

## **Adventist Theology and Deep Time/Evolutionary Theory: Are They Compatible?**

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The goal of this essay is to assess the compatibility of Adventist theology with deep time and the evolutionary reconstruction of the origins of earth history.<sup>1</sup> Should the Adventist church adopt one of the many “intermediate models of origins” that attempt to harmonize Christianity to evolution?<sup>2</sup> Can the church harmonize biblical creation to deep time evolutionary history without changing its essence and theological system? Would acceptance of deep time/evolutionary ideas modify only peripheral issues? Is deep time/evolution compatible with the inner logic of Adventist theology as expressed in the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan?

To achieve this goal and answer these questions, we will explore some systematic consequences of abandoning the historical-literal meaning of Genesis 1. We will start by considering the nature of the issue before us. Then, to gain a sense of the level of theological adjustment involved in harmonizing Adventist theology to deep time/evolutionary ideas, we will focus on biblical history, God’s actions, the inner logic of theological ideas, and the source of theological truth. To sense the extensive reinterpretation of Adventist doctrines involved in

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<sup>1</sup> Deep time and evolutionary ideas in this essay refer to the origin of life on planet earth, not to the origin of the universe or life in other galaxies.

<sup>2</sup> I am referring to the many attempts of harmonizing creation to evolution already produced by Christian theologians and scientists. Jim Gibson calls them “intermediate” models (“Issues in ‘Intermediate’ Models of Origins” [paper presented at the *Second International Conference on Faith and Science*, Denver, CO, August 23, 2004]). For an introduction to various intermediate models, see Administrative Committee, “Report of the Creation Study Committee” (Atlanta: Presbyterian Church in America: [www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics), 2000). Jim Gibson has convincingly shown that all intermediate models of harmonization have serious scientific problems. On this basis, he argues cogently that we should not adopt models that not only are unfaithful to biblical thought, but are also scientifically suspect.

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harmonization, we will underline the hermeneutical role that cosmology plays in the formation of theological thinking.

**Nature of the Issue**

The issue before us is not whether we can harmonize Genesis 1 with deep time/evolution, but whether deep time/evolution fits the entire system of biblical theology.<sup>3</sup> In short, are the six 24 hours days of Genesis 1 an essential component of biblical religious truth?

Some assume that Adventist theology is compatible with deep time/evolutionary history. For them, all it takes to harmonize evolution with Adventist/biblical theology is to interpret Genesis 1 theologically, that is, not literally.<sup>4</sup> If we were to make such a small concession, Adventist theology and doctrines would not only remain unchanged, but would also become “relevant” to those persuaded of the truthfulness of deep time and evolutionary ideas. The intellectual credibility of the church would increase and its intellectual appeal be broadened.

This view assumes that the deep time history of origins does not disturb the theological truths of Scripture, nor the Adventist theological system and fundamental beliefs. When it comes to the *theological* understanding of creation, “*time is not of the essence.*” Yet, if due to scientific and methodological convictions, Adventists take deep time and evolutionary ideas as true, they will have to harmonize not only Genesis 1, but also the entire system of Adventist doctrines. Then nothing would remain unchanged.

Those who assume that biblical creation and deep time/evolutionary history are compatible forget that in *biblical* thinking, *time is of the essence.* According to Scripture, God acts historically in human time and space. The truth of biblical religion is historical. If time is of the essence, deep time/evolutionary history conflicts with the closely-knit historical system of biblical theology. Biblical theology cannot fit the evolutionary version of historical development without losing its essence and truth. God’s works in history cannot follow evolutionary patterns. God’s history cannot become evolutionary history.

Consequently, before accommodating Adventist theology to deep time/macro evolutionary views, Adventists must make sure that deep time/evolutionary history does not change the order of theological causes assumed in Scripture, does not change the biblical history of God’s acts, strongly

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<sup>3</sup> Deep time cannot be separated from evolutionary processes. Although Progressive Creationism accepts multiple events of ex-nihilo creation, it also *de facto* accepts the evolutionary interpretation of life history on earth produced by evolutionary theory. Divine interventions in progressive creations adjust to evolutionary history, either explaining its gaps or saltations by transcendent divine interventions of creation ex-nihilo, or subsuming divine activity to macro evolutionary process via the providential-spiritual-immanent (non-historical) activity of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Fritz Guy, “Interpreting Genesis One in the Twenty-first Century,” *Spec-trum* 31/2 (2003): 5-16.

