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## What Happens to Biblical Truth if the SDA Church Accepts Theistic Evolution?

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The *National Geographic* asks, “Was Darwin Wrong?” William L. Allen, Editor-in-Chief, states, “Our magazine aims to explore the world, often by highlighting scientific concepts such as evolution. Is this approach necessarily at odds with faith, which lies beyond the possibility of scientific proof? No. Just as religion did not disappear after Galileo demonstrated that the Earth is not at the center of the solar system, evolution does not exclude God from our origins”<sup>1</sup>

In his article “The Evidence for Evolution is Overwhelming,” David Quammen notes,

Darwin himself quietly renounced Christianity during his middle age, and later described himself as an agnostic. He continued to believe in a distant, impersonal deity of some sort, a greater entity that had set the universe and its laws into motion, but not a personal God who had chosen humanity as a specially favored species.<sup>2</sup>

God was distant from nature in Darwin’s Victorian England. Newtonian physics, with its mechanistic view of nature, was compatible with a Deistic God who gave inherent laws so nature could operate on its own without His involvement. The fact that there is evil in nature was credited to nature, and not to God, a burden that Darwin retained in his theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest.<sup>3</sup> The basic assumption that God is removed from nature logically implies a Deistic God, one who is less than the God of Scripture.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bill Allen, “From the Editor” *National Geographic*, November 2004.

<sup>2</sup>David Quammen, “The Evidence for Evolution is Overwhelming,” *National Geographic*, November 2004, 9, (4–35).

<sup>3</sup>Two books by Cornelius G. Hunter give the background to the belief in God at the time of Darwin and the concern of Darwin to give a solution to the problem of evil in his theory of evolution (his theodicy). Hunter also documents that evolutionary scientists diminish God in their arguments and often say God could not or would not do certain things, as if they have information about God

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Darwin's view of God is contrary to the biblical view of God<sup>5</sup> and should give Christians pause before buying into Darwin's naturalism and attempting to wed it to the supernatural in a theistic evolutionary synthesis. At least Darwin was consistent in presenting evolution as pure naturalism with no connection with the personal God of Scripture, even if an impersonal God began the process.

Much of the Christian world no longer believes Genesis 1–2 is a literal account of creation. Physicist Howard Van Till asserts, "I would even be so bold as to add that the misunderstanding of the historic doctrine of creation may be as widespread within the Christian community as it is outside of it."<sup>6</sup> Since Darwin, natural processes are thought to explain the origin of life,<sup>7</sup> and Christian scholars have attempted to accommodate science by interpreting the Genesis record in the light of the current scientific worldview.<sup>8</sup> Theologian John S. Feinberg rightly compares interpreting Genesis 1–2 through evolution to interpreting biblical eschatology through current events. He concludes, "I don't think biblical data allow either an atheistic or a theistic evolutionary account . . . I would prefer my views to be consistent with Scripture even if that means they are inconsistent with science."<sup>9</sup> In 1991, theologian Paul K. Jewett said, "the form of the

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not found in Scripture. He shows that design in nature, credited to the evolutionary process, is insufficient to explain the incredible complexity of mechanisms found in nature, or how evolution could produce such mechanisms. Only intelligent design, belief in a divine designer, can do this. He argues that in the end evolution is "ultimately a religious theory," and its claim to be a fact is a certainty "in the religious sense," and not in the scientific sense. *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Brazos/Baker, 2001); *Darwin's Proof: The Triumph of Religion over Science* (Grand Rapids: Brazos/Baker, 2003); see page 153 for quote.

<sup>4</sup>See the discussion in Michael A. Harbin, "Theistic Evolution: Deism Revisited?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40 (1997): 639–651.

<sup>5</sup>In Darwin's day God was considered to be infinitely wise and good, but Darwin discovered nature to be otherwise. Rather than looking to Scripture for an answer and discovering that Satan and his cosmic controversy is responsible for all evil, he studied evil in nature and gave up belief in a God who was loving and personal, allowing the natural world to determine the nature of God rather than Scripture doing so. This is because Darwin placed nature above God's Word. See Cornelius G. Hunter, *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001), 9–12.

<sup>6</sup>Howard J. Van Till, "The Fully Gifted Creation: Theistic Evolution," in *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, eds. J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 161.

<sup>7</sup>Darwin opposed the view that each species has been independently created (69), that there is an "immutability of species" (317), and presented "the theory of descent with modification through natural selection" (435). *The Origin of Species* (New York: Gramercy, 1979, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1859).

<sup>8</sup>Evolution calls the Genesis creation account into question. Therefore, many theologians accept Genesis as pre-scientific with no interest in the process of creation which science allegedly provides. For example, Augustus Strong stated, "Evolution does not make the idea of a Creator superfluous, because evolution is only the method of God." *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1907), 465–466.

<sup>9</sup>John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 579, 580. However, he is inconsistent in accepting a modified 24 hour days, in which some days are a little longer (615). His argument that literary symmetry (two triads in six days) questions solar days

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creation story in Scripture is clearly that of a historical narrative, like the subsequent narrative of salvation history culminating in the Incarnation and Pentecost.” But, “Today, however, few who confess the Christian doctrine of creation would suppose that the world was fashioned in a week of time some six to ten thousand years ago.” He then notes some exceptions, and we cite one of them.

Many Seventh Day Adventists, named for their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, have followed Ellen White in seeing the choice as one between the Bible, which is God’s word, and science, which is a human word. Were the days of Genesis not literal, the seventh-day Sabbath would not be literal. But if the original seventh-day Sabbath was not a literal Sabbath, then how could one be sure she was keeping the right day as the Sabbath memorial of the creation, as God enjoins us to do in the fourth commandment? As far as planet Earth is concerned, the data to which geologists appeal, found in the rocks and fossils, is looked upon by Adventists as the catastrophic result of the Noachic deluge. Therefore, one need not postulate long periods of time to explain such data.<sup>10</sup>

### **What Theistic Evolution Does to the Plan of Salvation and the Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church**

Questioning the historical reality of the Genesis creation account logically questions subsequent acts of God in history. It is not a question confined to Genesis 1–2, but affects the rest of Scripture. Thus, the historicity of the entire biblical story is undermined by rejecting the historicity of Genesis 1–2, as it was for Rudolf Bultmann, who dubbed biblical cosmology as “pre-scientific,” with disastrous results.<sup>11</sup> Theistic evolution assumes that God uses evolution to arrive

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seems to overlook the fact that God does all things in an orderly way, which Scripture commends to humans (1 Cor 14:40, Col. 2:5) (615–617).

