavens and the earth or you believe that something happened and the process of evolution began, there is a first cause. So, is the “first cause” a question of “what” or “who?” If the “first cause” has to do with “what happened,” then you must try and deduce—even imagine the origin of the universe out of nothing. If the “first cause” has to do with the assumption that *Someone* created it, then it is not as much a question of “what happened” as it is about who created the world. For the evolutionist, the first cause is more of a mysterious leap of faith in that the “what” that started everything is ultimately a big guess. For the Christian, The Lord has revealed Himself in time, place, and even in the flesh to declare that “in the beginning God created...” James Sire concludes: “If it takes something to hold the world up, then there has to be a first holder, something that doesn’t require being held up—a prime foundation” (Sire, *Naming the Elephant*, p. 16).

“When considering the creation, the how and the when does not matter so much as the why and the wherefore” —(R. de Campoamor).

“God creates out of nothing. Therefore, until a man is nothing God can make nothing out of him” —(Martin Luther).



“Just how God accomplished the work of creation He has never revealed to men; human science cannot search out the secrets of the Most High. His creative power is as incomprehensible as His existence” —(Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* pg. 113).

“Yet the works of creation testify of God’s power and greatness” —(Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* pg. 116).

So through the creation we are to become acquainted with the Creator. The book of nature is a great lesson book, which in connection with the Scriptures we are to use in teaching others of His character, and guiding, lost sheep back to the fold of God. —(Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* pg. 24 ●

GROUP ACTIVITIES

taken from the 2010 Small Group Discussions for Adventist Youth available at <http://www.gcyyouthministries.org/Ministries/AdventistYouth/DiscussionQuestions/tabid/1176/Default.aspx>

1 In light of Matthew 14, discuss how your reactions / daily life might look different if you truly recognized the value of people in the way that Jesus did. What can you do to see people more like God does?

DISCUSS “In the past, and as recently as a year ago, my ideas of true leadership were skewed. I thought being a leader meant being the receiver of glory and the holder of control. ... Eventually I realized it felt [fake] because I was doing it for all the wrong reasons. I wasn’t leading because I was passionate about the cause but rather because I was passionate about the control. If I’ve learned anything since then, it’s that leadership isn’t about you. It’s about those you are leading and where you’re leading them. Leadership is a behind-the-scenes sacrifice that results in a great sense of accomplishment when you view the successes of others. I’ve learned that rather than leadership being equal to dictatorship it should be synonymous with servanthood.”

— Beth Groner, age 19

2 “When we succumb to bitterness and rebellion, it stops all forward progress – not only for ourselves, but also for others that we love and care about.” — Amerman

DISCUSS the effects of unforgiveness, hatred, anger, and hurt. In what ways are these things likely to do you at least as much harm as the person at whom they’re directed. Discuss the physical, emotional, and spiritual implications. Discuss 1 Peter 2:23-24 and what this would look like in your day-to-day life.

When was the last time you truly studied the Word of God and let it *transform* you? Have group members share their favorite transformative passages and discuss. [Romans 8 and Philippians 2:1-11 are good places to start...]

3 Assign each group one of the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. Have groups develop a skit about what a church with just their gift would look like. In the end, combine the groups to discover a much more effective picture of the church with complementary gifts.

Most Christians are not engaged in a heated debate with non-Christians about the issue of “creation vs. evolution,” but there is a growing tension between both camps and the chances of being confronted with the issue is growing, especially for our young people. We are living in the age of FaceBook, YouTube, blogs, and pod casts, where everyone can voice their opinion to the planet and do it efficiently. Just the other day I was watching a video on YouTube of a man slinging every imaginable insult to anyone who believes in God and creation.

Before, the argument seemed to be contained between a handful of creation scientists and evolutionary scientists while everyone else watched from the sidelines. Now, the battle is moving to a common battlefield and our youth are increasingly being caught up in it.

A typical science class in a U.S. public school teaches that the theory of evolution is the logical, scientific explanation of our origins. It used to be a “theory” but now they’re not even calling it that. Even though creation has been the widespread belief for thousands of years on this planet, “creation science” cannot be taught in public schools. Praying is not allowed nor even the mention of God or the 10 commandments. God has been censored from the schools and the only explanation kids are being taught is of evolution. What do we do about that?