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supports the pillars of the Adventist Faith, and strengthens the historical understanding of redemption embedded in the Sanctuary doctrine and the Great Controversy metanarrative.

#### **Rewriting Biblical History**

I agree with Fritz Guy when he invites us to read Genesis 1 theologically. Yet, we need to recognize that there are different theological readings of Genesis 1.<sup>5</sup> Theological interpretations spring from our preunderstanding of God's nature and His actions in created time. Usually, Christian theologians derive their understanding of God's reality from Greek metaphysics, according to which "ultimate" reality is timeless. Since a timeless God does not act directly within a historical sequence of events, we can understand why in this view historical events do not belong to what is properly theological. We can also understand why for most Christian theologians the evolutionary rewriting of history does not affect theological (religious) content. This presuppositional perspective allows theologians to harmonize creation with evolution by separating the theological (religious) content of Genesis 1 (its truth) from its historical wrapping (the story). Accordingly, the period of six 24 hour days and the historical process the text describes are dismissed as "non theological," and God's creative action is displaced from the historical to the spiritual realm.

Yet, Adventists depart from Christian theological tradition at its deepest hermeneutical level. Decidedly rejecting the "timeless" definition of ultimate reality found in Greek metaphysics, they accept the biblical understanding of ultimate reality being "historical." Thus, Adventist theologians do not read Scripture from the perspective of Greek metaphysical timelessness, but from the biblical understanding of God's being and actions. The God of Scripture is not timeless, but infinitely and analogously temporal. He creates and saves by acting directly from within the sequence of natural and human historical events. For this hermeneutical reason, when Adventists read Genesis 1 theologically, they see God creating our planet in a historical sequence of seven consecutive 24 hour days. This sequence of integrated divine actions not only forms part of the history of God, but also the history of our planet. In creation, God is performing a divine act in a historical sequence within the flow of created time.

Harmonization of theology to evolution starts with accepting the evolutionary rewriting of the history of humankind, accepting that paleontologists, geologists, and biologists tell the right account of historical realities. Because the Genesis "story" does not fit the "facts" as understood by evolutionists, most Christian theologians assuming the Greek "timeless" understanding of ultimate reality seriously consider letting biblical history go. As these Christian theologians have come to understand that God's act of creation does not take place in

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<sup>5</sup> Progressive Creationism and Theistic Evolution are theological readings of Genesis 1; see below.

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history, they have felt free to read the biblical history of creation as myth,<sup>6</sup> saga,<sup>7</sup> or literary framework.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the inner logic of theological thinking articulated by God's acts suggests that letting go of the biblical history of creation entails letting go of the biblical history of redemption and the future eschatological history of God with his redeemed church in eternity.<sup>9</sup>

For instance, theologians working from the Historical Critical Method of biblical interpretation apply the same evolutionary pattern to the entire sweep of biblical history. They are willing to let go of not only the history of creation, but also the entirety of biblical history, particularly when it presents God acting historically within the spatio-temporal flux of human history. We should not be surprised that according to this theological approach, the new earth will not be historical but spiritual.<sup>10</sup>

Can Adventist theology let go of biblical history? Is the reality and truthfulness of biblical history of the essence of Christianity? Can Adventist theology let go of the Genesis 1 history without also letting go of biblical and eschatological histories? At this point, we need to turn our attention to the actions of God involved in the process of creation. The answer to these questions depends on our understanding of "ultimate" reality.

### Spiritualizing Biblical Theology

Theology revolves around reality and its causes. Evolution also revolves around reality and its causes. Genesis 1 explains the origin of the physical world as a historical sequence of divine creative acts in space and time. Evolution explains the origin of the same physical world by constructing a different history with a different length, different events, and different causes. Clearly, only one history took place. The two historical scenarios cannot be true at the same time. Thus, harmonization of biblical creation with evolution requires not only the acceptance of a different account of history, but also a different understanding of the causal role God had in generating the history of evolution. The systematic

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<sup>6</sup> Bultmann's demythologization program described sacred history as "myth." See, for instance, Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith* (New York: Meridian, 1960).