<sup>10</sup>Paul K. Jewett, *God, Creation & Revelation: A Neo-Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 479, 480. Seventh-day Adventists base their doctrines on Scripture alone, and not on Ellen G. White or church tradition. She urged, “God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms.” *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1911), 595.

<sup>11</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1964, 1<sup>st</sup> ET, 1953), 1–4. He jettisoned the supernaturalistic worldview for a naturalistic worldview, and this called into question all God’s supernaturalistic acts in history. For example, he said, “No one who is old enough to think for himself supposes that God lives in a local heaven. There is no longer any heaven in the traditional sense of the word . . . We can no longer look for the return of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven or hope that the faithful will meet him in the air (1 Thess. 4:154ff).” “Even if we believe that the world as we know it will come to an end in time, we expect the end to take the form of a natural catastrophe, not of a mythical event such as the New Testament expects.” Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, 4–5. See also The Gifford Lectures that Bultmann delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1955, where eschatology is confined to the ever-repeated coming of the Holy Spirit in encounters to human existence, replacing a final cosmic coming of Christ. This is the extent of the reinterpretation and reductionism of Bultmann’s existential hermeneutic. Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh: University P, 1957).

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at the creation of humans, who are still in process, and some forms of evolution go so far as to say humans will evolve to become God, a similar falsehood suggested to Eve in Genesis 3:1–6.<sup>12</sup> If humans are the result of a progress within natural evolutionary development, then there is no place for their fall, for death through sin, no need of God’s law, of divine revelation in Scripture, of salvation through Christ, of the new creation work of the Holy Spirit, or of Christ’s present intercession, second coming, or final judgment.

If God didn’t speak much of creation into existence in Genesis, this calls into question His future creative word to raise the dead and His supernatural creation of a new heavens and a new earth. Once a literal supernatural spoken word of God in creation is rejected, then a supernatural spoken Word of God in Scripture is rejected, and Scripture is merely the product of a natural collection of oral and human sources. If the Adventist church accepts theistic evolution, it must abandon its biblical basis and mission and descend the slippery slope of doctrinal change, as described by E. Edward Zinke and Angel Manuel Rodriguez.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, if the truths of Scripture are undermined, so is the God of Scripture who gave them. Acceptance of theistic evolution would also call into question the unique mission that Adventists believe they have in proclaiming God as Creator in the context of the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6, 7) in the end-time (2 Pet 3:3–5), with the seventh-day Sabbath truth this involves (Gen 2:2, 3; Exod 20:8–11; Isa 66:23).

#### **What Theistic Evolution Does to the Uniqueness of Human Creation**

The Genesis creation record differentiates Christ as *Elohiym* (transcendent, omnipotent God), who creates (*bārāʾ*) by speaking things into existence in Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, from His added name *Yahweh* (imminent, covenant God), the Christ who forms (*yašar*) humans in Genesis 2. *Yahweh* is only added to *Elohiym* in Genesis 2:4, after which *Yahweh Elohiym* is the name for Christ throughout the rest of Genesis 2. *Yahweh Elohiym* is the powerful Christ-up-close, creating humans in a way distinct from His creation of all the rest of created reality in Genesis 1. There is an important reason for this addition to Christ’s name. As the all-powerful transcendent God He spoke all created realities into existence (Genesis 1:3–2:3). But as the *Yahweh Elohiym* He drew

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<sup>12</sup>See the New Age Movement in Norman R. Gulley, *Christ is Coming!* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1998), chapter 13. If God allegedly held Eve back from becoming like God, then eating the forbidden fruit was an alleged natural process to achieve this end. So Satan not only caused Eve to doubt God’s Word, His love and wisdom, but suggested a natural process to achieve this goal apart from Him. This is the whole thrust of naturalism. Evolution is atheistic, and it is illogical to consider it theistic.

<sup>13</sup>For examples of the effect of theistic evolution on doctrines, see E. Edward Zinke, “Theistic Evolution: Implications for the Role of Creation in Seventh-day Adventist Theology,” in *Creation, Catastrophe and Calvary*, ed., John Templeton Baldwin (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000), 159–171, and Angel Manuel Rodriguez, “Theistic Evolution and the Adventist Faith: An Analysis,” unpublished manuscript, Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of SDA.

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close and formed Adam and breathed the breath of life into him (Gen 2:7) and created Eve from a rib taken from Adam (Gen 2:20b–23). The stunning contrast emphasizes the stark distinction between the way humans were created and the way the rest of creation was created by Christ. Humans are singled out as unique, just as their being made in the image of God is unique (Gen 1:26, 27). They were not merely the final product of a process, but a hands-on creation by *Yahweh Elohiym*. Evolutionary naturalism does not do justice to this distinction given in the biblical creation record.

Because of the creation of humans in the image of God (Gen 1:26, 27), Christian theology does not consider humans as merely evolved from animal ancestry without God's intervention. Many theistic evolutionists believe God places the human soul into each human, but this is because they accept another human idea, taken from Greek philosophy, that human souls are separate from human bodies, which is contrary to the biblical holistic view of humans, where there is no distinction between soul and body.<sup>14</sup>

#### **What Theistic Evolution Does to the Supernatural**

Evolution is confined to methodological naturalism, shutting out the supernatural in the process. This means that the acts of the Creator in Genesis 1–2 are irrelevant, and the creation record is discarded as non-literal and non-historical.

No humans observed creation week, nor did evolutionists observe deep time when the alleged evolutionary process took place. So neither creation nor evolution is proved or disproved in the lab today. It takes faith to believe either view. There is empirical evidence for micro-evolution, the metamorphosis of caterpillar to butterfly, for example. But this is minor compared to the impossibility of demonstrable evidence for macro-evolution.