We need to start by making sure Christian youth are aware that the general public is being indoctrinated in the belief that we evolved. It’s not just being taught in schools, they are seeing it as well in popular culture, movies, etc. Many of our youth attend Christian schools and churches where they are taught that *creation* is the truth, but what

HIPPOS, DAISIES, AND EVOLUTION

BY RICHARD AGUILERA, JR.

happens when they confront a friend about evolution? Their friends have always been taught that life evolved to everything we see today. What if they encounter a hostile evolutionist such as the one I saw on YouTube?

Have you ever met a kid who really believes in Santa Claus? There are millions of them who are told by their parents for years that Santa really exists. When they finally learn the truth, they struggle with denial and often refuse to accept this new truth until they finally realize how unlikely “Santa” is. When someone has been taught about evolution their whole life, any other explanation will be hard to accept even when they see evidence for creation.

Sometimes, it seems that evidence has nothing to do with it because people often *choose* what they want to believe regardless of the evidence. Sadly, there are many people out there who despise God and Christians and prefer any path that leads them away from the Bible.

Let me be clear about something before we get too much farther. I am not a scientist or an authority on this matter. I’m only reporting what I’m reading and researching. Like many, I

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am in search of the truth and I invite you to do the same and wrestle with these issues yourself.

The truth is, you have to have faith to believe in either creation or evolution because none of us were there. In reality, having faith is part of everyday life. We have faith that

money deposited in the bank is secure. We have faith that our food is safe to eat. We even have faith that Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet. There is no one alive that actually saw him write it, but we have faith that he wrote it. Faith is not just limited to religion, it’s part of every day life.

As I’ve studied the various evidences and arguments of both creation and evolution, I’ve learned that one thing very clear: This subject is huge; there are many unanswered questions—and neither side is airtight. No matter how you look at it, faith is required to believe in either explanation.

The basis for creation science truth is the Bible. The basis for evolution science truth is a theory. This forces evolution scientists to theorize even more in order to answer difficult questions. If someone claims they saw a hippo hanging over a cliff holding on to nothing but a daisy, there is a scientist who can provide a theory on how this could happen, however unlikely it is. Don’t get me wrong, science has advanced dramatically in the last century and humanity is discovering things at an amazing pace, but there is still much that eludes us.



WATER IN THE BEGINNING OF THE GRAND CANYON BY KATRINA BROWN © FOTOLIA.COM

The interesting thing is that most of the evidence that evolutionists use to support their theories is the same evidence that creationists use to support theirs. How can that be?

For example, evolutionists will say, *“Look at the various rock layers found in places like the Grand Canyon. It took millions of years to deposit each one of those layers!”*

In turn, creationists say, *“Look at the various rock layers found in places like the Grand Canyon, the world wide flood relocated continents and mountains, then cut these canyons as the waters receded!”*

The nice thing is, at least everyone agrees that this type of geological formation was formed in one of two

ways: A little water over a long period of time (evolution), or a lot of water over a short period of time (world wide flood).

As a nature columnist for *Guide* magazine, one of the questions I get asked a lot is, *“How do I respond to friends who believe in evolution?”* It’s a great question since that’s what millions of their friends are being taught in school. On the flip side, sometimes our own youth are taught to just believe the Bible and have faith in its writings. Is that enough defense for our youth? It’s a rough world out there. Can we give them more?

There is more.

An important starting point is to keep the Bible close. Many people that believe in evolution want to keep

the Bible out the discussion because they’re used to making conclusions based on scientific evidence. There’s nothing wrong with looking at scientific evidence, but you must keep your biblical beliefs close because a Christian’s beliefs are based on the Bible and confirmed by scientific evidence, not the other way around. For example, you can say, *“The Bible teaches that a world wide flood destroyed the earth about 4,300 years ago. Let’s look at all the physical and scientific evidence of a worldwide flood. There’s a lot!”* If you try to defend creationism without the Bible, you will be distancing yourself from creation’s basis of truth.