<sup>7</sup> Barth favored the term "saga" to categorize theologically the type of history Scripture presents in Genesis 1–11. Barth argues that "in addition to the 'historical' there has always been a legitimate 'non-historical' and pre-historical view of history, and its 'non-historical' and pre-historical depiction in the form of saga" (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, 13 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936): III/1, 81). Saga is clearly defined as "an intuitive and poetic picture of a prehistorical reality of history which is enacted once and for all within the confines of time and space" (*ibid.*).

<sup>8</sup> See Gibson, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Jürgen Moltmann applies the Greek understanding of ultimate reality to eschatology. Thus, the world to come will not have a continuation of human history forever, but will consist of a timeless reality in which the soul shares in the divine life of the trinity. *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> See note 9.

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centrality of this issue for theology cannot be overemphasized. Theological consistency requires that once we adjust our view of how God relates to evolutionary history, we will apply the same view throughout the entire range of human history.

This brings us to a central issue in any theological harmonization of Genesis 1 to evolution: namely, divine causality in evolutionary history. How does God operate in evolutionary history? Does God operate historically within the future-present-past sequence of time, as Scripture says, or spiritually (non-historically), as Christian theologies suggest? Let us review briefly the way in which the leading intermediate models harmonizing creation and evolution theologically conceive the nature of divine action in creation. Both Theistic Evolution and Progressive Creationism understand divine causality in evolutionary history spiritually rather than historically.

**Theistic Evolution.** Teilhard de Chardin, a French Roman Catholic priest, imagines a system of theistic evolution where God works from the inside of nature and history, not from their outside. God works as spiritual energy animating evolution in its lower stages (for God “could of course only act in an impersonal form and under the veil of biology”<sup>11</sup>). Thus, according to Chardin, divine causality does not operate within the spatiotemporal order of historical causes, but as hidden energy from the non-spatiotemporal realm of the spirit.

**Progressive Creationism.** Bernard Ramm, an American Evangelical theologian, rejects theistic evolution because, according to him, it springs from a pantheistic view of God’s being.<sup>12</sup> Instead, he suggests Progressive Creationism as the theory that gives the “best accounting for all the facts—biological, geological, and Biblical.”<sup>13</sup> “Progressive creation is the means whereby God as world ground and the Spirit of God as World Entelechy bring to pass the divine

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 291-292.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Ramm argues, “According to the Biblical view pantheistic identification with Nature is wrong. God is not Nature, but *world ground* to nature as both Augustine and Aquinas taught” (ibid., 108). He later explains, “God is world ground. He is world ground to all geological phenomena as well as to morality, ethics, and spirituality. God is in Nature for God is *in* all things. *All* is according to his divine will and by his power. The Spirit of God is the Divine Entelechy seeing that the Divine will is accomplished in Nature. Progressive creation is the belief that Nature is permeated with the divine activity but not in any pantheistic sense” (ibid., 227). Ramm builds on Augustine, from whom he quotes approvingly: “Whatever bodily or seminal causes, then, may be used for the production of things, either by the cooperation of angels, men, or the lower animals, or by sexual generation; and whatever power of the desires and mental emotions of the mother have to produce in the tender foetus, corresponding lineaments and colours; yet the natures themselves, which are thus variously affected, *are the productions of none but the most high God. It is his occult power which pervades all things, and is present in all without being contaminated*, which gives being to all what is, and modifies and limits its existence so that without him it would not be thus and would not have any being at all (Confessions, XII, 25, quoted in Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 107).

<sup>13</sup> Ramm, 293.