But there is macro-evidence for creation in historical time. The incarnation of God into history is a far greater miracle than the creation of Adam, and if God can do the greater through a supernatural act, why not the easier creation of Adam? Genesis 1 and John 1 speak of Christ. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1), and "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1:1, 2). An incredible supernatural event is revealed to us in John 1:14a: "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us." Here are two

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<sup>14</sup>There is no distinction between an immortal soul and a mortal body, for Christ said to Adam that death would come if he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen 1:16, 17). There was no mention of death only to the body. In fact, Scripture is clear that God "alone is immortal" (1 Tim 6:16) and that humans only receive immortality at the second coming of Christ (1 Cor 15:53, 54). In the meantime Christians seek immortality (Rom 2:7). So God does not place an immortal soul into mortal human bodies. The total person is somebody or a soul, as in English we can say, "I know somebody" who was one of the "souls" baptized. In this holistic sense Scripture can say, "The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezek 18:20), which is contrary to Greek philosophy on the immortal soul. For further discussion on this, see Norman R. Gulley, *Christ is Coming!*, 276–298.

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supernatural creation events—the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the incarnation of God. Here is the Creator Christ who created everything becoming a part of His creation. This means that the creation of Genesis 1–2 was just as supernatural as the incarnation of the Creator. That’s why the creative words were instantaneously obeyed in Genesis 1 and the Creator instantaneously left heaven and became present in Mary in John 1:14. This unique creation event involved God preparing Christ a body (Greek *sōma*, Heb 10:5–7) and His conception (Greek *gennēthen*) through the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20b). Naturalism has no place for this supernatural event into human history.

Reading the Genesis creation account in light of God’s creation of the humanity of the God-man (John 1:1, 14; Matt 1:20), the creation of the first Adam in light of the incarnation of the second Adam (1 Cor 15:45, cf. Rom 5:18–19), we find a type/antitype gift of love which is fully compatible with God’s gift of love at Calvary (John 3:16). Here is the biblical God of love and not the God of theistic evolution. Here is “Immanuel,” God with us—our Creator-Redeemer, rather than a distant and disinterested God in methodological naturalism.

#### **What Theistic Evolution Does to the Biblically Constructed Worldview**

Theistic Evolution is a view of origins that subscribes to God either beginning the process of evolution or beginning and superintending it. But this is an attempt to marry two mutually exclusive worldviews: supernaturalism (theistic) and naturalism (evolution). Supernaturalism is God creating the world without any dependence on nature. Naturalism is nature evolving in the world without any dependence on God. So which is it? It has to be one or the other, for a mix of the two isn’t possible. For example, why would an omnipotent God need a long process? Why would an omniscient God need so much trial and error along the way? Why would the God who asks that “everything be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40) do the opposite in the torturous process of mega-time? Why would the God who opposes salvation by works (Eph 2:9) use the survival of the fittest method?<sup>15</sup> In all these examples, theistic evolution calls into question God’s Word about these matters, presenting a human worldview in place of the biblically constructed worldview.

It should be kept in mind that Darwin’s *Origin of Species* is a worldview to explain evil in nature,<sup>16</sup> whereas God’s creation of the universe through Christ (Col 1:15, 16; Heb 1:1, 2) is through One who later revealed God as love (John 14:9b; 17:23), and the Trinity were as selfless and loving in creation as they are in salvation (John 3:16; Heb 13:8). In stark contrast, Satan is self-centered (Isa 14:12–15; Ezek 28:12–18) and launched a war against God in heaven (Rev

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<sup>15</sup>See Henry M. Morris, John D. Morris, *The Modern Creation Trilogy: Scripture and Creation* (Green Forrest: Master, 1996), 40.

<sup>16</sup>See Cornelius G. Hunter, *Darwin’s God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil*.

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12:3–8) and on earth, which affected the natural world (Gen 3:1–19).<sup>17</sup> Christ called Satan the “prince of this world” (John 12:30–32), and Paul called him the “god of this age” (2 Cor 4:4), and evil in this world (moral and natural) must be credited to him, for “God is love” (1 John 4:7–16), and His love defeated Satan at the cross (Rev 12:9–13; John 12:31, 32). It seems that theistic evolutionists do not take into account the radical difference between these two worldviews.<sup>18</sup> If the Seventh-day Adventist church ever accepted theistic evolution it would unwittingly find itself on the wrong side of the cosmic controversy by contributing to a worldview that distorts the truth about God, the hallmark of the controversy.

**What Theistic Evolution Does to the Truth About God**

A “particular doctrine of God is a prerequisite for evolution’s success.”<sup>19</sup> If God chose to create through the natural evolutionary process, in which the horrors of torture and death over millions of years was necessary to create humans, this would be the longest and cruelest holocaust ever imagined. Why would God use such unjust carnage to create when justice is the foundation of His throne (Psa 89:14)? How is such a model possible in view of His divine providence in history (Rom 11:36; Rom 8:28–30)? Why would God use death to create humans in His image (Gen 1:26, 27), which is love? If He used death to create, then why did He warn Adam of the evil of death (Gen 2:17) and expose the depths of that evil through dying to save humans from the penalty of death (John 3:16; Rom 6:23)? If death is the last enemy to be destroyed at the end of the controversy (1 Cor 15:26), then how could God use it to create before and after the beginning of the controversy?

George Bugg (1769–1851) asked, “Where is the benevolence, not to say justice of all this? Not a creature capable of offending its Creator. Nevertheless we find whole genera and whole nations of animals perishing in succession; and this numerous times repeated, as if their Author . . . were in sport, forming and

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<sup>17</sup>After the fall of humans God said the ground would produce thorns and thistles (Gen 3:18). In pre-fall time, in Genesis 1:11, 12, “vegetation” is the Hebrew word *deše*’, “seed-bearing plants” is *‘ešeb mazrya’ zera’*. By contrast, in Genesis 2:5, when it says, “no shrub of the field had yet appeared,” “shrub” is the Hebrew word *šiah*. Randall Younker links this to the thorns and thistles of Gen 3:18, and so it is a reference to a thorny xerophyte. See “Genesis 2: A Second Creation Account?” in *Creation, Catastrophe and Calvary*, 72–74. Just as Adam’s fall caused death to enter the human race (Rom 5:12), so it caused death to enter the natural world, which consequently longs for restoration (Rom 8:18–22), which would not be so if death was the means God used to create the natural world.