Upon analysis, the theory of evolution has many holes that can’t

be explained very well. As I said earlier, evolutionists will be quick to offer explanations on how a daisy can support the weight of a hippo hanging over a cliff. These are areas that can be exposed since they are based on theories. There are countless examples we can study:

Evolution claims that dinosaurs became extinct about 65 million years ago. They say that about 60 million years later, humans entered the scene. This is an important part of the evolutionary chain of events to support the theory. The problem is that there is evidence that dinosaurs only became extinct in the last couple thousand years, and that they walked on the earth at the same time as humans. Human and dinosaur fossils have been found near each other on the geologic column. Scientists are even studying examples where man and dinosaur footprints may have been found together.

There is also strong literary evidence that humans and dinosaur coexisted. The word “dinosaur” was invented only 150 years ago. Before, words such as “dragon,” “beast,” “leviathan,” or “behemoth” were used to describe these animals. Practically every ancient civilization has literary descriptions of these animals the earth. Even ancient carvings and cave drawings are found depicting these large beasts in detail. In Cambodia, a 1,000 year old temple clearly shows



CARVING AT TA PROHM TEMPLE, NEAR THE MORE FAMOUS ANGKOR WAT, CAMBODIA. IMAGE FROM NEUROLOGICA BLOG.

carvings of a stegosaurus. How would anyone a 1,000 years ago know what a stegosaurus looked like? Many evolutionists claim it's a rhino but even a child knows the difference between a rhinoceros and a stegosaurus. Also, how could paleontologists now find remains of a T-Rex with soft tissue and blood cells? Could soft tissue survive for 65 million years? Not according to scientists.

Even in the book of Job, animals are described that can fit the description of a dinosaur.

“Look at the behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength he has in his loins, what power in the muscles of his belly! His tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are close-knit. His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like rods of iron. When the river rages, he is not alarmed; he is secure, though the Jordan should surge against his mouth” (Job 40:15-19, 23).

How many animals today would not be scared of a raging river? The largest land mammals we have today are an elephant, hippopotamus or rhino, but none of those have a tail like a cedar tree. If you read the whole chapter, you will see more descriptions of these huge beasts. A close study of the evidence shows that dinosaurs walked the earth recently, not millions of years ago. What happened to them? That is a different story.

Many scientists use radioisotope dating as a method for dating objects. They test a fossil and it tells them it's millions of years old. Pretty convenient, except that the testing is not very reliable. In 1980, Mount St. Helen's, a volcano in Washington, erupted dramatically. A few years later, scientists went up and collected rocks from the new dome being formed by new lava. This was a great opportunity to test some dating equipment. They tested these rocks and the results said these 30-year-old rocks were 40 million years old. I remember watching the eruption on TV so I know these rocks aren't 40 million years old. During that same eruption, huge canyons were carved out of solid rock by mudflows after the eruption. Canyons and layering that scientist said would take millions of years to form were formed quickly by a “small” catastrophic event. Small. . . compared to the Flood.

The theory of evolution claims that all life including plants and animals,

evolved from a random chemical reaction into everything we see today, taking billions of years to evolve. One of the biggest challenges evolutionary scientists face is providing evidence of these transitions, not just of man, but also of thousands of animal types into what they are today. Evolution claims that one of man's most recent ancestors evolved from the ape. But if we can easily find 200 million year old dinosaur fossils scattered all over the planet, why can't we find a single "ape-to-man" fossil from only 4 million years ago?

Of course that doesn't stop scientists from trying to explain it, even if it's a "daisy-hippo" explanation. Countless fossils of "transitional men" have been presented as evidence such as "Java Man," a transitional human created from the excavation of three teeth, a leg bone and a skullcap piece found over a seven-year period and scattered along a riverbed. There's also "Lucy," "Peking Man," "Neanderthal Man," etc. One in particular stands out called "Nebraska Man," where a new transitional human was announced in the early 20th Century. The problem is that all they found was a single tooth. One. Still, artists and sculptors created detailed representations of what they thought this new transitional species man looked like. Years later, after further



study, scientists discovered the tooth came from an extinct pig and had to make some changes to their claims and removed it from textbooks and literature. Sadly, many of these artistic depictions are still used in textbooks today to teach kids about evolution.

Evolutionary scientists freely and proudly admit their "truth" is constantly changing. Science is about learning and discovering new truths all the time. I agree, science is a wonderful tool for learning and discovering, but isn't that kind of "truth" a contradiction in itself? How can you consistently believe in a truth that is constantly changing? Science is

a tool for confirming truth, not for creating truth.