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will in Nature.”<sup>14</sup> God works creation by a combination of instantaneous miraculous fiat creation and a process of derivative creation. God operates fiat creation from *outside* history.<sup>15</sup> Ramm suggests that several acts of fiat creation have occurred through deep evolutionary time.<sup>16</sup> These acts help to clarify the starting point and gaps in evolutionary history that science cannot explain.<sup>17</sup> Then God “turns the task of creation over to the Holy Spirit who is *inside* Nature.”<sup>18</sup> The Holy Spirit is the energy that brings about the evolutionary side of God’s plan of creation.<sup>19</sup>

According to these theories, God works out the events of natural and human history, as constructed by the biological mechanism and laws of evolution. However, according to Scripture, God created our world by acting not from the inside or outside of the spatiotemporal series of historical causes, but from within its historical flow.<sup>20</sup>

The difference between Theistic Evolution and Progressive Creationism consists in the way they see God’s involvement in the process of evolution. Both, however, share the conviction that evolutionary science tells the true story of what actually took place in historical reality. Moreover, following the dictates of timeless Greek metaphysics, both views assume that God does not work historically within the spatiotemporal sequence of historical events. Divine causality does not operate historically (sequentially), but spiritually (instantaneously). Thus, Christian harmonization of creation to evolution stands on the prior harmonization of reality to Greek metaphysical and anthropological dualisms that guided Augustine’s and Aquinas’ theological constructions.<sup>21</sup> They systematized the dehistoricization and spiritualization of Christian doctrine on which Theistic Evolutionism and Progressive Creationism build their theological syntheses.

The way in which Theistic Evolution and Progressive Creationism deal with creation may help Adventists see that harmonizing biblical creation with deep time/evolutionary history requires more than a theological interpretation of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ramm, 115–116.

<sup>15</sup> Ramm, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Ramm, 116.

<sup>17</sup> Ramm, 228.

<sup>18</sup> Ramm, 116 [emphasis in the original].

<sup>19</sup> Ramm, 116.

<sup>20</sup> Ramm claims that the way to fit evolution to creation is to understand it as “an element in providence” (ibid., 292). However, in Scripture, divine providence does not act from “inside” or “outside” nature and historical events, but from within their flow. Ellen White explains that “in the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, *behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will*” (Education, 173).

<sup>21</sup> Bernard Ramm borrows freely from Augustine and Aquinas as he argues that “God is world ground”; see 106-108.

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Genesis 1 account. The way God acts in history must also fit the biological mechanism of evolution and the actual historical events it generates. How would this reinterpretation of divine activity affect Adventist theology?

#### A Conflict of Metanarratives

All systems of theological interpretation stand on the strength of their inner logic that revolves around the way theologians understand the being and actions of God and the way He relates to human beings. In theological method, this “preunderstanding” behaves as a hermeneutical “template” shaping all theological ideas, doctrines, and interpretations of Scripture. Changes in the theological template of any theological system necessarily unleash changes in the understanding of all its theological ideas, doctrines, and interpretations of Scripture. The template, then, ultimately decides whether we can integrate a new idea like evolution to the inner logic of the system of Christian theology.

Roman Catholicism and Protestantism share the same template, from which they ground and develop their theologies. For them the template is metaphysics, on which the notions of a timeless God, sovereign providence, and the immortal soul play a dominant role. Bernard Ramm recognized the defining role that the classical metaphysical template plays in his “progressive creation” model of accommodating Evangelical theology to evolutionary theory. “[A] theory is *antichristian when it denies something in Christian metaphysics*, i.e., when it attacks the very roots of the Christian faith.”<sup>22</sup> Ramm goes further, “If it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of all that evolution is contrary to Christian metaphysics then we must brand theistic evolution [and progressive creationism] as an impossible position. We shall be either Christians or evolutionists.”<sup>23</sup> Obviously, theistic evolutionists and progressive creationists believe that evolutionary theory is not contrary to Christian metaphysics. Evolution fits within the metaphysical template Christian philosophers constructed from Plato’s and Aristotle’s views. Historical contradictions are not important, metaphysical contradictions are. Does evolution fits within the Adventist theological template?

Does Adventist theology have a theological template? Does Adventist theology have a metaphysics? Here we are facing an issue we seldom discuss in Adventist theological circles. As far as I know, Adventist theology has a theological template. Adventist theology has implicitly rejected the metaphysical template on which Christian theology stands and replaced it with the Great Controversy metanarrative Adventist theologians find in Scripture itself. Ellen White testified to the existence of an Adventist template when she explained that “The subject of the sanctuary . . . opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great Advent

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<sup>22</sup> Ramm, 291 [emphasis in the original].