<sup>18</sup>Some theologians understand God’s creation as an expression of His love. For example, Jürgen Moltmann, *God and Creation*, 75, 76; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994, German 1991), 2, 25; and Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 133. Some theologians deny theistic evolution. For example, Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (2, 139, 140), and Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 275–279.

<sup>19</sup>*Darwin’s God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil*, 159.

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destroying worlds again and again!”<sup>20</sup> Fredrick Nolan, in the Oxford Bampton Lectures of 1833, said, “During the immensity of time in which, we are assured, this development of nature proceeded, the earth is represented as wholly abandoned to creatures . . . monsters of the most hideous forms and ferocious natures. If the notion of a Creator be admitted into this scheme, the moral incongruities . . . are . . . gross . . . he is represented as improving upon his first essays; as destroying in succession his earliest and rudest works, to exercise his skill in the production of others, more worthy of his contrivance.”<sup>21</sup> In 1991, David Hull of Northwestern University evaluated the evolutionary process as “rife with happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, death, pain and horror . . . The God implied by evolutionary theory and the data of natural history . . . is not a loving God who cares about His productions. He is . . . careless, indifferent, almost diabolical. He is certainly not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray.”<sup>22</sup>

One must look at all biblical truths in the light of the greatest revelation of God at Calvary. The revelation at Calvary was made in history. It had witnesses. As such it provides empirical (historical) evidence of how loving God is, even asking His Father to forgive those who heaped cruelty upon Him (Luke 23:34). Assuming that this same Creator Christ (Heb 1:1–2) heaped cruelty on animals, not for part of a day, but for millions of years, is not a historical datum, but a metaphysical assumption that Calvary can rightly question. Calvary was a holocaust that others brought upon Christ, but the pain and death of animals for millennia would be a holocaust that He brought upon the animal kingdom, which is incompatible with Christ’s love at Calvary.

The fact that the onlooking universe shouted for joy at the creation of this world (Job 38:4–7) is inexplicable if Christ created through causing animal suffering for millions of years. Christ called creation “very good” (Gen 1:31), and that’s worth singing about, but who could call the tortuous process of evolution “very good”? After Christ’s ascension, beings in heaven worshiped God as worthy and deserving of glory because He created all things (Rev 4:10–11). That would be impossible if He created through cruelty. A part of God’s end-time message calls the world to worship the Creator and bring Him glory (Rev 14:6–7), which could not be done if He created through cruelty. Scripture is consistent that God is deserving of glory and worship as Creator (e.g., Rev 4:6–11), for His creative work can only be understood in relation to His character as a God of love (1 John 4:8–16).

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<sup>20</sup>George Bugg, *Scriptural Geology* (London: Hatchard and Son, vol. 2, 1826–1827), 44, quoted in Thane Hutcherson Ury, “The Evolving Face of God as Creator: Early Nineteenth Century Traditionalist and Accommodationist Theological Responses in Anglo Religious Thought to Paleontological Natural Evil in the Fossil Record,” Ph.D dissertation, Andrews University, 2001, 199.

<sup>21</sup>*The Analogy of Revelation and Science* (London: Oxford, 1833), 130, 131.

<sup>22</sup>David Hull, “The God of Galapagos,” *Nature* 352 (1991): 486.



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Christ's warning to Adam about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, stating that eating its fruit would bring death (Gen 2:17), indicates that death was not yet a present reality. Here evil and death are associated with disobedience to the Creator. Such disobedience would bring a curse on nature as well as on Adam and Eve (Gen 3:17–19). When Christ recreates the earth there will be no more curse (Rev 22:3). Clearly curses and death are linked to disobedience and have nothing to do with Christ's method of creation. If the new earth will have no curse, and the curses came through the fall, and the first creation was "very good" (Gen 1:31), it is logical that the first creation had no curses or death. That's why Scripture speaks of death as the wages for sin (Rom 6:23) and an enemy (1 Cor 15:26), and never as God's chosen method to create.

That's why Scripture says, "sin entered the world through one man" (Rom 5:12). It was Adam and not His Creator who brought death to this planet. It was Christ who came to die to put death to death and liberate the fallen race (Rom 4:25). It was the one act of the first Adam that caused this death-condemnation, and the one act of the second Adam's death that provided salvation (Rom 5:18). Christ did not use death to create humans in Eden, He died to save humans at Calvary. Given a cosmic controversy in which Satan hates Christ and has engaged in a process of disinformation about God (Hebrew word *rekullah* of Ezekiel 28:15–16)<sup>23</sup> since the inception of his rebellion, it makes sense that a natural method of creation through horror is something he would promote, for it effectively destroys the drawing power of Calvary. Satan hates the cross because it reveals what God is really like and what he (Satan) is really like. Creation through horror is compatible with Satan's hatred against Christ at the cross and not compatible with a loving Creator-Redeemer who dies for others (rather than inflicting death). Life through death is a biblical concept of atonement and not a biblical concept of creation.

Christ created "every green plant for food" for animals (Gen 1:30). Apparently animals were not created as predators, nor will they be predators in the new earth (Isa 65:25), as no death or pain will be there either (Rev 21:4). Predation is a post-fall phenomenon and should not be read back into the creative process. As a God of love (John 4:7–16), God created in love. The fact that He sees the sparrow fall (Luke 12:6–7), feeds the ravens (Luke 12:24), and was concerned about "the many cattle" in Nineveh if it was destroyed (Jonah 4:11) is evidence that He would not cause animal suffering in a theistic evolutionary plan of creation. How important it is to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture (*sola Scriptura*), rather than a nonbiblical idea (naturalism) to have that function.