Since the 19th Century, when evolutionary thought entered the mainstream, scientists have been trying to estimate the age of the earth, changing and adding time when they discover a new piece of information they can't explain. They simply add time to allow for those changes to evolve. Again, how can something that constantly changes be called "truth?"

For years, scientists said that petrified trees took millions of years to form until they recently discovered that if a piece of wood is subjected to a certain combination of materials and conditions, wood could petrify in a few short years. Suddenly all these trees weren't necessarily millions of years old. Are we

so arrogant to think we've already discovered enough to know all the answers and claim we know the truth?

Imagine a beach full of sand. Each grain of sand is a measure of knowledge. A bucket full of sand represents our knowledge in the year 2010. Let's say 50 years ago humanity's knowledge was like a cupful of sand. Every day our knowledge grows in leaps in bounds and we add a few grains of sand to our bucket. As our knowledge grows, we learn more and we realize previous mistakes and adjust our perceptions of truth. Remember, a

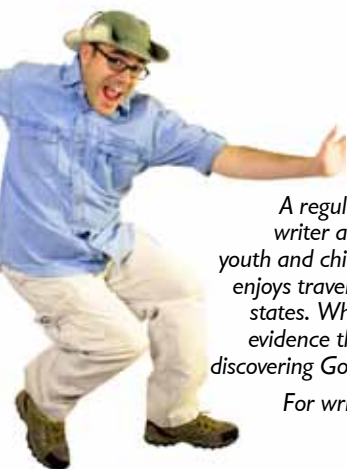
few decades ago doctors were still standing in their patients' hospital room puffing away on a cigarette while trying to figure out why they were dying of lung cancer? As we stand here with our bucket of sand, we need to remember that a beach full of sand surrounds us. There is an immeasurable amount of knowledge yet to be discovered.

Would you rather base your "truth" on the grains of sand we have in our bucket, or would you rather base it on all the grains of sand that are actually on the beach? Remember, either way will require faith.

Faith in creation is: Believing that God knows about each grain of sand. Faith in evolution is: Believing in incomplete information and theories that keep changing as our bucket fills with sand. Evolution's truth is constantly changing. God's truth is consistent.

It's impossible to fully understand God. We can't just rely on scientific and physical evidence to comprehend His power and explain everything. Science is reliable only to a certain extent. I prefer to believe in a truth that makes sense and doesn't change. I prefer the truth God gives us in the Bible and the truths that nature and history confirm all around us.

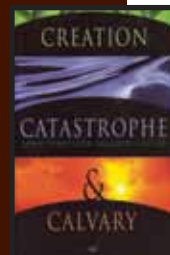
"Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight" (1 Corinthians 3:18-19). ●



A regular contributor to Guide magazine, Rich Aguilera is a writer and producer of audio/video resources, especially for youth and children. Rich speaks English, Spanish and French and enjoys traveling. He has already visited 50 countries and 49 U.S. states. When he travels he likes to study nature and search for evidence that supports creationism. Richard recently spoke on discovering God through nature and science in San Antonio, Texas.

For writing or speaking engagements you can email him at richaguilera@gmail.com.

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"In this scientific age, what difference does it make whether I believe the world was created in six literal days and that the world was destroyed by a global flood?" In answering these questions, *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary* shows how these beliefs are related to key issues such as the forgiveness of our sins and Sabbath observance. Edited by John Templeton Baldwin, Ph.D., professor of theology at the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University.



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Dinosaurs—An Adventist View by David C. Read is a fair examination of theories in evolution as well as creation. Providing a comprehensive examination of evidence ranging from fossils and Stonehenge, to genetic engineering, the author provides a most plausible reenactment of how the antediluvian world behaved and ultimately how they were destroyed.



Todo ser humano se pregunta sobre sus orígenes. Y ante cada uno se ofrecen diversas posiciones filosóficas, teológicas y científicas. La lectura y estudio de *En Busca de los Orígenes* facilitará el hallazgo de respuestas satisfactorias a tan apasionante cuestión. A partir de los hechos y datos que nos ofrecen los autores, el lector podrá formar un criterio propio. Conocer nuestros orígenes ilumina quiénes somos y lo que podemos llegar a ser. Y a partir de ahí, este libro nos permite establecer una base ética firme y un nuevo estilo de vida que nos dé la paz deseada.

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