<sup>23</sup> Ramm, 292.

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movement, and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of his people."<sup>24</sup>

The main difference between the classical metaphysical template and the biblical metanarrative template is that the former places God and his acts in a spiritual, timeless, non-historical realm of reality, while the latter places God and his acts in the historical continuum of created reality. This methodological template helps us understand why Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians correctly argue that since evolution fits the template of classical metaphysics, they can harmonize it to Christianity without changing its theological structure and inner logic.

From the perspective of the biblical metanarrative template, we also easily understand that evolution does not fit the biblical template embodied in the Great Controversy metanarrative that includes the six twenty-four hour consecutive days of divine creation of life on our planet, the inner historicist logic centered in the sanctuary, and the eschatological prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. The reason for this situation is simple. Evolution is a metanarrative about the origins of human history that fits well in the timeless non-historical template on which Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies stand. By the same token, the evolutionary metanarrative collides with the Great Controversy metanarrative because both attempt to explain the same historical reality using different views of the causes involved in the process. As Ramm correctly pointed out, we should reject deep time/evolutionary history if it contradicts Christian metaphysics. Because biblical thought deals with metaphysical issues by way of historical metanarrative, it unavoidably conflicts with the deep time/evolutionary metanarrative. Evolution and biblical creation are rationally incompatible metanarratives between which theologians and believers must choose.

#### **The Role of Cosmology in Theological Hermeneutics**

To understand the way in which acceptance of deep time/evolutionary history will affect Adventist theology and doctrines, we need to realize the macro hermeneutical role cosmology plays in Christian theology. In theological thinking, cosmology is not a side issue, but one of the few broad high-level issues (theories) that condition the understanding of all biblical teachings, including redemption and eschatology. In Scripture, the design and history of creation sets the stages from which sin, covenant, sanctuary, redemption, atonement, and eschatology draw their meaning and logic. Changes in these far-reaching ideas necessarily unleash changes in the entire theological system. Besides, biblical cosmology assumes and depends on the biblical view of divine reality.

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<sup>24</sup> *Great Controversy*, 424. The doctrine of the Sanctuary is the backbone of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan that takes place as an ongoing historical battle for the destiny of the universe.



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Those attempting to accommodate Genesis 1 to evolutionary history will find themselves not only changing the length of time of creation, but also its actual content and history.<sup>25</sup> This will take place because we cannot accommodate Genesis 1 to deep time history without also accommodating the theological order of causes implicit in the biblical text to the order of causality implicit in the mechanism of evolution. In short, accommodating the biblical six twenty-four hour consecutive days to deep time/scientific history require accommodating not only the length of time, but also the understanding of the order of reality and the causes involved in the generation of life on earth.

Changes in cosmology require changes in divine reality and action. In turn, the changes in the understanding of divine reality and actions required to accommodate biblical thinking to evolutionary history will unleash a wholesale reinterpretation of the entire range of Adventist doctrines. Moreover, the project of accommodating Adventist theology to evolutionary history stands on a paradigmatic shift in theological authority. Science and philosophy replace Scripture as the source of what has truly happened in history.

In the end, the inner logic of accommodation will lead to a spiritualized panentheistic view of God's reality. The pillars of the Adventist faith will be discarded, and the Sanctuary doctrine will no longer open to view a complete system of truth, harmonious and complete.

### **Conclusions**

From the theological perspective, the issue before us is not to decide between a literal and a theological interpretation of Genesis 1, but between two rationally conflicting metanarratives that affect the entire scope of Adventist theology. One, of philosophical origin, understands God and ultimate reality as timeless/spiritual; another, of biblical origin, understands God and ultimate reality as historical. These two incompatible metanarratives attempt to explain the entire history of reality. In postmodern times, incompatible metanarratives are equivalent to incompatible metaphysics in classical and modern times. We cannot harmonize or rationally overcome conflicting metanarratives. Therefore, Adventist theology cannot harmonize biblical creation to deep time/evolutionary

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<sup>25</sup> For instance, Langdon Gilkey explains with clarity the necessity of extending the same hermeneutical principles involved in the acceptance of deep time/evolutionary history to the entirety of biblical contents. "Not only, for example, do the six days of creation, the historical fall in Eden, and the flood seem to us historically untrue, but even more the majority of divine deeds in the biblical history of the Hebrew people become what we choose to call symbols rather than plain old historical facts. To mention only a few: Abraham's unexpected child; the many divine visitations; the words and directions to the patriarchs; the plagues visited on the Egyptians; the pillar of fire; the parting of the seas; the verbal deliverance of covenantal law on Sinai; the strategic and logistic help in the conquest; the audible voice heard by the prophets; and so on—all these 'acts' vanish from the plain of historical reality" ("Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language," *JR* 41/3 [1961]: 196).