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<sup>23</sup>The Hebrew word *rekullah* means "trading" or "peddling," referring to goods or gossip. Here Satan spreads gossip about God. See Richard M. Davidson, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 11 (2000) 1–2:108.

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**What Theistic Evolution Does to the Truth About Christ's Spoken Word**

Christ "is the image of the invisible God . . . by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him" (Col 1:15, 16). God made the universe through Christ (Heb 1:2b; cf. Rev 4 and 5). The question is, did Christ depend upon the natural process of evolution to create, or did He as the omnipotent God create without dependence on anything?

Genesis 1 indicates how Christ created the world and all things in it. He spoke things into existence. In all but one of the days "God said" (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24) is followed by "and it was so," proclaiming the power of His commands. The supernatural power of Christ's creative word is demonstrated by the speed with which His commands were fulfilled, for the creation days were literal, continuous, contiguous, 24 hour periods of time, for the Hebrew word for day "*yôm*" when used with ordinals (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.) is always a literal day.<sup>24</sup> His commands had instant response. That's why He could say each day that the new created reality was "good" (Gen 1:3, 10, 13, 19, 20, 24). That's why Scripture presents creation as one of the mighty acts of God. "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm" (Psa 33:9), for "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (Heb 11:3). Scripture warns that in the end-time there are scoffers who "deliberately forget" that the heavens and earth were created "by God's word" (2 Pet 3:5). One important part of our church mission is to tell these persons that Christ is the Creator (Rev 14:7) and show how He created from Scripture, which includes His time on planet-earth.

Throughout His life on earth, Christ manifested the power of His creative words and works. Here are some examples from the book of John. His first creative miracle changed water into wine, in obedience to His words, "Fill the jars with water" (John 2:7-11). To one an invalid for thirty-eight years Christ said, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk," and he was instantly healed (John 5:1-15). Christ fed five thousand men, besides woman and children, through a creative miracle using "five small barley loaves and two small fish" (John 6:5-14). Christ's creative power gave sight to one born blind (John 9:1-7). Christ called

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<sup>24</sup>Context decides the meaning of the Hebrew word for day (*yôm*). For example: (1) "This is the account of the heaven and the earth when they were created" (Gen 2:4). The word "when" in Hebrew is *yôm*, meaning in the day they were created. Day = six days. (2) "A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath" (Job 20:28). Day = period of God's wrath (also; "Like the coolness of snow at harvest time" (Prov 25:13). Time = period of time). (3) In creation week the six days are designated within the time of an evening and a morning (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), and the seventh day (Gen 2:2-3) and the Sabbath is the seventh day after six creation days in the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8-11). The reason for the specificity of "continuous, contiguous, 24 hours periods of time" is because evolutionists look at the six creation days as six revelatory days, separated by vast amount of time, in their day-age interpretations, which are popular in many churches.

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Himself “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), and resurrections are the ultimate evidence of His creative power.

Christ raised Lazarus after the man had been dead four days. Jesus said to the onlookers,

‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus come out!’ The dead man came out. (John 11:40–44a)

Looking to the future, Jesus spoke about His creative power, “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:28, 29). Christ says of a believer, “I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54). So one day all dead humans will hear the creative voice of Christ and will rise from their graves, so billions will be instantaneously raised by His creative word, just as Adam and Eve received life from His creative work. It is the same Christ who does both through His supernatural power.<sup>25</sup> He was no more dependent upon natural means in creation than He will be dependent on natural means in these final resurrections.

Christ demonstrated His power as Creator through these creative acts during His life on earth.<sup>26</sup> They give demonstration in human history of His creative power in the beginning. To accept His creative power during His life on earth necessitates accepting His creative power in the Genesis record, for both are equally supernatural, and both are given to us through divine revelation. The reason Christ’s spoken word is so important in creation is because God’s word is so important throughout Scripture, for it is the revelation of that word which is supernatural, and hence inspired, and gives us God’s supernatural worldview, which is contrary to the worldview of naturalism.

### **What Theistic Evolution Does to the Sabbath**

In Genesis 1 there is a correspondence between days 1–3 and days 4–6, where the first three days give the areas *formed* by *Elohiym*, the all powerful

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<sup>25</sup>We are not considering here the millennium between the resurrection of the good and the resurrection of the evil (see Revelation 20).

<sup>26</sup>In Genesis Christ created as God, for God worked through Him to create (Heb 1:1–3). Having laid aside the use of His divinity in His incarnation (Phil 2:5–11), Christ depended upon His Father to do creative acts (John 10:25, 32, 38; 14:10). As Son of God He was also a dependent human throughout His human life, but in choosing to die and in His resurrection His divinity operated again. As He chose to become human (Heb 10:5–7), so He chose to lay down His life and to take it up again (John 10:17, 18).

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God, and the last three days give the areas *filled* by Him.<sup>27</sup> This can be charted as follows:

Day 1	Light	Day 4	Luminaries
Day 2	Sky	Day 5	Birds and Fish
Day 3	Land (Plants)	Day 6	Animals and Man (Plants for food)
	Day 7	Sabbath <sup>28</sup>	

The climax is not the creation of humans,<sup>29</sup> as it is in theistic evolutionary theory, but the gift of the Sabbath.<sup>30</sup> The narrative ends with the Sabbath in Genesis 2:1 (chapter divisions came long after the time of writing). Karl Barth says the Sabbath “is in reality the coronation of His work” for “not man but the divine rest on the seventh-day is the crown of creation.”<sup>31</sup>

The first biblical reference to the Sabbath (Gen 2:2–3) is in a chiasmic structure, where it is central and hence emphasizes its importance.

- A God finished his work (v. 2)
- B And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done (v. 2)
- C So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it (v. 3)
- B' Because on it God rested from all his work which he had done (v. 3)
- A' In creation (v. 3)<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1–15*, 6–7.

