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11-2009

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Recommended Citation

Steen, David, "My Confidence in Our" (2009). *Lake Union Herald*. 506.

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My Confidence in Our Creator God

A BIOLOGIST'S STORY

BY DAVID STEEN

Born into a medical missionary home, growing up in the scrublands of Ethiopia, getting my early education in one-room mission schools and enjoying much world travel before I became a teenager certainly were formative events in my life. Then higher education in biology, chemistry and philosophy at the feet of godly men and women led me to read widely and think carefully about where we came from, how we got here and where we are headed. After three-and-a-half decades of continued reading, exploration, searching for truth and mentoring my own students in their scientific careers, I am more certain than ever of my faith and confidence in my Creator God.

God claims to be the Creator, and He pronounced the creation as good—and even very good. I agree. My explorations into deep space, brought near by the wonderful invention of the Hubble space telescope, let me know how very small I am and how very big God is. And the thought that He made all those stars, planets and galaxies, knows how many there are, and calls them all by name simply takes my breath away (see Psalm 147:4).

My explorations into inner space and the intricacies of the cell using light microscopy, electron microscopy and molecular biology show me awe-inspiring evidence of God as a creator and designer of order and control. What is coming to light through the discoveries of modern biology is a picture of a cell that is astoundingly more complex and far more carefully regulated than anyone has ever imagined. And when you realize that we are just now beginning to figure out how cells really work, it is a truly humbling experience. And

with the flood of new discovery, the counterfeit notion that even the “simplest” cell could ever arise by chance is dimming rapidly. Truly, this is a wonderful time to be a biologist.

My challenge and awesome responsibility as a biology teacher is to rightly represent my Creator and help my students to build faith as together we explore modern biology. Teaching biology in a way that my students can honestly and fairly examine data from Inspiration and from nature is a sacred duty. Problems arise when the two revelations appear not to agree, as is sometimes the case. Holding what may appear to be two variant truths in tension while continuing to build faith in God is what we must do. What is clear from Paul's letter to the church in Rome is that faith is crucially important, and a study of creation should result in believing (see Romans 1).

I believe that the Word of God is true and holy, and is not to be taken lightly. Thus, I accept it at face value. When I

search the scriptures, it is an inescapable fact that the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath, is a holy day—a sacred day set apart by God as a memorial of His creation week. It honors and recognizes the One and only Creator God. He commands me not to work but rather to rest. It is an invitation to commune with my Maker. I thank God for this privilege. Each Sabbath I have the guilt-free opportunity to close the books, lay down the shovel, put the hammer and chisel away, close the cash register, hang out the “Closed” sign and quietly enter His sacred tabernacle of time. There, I find peace-filled rest and holy communion with the One who is altogether lovely, ineffably sublime, my unconditional Lover, my wonderful Counselor, my King of kings and my Lord of lords, Creator of all that is or ever will be.

I am thankful that God modeled the rhythm of life for me during the creation week, that it was affirmed during His life on earth and that this cycle will continue throughout eternity. Though I have carefully examined and understand the evidence that suggests that this Earth may be very old, and despite the ever-shifting propaganda perpetually preached by purveyors of origins by means of naturalistic evolution, I choose rather to believe the few simple words gouged in stone by the very finger of God: “Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. ... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the

Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Talk about clarity.

Setting this day aside to honor my Creator simply because He asks me to, taking His request at face value, has proven to be a huge blessing for me and my family. Psychologically, financially, spiritually, professionally, physiologically, socially—any way I slice it, observing the Sabbath is an added value that I enjoy simply for doing what my Creator asks me to do.

The Sabbath helps me to re-prioritize. It’s all about relationship. The depth and quality of relationships are far more important than any of the things that we tend to collect and spend so much time worrying about. Our stuff comes and goes in what I sometimes call the “stuff cycle.” First, we just gotta have the stuff. Then, before long, we gotta fix the stuff. Soon after that we spend time trying to figure out how to get rid of the stuff. In contrast, relationships give my life lasting meaning. My closest friendships provide insights into the depth and quality of the relationship that God wants to have with me. I am thinking just now of all the best godly friends that I have. Now, I try to imagine all of the best qualities of all of those friends rolled up into one. What I am imagining is wonderful. But I am certain that it can’t begin to describe the friendship God wants to have with you and me. God is a far better Friend. We can’t begin to describe the beauty and loveliness of God. Still, it doesn’t hurt to imagine.

David Steen is a professor of biology and chair of the biology department at Andrews University.

MY CREATOR, MY GOD

My God. My God. How excellent is Your name in all of Your creation. You have given me senses to perceive, a mind to think, Your Word to instruct, an amazing creation to discover and the mysteries of a still small voice for guidance. All of these God-given gifts open channels for communion with You. How thrilling and awesome is that thought to me! I am astonished that the God of all creation longs for communion with me and has given me multiple ways to do that.

You give me the loving warmth of human touch. Can that touch even begin to model Your yearnings for me? You speak tender love, clear instruction and unwavering accountability through Your written Word. Do I truly listen, understand and obey? You have given clear and abundant evidence of Your creative genius that made all that is. I am stunned by how good it is. Yet, how often do I listen to the lies, innuendos and insinuations of the great deceiver that deny Your creative power and Your love for me? You came in flesh among us, showing me how to live. Then You suffered, bled and died to pay the penalty for my sins. Can I begin to understand the magnitude of Your sacrifice and gift? Then You conquered death, rising again to prepare a place for me. Have I even begun preparing for the intergalactic trip? And I read about Your longings to bring me home. My God. My God!!! How I long to go home.

David Steen is a professor of biology and chair of the biology department at Andrews University.