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history without changing its essence, doctrines, and theological system.<sup>26</sup> Adventist theology has to choose the biblical metanarrative on which its theology stands.

If because of sociological, cultural, or political reasons, some Adventists continue to believe that Adventist theology should reject Genesis 1 as theological history and accept deep time/evolutionary history, they should explain to the rest of the worldwide body of believers the systematic consequences of such a paradigmatic change *in theological detail*. For instance, they should make it clear that deep time/evolutionary history 1) does not change the order of theological causes assumed in Scripture; 2) does not change the biblical history of God's acts; 3) strongly supports the pillars of the Adventist faith; and 4) strengthens the historical understanding of redemption embedded in the Sanctuary doctrine and supports the Great Controversy metanarrative. For the reasons presented in this paper, however, such an attempt will only reveal with greater clarity the incompatibility of evolutionary history and Adventist theology.

If Adventist theology were to adopt deep time history as truth, the Great Controversy metanarrative on which the Adventist system of theology stands will be replaced, most probably by some combination of classical metaphysics and modern evolutionary patterns. The pillars of the Adventist church will be changed. The *sola-tota-prima Scriptura principle* will be replaced by the *authority of science*. In time, the methodological function of these ideas and the inner logic that they ground will require a reinterpretation of the entire content of Adventist theology and fundamental beliefs. For instance, God's act of redemption may become a continuation of His act of creation. Divine activities of creation and redemption will no longer be understood as historical but as spiritual, working either from outside or inside the flow of the spatiotemporal continuum of human history. In this context, Adventist doctrines such as the Sabbath, the law, the nature of sin, the sanctuary, redemption, and eschatology will no longer be speaking about historical realities, but will become metaphors pointing to the spiritual realities. God will be understood in a panentheistic fashion. Evil will be a part of God's design and method of creation. The cross will no longer be the historical cause of eternal salvation, but only a part in the process of historical evolution through which God is achieving its plan of creation. There will be no real historical heaven, but a spiritual timeless contemplation of God.

The various presentations discussed during three sessions of the *Faith and Science International Conference* reveal that Adventist theology needs to de-

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<sup>26</sup> In 1982, the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy "concluded that adherence to six consecutive twenty-four-hour creation days is non essential to belief in biblical inerrancy" [Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time: A Biblical and Scientific Perspective on the Creation-Date Controversy* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1994), 156]. In other words, "By refraining from dogmatic statements on the creation date, the ICBI hoped to keep the creation time scale from becoming an issue for inerrancy, doctrinal orthodoxy, evangelism, and missions" (Ibid. 157).

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velop in the areas of Fundamental and Systematic theologies. Studies in Fundamental theology, investigating issues such as the sources, principles, and methods of theology, will greatly help present and future generations of Adventists to understand and articulate the authority of the *sola-tota-prima Scriptura principle*. These studies are the necessary condition for engaging in constructive interdisciplinary dialogue between theological and scientific disciplines. Studies in Systematic theology will help present and future generations of Adventists to discover the inner logic of biblical thinking and its power of explanation. These studies are the necessary condition to assessing the compatibility that may exist between Adventist theology and scientific teachings.

During the Faith and Science International Conference no argument or evidence has been presented that may intellectually compel the Church to adopt the deep time/evolutionary version of the history of life on our planet. Consequently, Adventists need to reaffirm the fact that a theological understanding of Genesis 1 as describing the literal-historical-six-24-hour-consecutive-days period through which God created our planet is essential to the theological thinking of Scripture, and therefore, to the harmonious system of truth that gave rise to Adventism and its global mission.

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