<sup>28</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1–15*, 7. Adding “Dark” and “Sea” as Kidmer does, makes more sense. Derek Kidmer in the *Tyndale O.T. Commentaries*, Gen. ed. D. J. Wiseman, Genesis (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1967), 46, arranges the six days as follows:

	<i>Form</i>		<i>Fullness</i>
Day 1	Light and Dark	Day 4	Lights of Day and Night
Day 2	Sea and Sky	Day 5	Creatures of Water and Air
Day 3	Fertile Earth	Day 6	Creatures of Land

Wayne Grudem has a similar arrangement, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 301.

<sup>29</sup>Humans are “the crowning work of Creation” in SDA Fundamental Beliefs, #6 (which compares humans with other created things in space). Davis A. Young considers humans as “the climax of creation” in this sense in *Creation and the Flood: An Alternative Flood Geology and Theistic Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 89.

<sup>30</sup>John S. Feinberg, in *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, notes that the Sabbath commandment is linked to the creation narrative of Genesis 1–2. He considers this as “undeniably a significant theme of these chapters,” although not the whole point of them. He also notes that the “rest of the Pentateuch makes it quite clear that a major purpose of that day is to worship the great God who made all things” 573. Compare Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning*, trans. David G. Preston (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984), 52–59, where the climax of creation is the Sabbath.

<sup>31</sup>Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), vol. 3/1, 223.

<sup>32</sup>Kenneth Strand, “The Sabbath,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 493–495.

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God's blessing (Hebrew, *bārāk*) was only given to the seventh day. It was set apart from the other six, and in this way it was made holy. The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew word *šābat*, meaning to "cease" or "desist" from a previous activity. On day six, Christ judged creation as "very good" (Gen 1:31), and hence completed (Gen 2:3). For "in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested" (Exod 31:17). His "works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb 4:3 NKJV). Clearly the work of creation was finished on the sixth day of creation week, contrary to the claims of some who believe in an on-going macro-evolutionary process.

In Scripture the Sabbath is a celebration of finished works of Christ, in creation (Gen 2:1–3, Exod 20:8–11), in the Red Sea deliverance (Deut 5:15), and on crucifixion Friday (John 19:30). Christ created Adam on creation Friday, and on crucifixion Friday He became the second Adam for the world in His death (Luke 23:44–24:6). Crucifixion Friday, like creation Friday, was a beginning for the race. The Sabbath celebrates (1) Christ's finished creation for Adam and Eve, (2) Christ's finished deliverance for a nation, and (3) Christ's finished sacrifice for a world. The first finished work of Christ is as literal as the other two finished works. Christ was no more dependent on an evolutionary process than He was on any other process in these miracles of His divine power.

Those denying a literal seven-day creation week and attempting to found the Sabbath in the Sabbath-keeping practice of Christ overlook the fact that the pre-incarnate Christ, who gave Moses the ten commandments on Sinai, inscribed the following revelation in stone (Exod 24:12): "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exod 20:11). God created all things through Christ (Heb 1:1–2). In the fourth commandment Christ was writing about His own experience in human history at the end of creation week (Gen 2:1–3, cf. John 1:1–3, 14; Col 1:15–15). Christ as "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) made the Sabbath for all humans (Mark 2:27). Christ's pre-incarnate teaching about the Sabbath clearly endorsed the six days creation week, where the days were literal, historical, consecutive, contiguous, 24 hours, each bordered by an "evening and morning" (Gen 1:5, 6, 13, 19, 23, 31), and not merely revelatory days with millions of years between them. In keeping the Sabbath during His life on earth, Christ endorsed the six days creation account. In His death, Christ's followers "rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment" (Luke 23:56b; cf. Exod 20:8–11).

So it is not possible to ground Sabbath keeping in Christ's incarnational practice and teaching without reference to creation week, because He began His practice of Sabbath keeping at the end of creation week and presents the Genesis creation account as literal history in His pre-incarnate teaching—because He was there. No wonder the incarnate Christ speaks of the creation of Adam and

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Eve as a literal historical fact (Matt 19:4–5), and Paul speaks of their creation and fall as literal historical facts (1 Tim 2:13, 14).

Prior to Darwin, there was general belief that creation days were literal.<sup>33</sup> Some even referred to creation days as literal because of a literal Sabbath,<sup>34</sup> or referred to the Sabbath in creation week.<sup>35</sup> In denying the literal days of creation, and so denying a literal creation week, theistic evolution removes the God-given foundation for the seventh-day Sabbath.

#### What Theistic Evolution Does to Scripture as God's Word

Behind all that has been said so far, theistic evolution calls into question God's written Word, and hence questions the truths it presents. In denying the literal 24 hours days of Genesis 1–2, theistic evolution unwittingly questions God's Word.<sup>36</sup>

Robert Reymond gives seven hermeneutical principles for interpreting the creation days. (1) The preponderate meaning of a term should be maintained unless contextual considerations suggest otherwise. The Hebrew word for day *yôm* in the singular, dual, or plural occurs 2,225 times in the Old Testament, and the overwhelming majority designate a 24-hour period. No contextual demand is present in Genesis 1 to do otherwise. (2) The recurring phrase “evening and morning” (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) occurs in 37 verses outside of Genesis (e.g., Exod 18:13; 27:21) and always designates a 24 hour period. (3) The ordinal numbers (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) used with *yôm* (same texts as above) occur hundreds of times in the Old Testament (e.g., Exodus 12:15; 24:16; Lev 12:3) and always designate a 24 hour period. (4) The creation of the sun “to rule the day” and the moon “to rule the night” (Gen 1:16–18) on the fourth day suggest literal 24 hours days for days 4–7, and nothing in the text suggests that days 1–3 were different. (5) Scripture best interprets Scripture (*analogia Scripturae*), where a less clear passage is interpreted by a clearer passage or passages. The fourth commandment of Exodus 20:11 (cf. Exod 31:15–17) documents that creation days were literal. (6) Days plural (Hebrew *yāmîm*) occur 608 times in the Old

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<sup>33</sup>For example, John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Genesis*, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1. 92; John Brown (1772–1787), *Systematic Theology* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2002), 170; Heinrich Hepppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans., G. T. Thomson (London: Wakeman Trust, 1950, 1<sup>st</sup> 1861), 199.

<sup>34</sup>For example, Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed., James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 1. 444–452, and Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996; includes the 1932 and 1938 vols), 155.

<sup>35</sup>For example, Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed., Jaroslav Pelican (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 1.80, see 3–82.

<sup>36</sup>There are those who do not subscribe to theistic evolution, but who question whether God created the world in six literal days. They honor God's power to create, and would not question His ability to do so in six days, but seem hesitant on other grounds. By contrast, Scripture has a certainty that can help them have the same.

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Testament and always designate 24 hour periods. (7) If Moses intended to mean day-age, instead of a 24 hour period, he would have used the Hebrew term *śōlām*.<sup>37</sup>

Theistic evolution needs to take God's creative word seriously as well as His written Word that supports a literal historical creation. It should be kept in mind that if the length of creation days is a day-age, then how would vegetation created on the third day (Gen 1:11–13) survive until the fourth day when the sun was created (Gen 1:14–19)? This is contrary to science and is another contextual reason that the days of Genesis 1–2 are literal 24 hours periods.

The whole book of Genesis is structured by the word “generations” (*tōlēdōt*), so that the statement, “these are the generations of the heavens and the earth” in the Genesis 2:4 (KJV) creation account is as literal as “these are the generations of Noah” (Gen 6:9, KJV) or as literal as God's promise to establish His covenant with Abraham “and thy seed after thee in their generations” (Gen 17:7, KJV). Scripture presents creation as one of the mighty acts of God. “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Psa 33:9). “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (Heb 11:3).

Genesis is only one of five books Moses wrote under God's guidance. Do his other books interpret the creation week as literal? All subsequent references of Moses to creation week<sup>38</sup> are given a literal interpretation. For example, (1) manna fell for six days but none on the seventh day Sabbath (Exod 16:16:4–6, 21–23). (2) The Sabbath in the fourth commandment is based on the seventh day which God blessed after six days of creation (Exod 20:8–11). (3) The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people, “for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested (Exod 31:16–17). To interpret the creation record as non-literal doesn't make sense in view of these subsequent references. The above evidence for literal creation days needs to correct the Catholic Church<sup>39</sup> and even evangelical theologians

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<sup>37</sup>Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of The Christian Faith* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), 393, 394.

<sup>38</sup>Even the repetition of the Sabbath command with its additional meaning and purpose (celebrate liberation at the Red Sea—rest from enemies Deut 5:15) is prefaced by reference to the Sabbath as a holy day of rest following six days of work (Deut 5:12–14), based upon the creation holy Sabbath following six days of creation (Gen 2:1–2).

<sup>39</sup>For example, the second Vatican Council (1963–1965) addressed the relation between Scripture and science. It speaks of “the rightful independence of science” (Documents of Vatican II, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J., trans. ed., Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 234), and of “the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences” (265). This is in keeping with the Catholic division between Scripture and tradition. In the Document on Revelation, “sacred tradition” is placed before “sacred revelation” (117). In the same way it is expected that science takes precedence over Scripture in the area of evolution. The latest *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) says, “The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies which have splendidly enriched knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of man.” The document

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who otherwise believe in the inerrancy of Scripture,<sup>40</sup> for any question of the literal days of creation unwittingly denies a detail of God's Word. Is this any different in kind from Satan questioning a detail of God Word about dying if the forbidden fruit was eaten (Gen 2:16)? That questioning of God's Word led to the fall of the human race (Gen 3:1–19). Eve fell because she listened to the questioning of God's Word. If she had trusted God's Word she would have evaluated Satan's alleged empirical evidence for what it was—a rejection of God's Word. When Eve “saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it” (Gen 3:6). She put her faith in what looked to her like empirical evidence that doubted God's Word.<sup>41</sup> That's the fundamental challenge we face in this final Faith and Science Conference<sup>42</sup>—will we place our faith in God's Word or in empirical evidence that seems to call it into question?

#### Conclusion

The overwhelming evidence in the Genesis creation record, in the other books of Moses, and in the entirety of Scripture<sup>43</sup> leads one to conclude that God created during a literal six days followed by a literal Sabbath. Any accommodation of the literal historical creation week to theistic evolution (1) calls into question God's Word not only in Genesis but throughout Scripture, replaces the plan

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gives thanks to God “for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers” (Laager: Laager, 1994, 74), and views the Genesis creation account as symbolic (87).

<sup>40</sup>For example, Carl Henry said, “The Bible does not require belief in six literal 24-hour creation days on the basis of Genesis 1–2” [*God, Revelation and Authority* (Waco: Word, 1983), vol. 6, 226]. Millard Erickson says, at “present, the view which I find most satisfactory is a variation of the age-day theory,” although he wisely adds, “we cannot be dogmatic” [*Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1998) 407]. Wayne Grudem considers “the possibility must be left open that God has chosen not to give us enough information to come to a clear decision on this question” [*Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 297], and the “heated debate” is “far from being settled decisively one way or another” (293). Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest believe “The most probable conclusion is that the six consecutive creative acts were separated by long periods of time” [*Integrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990) vol. 2, 44]. So there is considerable hesitancy to see the Genesis creation days as literal.

<sup>41</sup>Christ the Creator gave Eve life, a husband, a garden, the world, the Sabbath, and Himself in close Yahweh fellowship with a warning about the forbidden fruit. Yet Satan, who had given her nothing except a contrary claim to Christ's, was accepted. Such is the delusive power of doubting God's Word because apparent empirical evidence seems to call it into question.

<sup>42</sup>International Faith and Science Conference, Denver, Colorado, August 20–26, 2004.

<sup>43</sup>Although beyond the scope of this paper, there are various references concerning Israel keeping the seventh-day Sabbath (Exod 16:23–26; 31:16; Ezek 20:12–24), as well as non-ethnic persons (“aliens within your gates” Exod 20:10b), Christ's practice of Sabbath keeping (Luke 4:16), Sabbath keeping after Calvary (Matt 24:20), Sabbath keeping for all humans (Mark 2:27), Sabbath keeping in the end-time because the everlasting gospel, to all nations, calls for all to worship Christ as Creator, with the words who “made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water,” which recite a part of the Sabbath commandment (Exod 20:11a), and Sabbath keeping for all the redeemed in the new earth (Isa 66:22, 23).



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of salvation, and is contrary to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church; (2) replaces the uniqueness of human creation with humans merely a product of the process; (3) replaces the supernatural by the natural; (4) replaces the biblically constructed worldview with one that concurs with the cosmic controversy questioning of God's Word and nature; (5) replaces the loving God with a God who created through millions of years of suffering, portraying Him in a way incompatible with Calvary; (6) undermines Christ's supernatural words in Scripture, in His past, present, and future ministry; (7) removes a literal Sabbath as the climax of a literal creation week, which calls into question the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8–11); and (8) rejects God's Word in Genesis 1–2, which is just as destructive as Eve rejecting God's Word in Genesis 3.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore the Seventh-day Adventist church must reject theistic evolution as God's method of creation, or it could end up questioning God's Word throughout Scripture, abandon its unique end-time mission, and fail God just as Eve did. We must not allow God's Word to be doubted through apparent empirical evidence, but test empirical evidence by God's Word.<sup>45</sup> For in the end-time there are scoffers who "deliberately forget" that the heavens and earth were created "by God's word" (2 Pet 3:5) and believers who "by faith . . . understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (Heb 11:2). This supernatural creation is unanimously attested to throughout Scripture, leaving no room for theistic evolution (some examples: Exod 20:11; Neh 9:6; Job 26:7, 13; Psa 8:3; 33:6; 96:5; 102:25; 104:24, 30; 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 136:5; 146:6; 148:4, 5; Prov 3:19; 8:22–30; Eccl 12:1; Isa 37:16; 40:12, 26–28; 42:7; 43:7; 44:24; 45:11–18; 51:13, 16; Jer 51:15; Zech 12:1; Mark 13:19; John 1:1–3; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 1:1, 2; Rev 4:11; 10:6; 14:7).

**Corroborating Criticism of Theistic Evolution**

Theistic Evolution hoped to bridge the gap between faith and science. In his article "Theistic Evolution: Deism Revisited?" (1997), Michael Harbin documents that "Theistic evolution . . . has not proven to be the mediating position once hoped for," and that "theistic evolution finds itself in the awkward position

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<sup>44</sup>Satan deceived Eve to believe she could become as God by rejecting His Word (Gen 3:1–6), which was a type of natural "evolution" apart from God. Evolutionary theory that denies God's Word (as seen in this paper) is equally evolution apart from God, for theistic evolution is a misnomer, for it is tantamount to saying God creates through natural evolution apart from His Word about supernatural creation in Genesis 1–2. Such a premise questions the reliability of God's Word about a supernatural creation in history (Gen 1–2) just as much as Satan called into question a part of the creation record in tempting Eve (Gen 2:16, 17; 3:1–6).

<sup>45</sup>The same principle applies in testing miracles, prophetic claims, and speaking in tongues. God's Word is the divine standard to determine between the genuine and the counterfeit (e.g., cf. 1 Thess 5:20, 21; 1 John 4:2, 3; Matt 7:20; Gal 5:22, 23; Jer 28:9, cf. Deut 18:20–22).

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of defending a scientific model that is coming under increasing attack, even by its own adherents.”<sup>46</sup>

In his book *Intelligent Design* (1999), William A. Dembski, a leading voice in the Intelligent Design movement, evaluates theistic evolution. The fundamental difference between theistic evolution and Intelligent Design is the inaccessibility of God’s design in nature (theistic evolution) and the accessibility of God’s design in nature (Intelligent Design). Dembski says, “The current theological fashion prefers an evolutionary God inaccessible to scientific scrutiny over a designer God whose actions are clearly detectable.”<sup>47</sup> In other words,

Theistic evolution places theism and evolution in an odd tension. If God purposely created life through Darwinian means, then God’s purpose was ostensibly to conceal his purpose in creation. Within theistic evolution, God is a master of stealth who constantly eludes our best efforts to detect him empirically. Yes, the theistic evolutionist believes that the universe is designed. Yet insofar as there is design in the universe, it is design we recognize strictly through the eyes of faith. Accordingly the physical world in itself provides no evidence that life is designed.<sup>48</sup>

So Intelligent Design (design in nature) is incompatible with theistic evolution (Designer God and His empirical design removed from nature), but compatible with atheistic evolution in that both look in nature for evidence. However, unlike evolution, Intelligent Design does not extrapolate a theory beyond its evidential base,<sup>49</sup> and unlike theistic evolution it critiques evolution at the mega-level of worldviews. Intelligent Design does not attempt to marry two incompatible worldviews (natural and supernatural, as does theistic evolution), but critiques the naturalistic worldview of atheistic evolution for rejecting the presence of design.<sup>50</sup>

William Dembski’s latest book is *The Design Revolution: Answering The Toughest Questions About Intelligent Design* (2004). In the Foreword Charles Colson rightly notes that Intelligent Design is a scientific theory, and because it is a scientific theory, “secular thinkers are no longer able to simply dismiss design as a religious idea.”<sup>51</sup> In response to Dembski’s book, Ted Peters, Professor

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<sup>46</sup>Michael A. Harbin, “Theistic Evolution: Deism Revisited?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 40/4 (December 1997) 639–651; see 640, 651.

<sup>47</sup>William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 110, 111.

<sup>48</sup>William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 110.

<sup>49</sup>William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 113.

<sup>50</sup>William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 114.

<sup>51</sup>William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution: Answering The Toughest Questions About Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 17. Keep this in mind with Hunter’s assessment that evolution has only religious certainty and not scientific certainty (footnote 4). This should make Christian scholars pause before giving more credence to a natural evolutionary method of creation than to the *ex nihilo* supernatural method of creation in Scripture.

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of Systematic Theology, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and Graduate Theological Union, says, “I find William Dembski’s writing and argumentation on behalf of intelligent design to be careful, erudite, thorough and a formidable challenge to the theistic evolution camp I normally defend.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution*, 3.