2005

Creation and the Adventist Church (The Associate Editor's Desk)

Gerhard Pfandl

Biblical Research Institute

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd

Part of the Biblical Studies Commons, and the Practical Theology Commons

Recommended Citation

Pfandl, Gerhard (2005) "Creation and the Adventist Church (The Associate Editor's Desk)," Perspective Digest: Vol. 10 : Iss. 3 , Article 7.

Available at: http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol10/iss3/7

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Adventist Theological Society at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Perspective Digest by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.
Biblical writers often refer to phenomena of nature as a revelation of God’s majesty and greatness. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork,” says David in Psalm 19:1 (NKJV). How true! Consider the universe for a moment! On a clear night, one can see about 3,000 stars with the naked eye. Astronomers, however, tell us that our Milky Way galaxy has about two hundred thousand million stars, all in their appointed order circling along the orbit God assigned to them. Yet our galaxy is only one among several hundred thousand million galaxies in the universe that astronomers can locate with their strongest telescopes. And who knows how many more galaxies there are beyond that.

Distances in the universe boggle the mind: Apart from the Sun, the nearest star to our Earth, Alpha Centauri, is 5.22 trillion light-years away. (One light-year is the distance light travels in one year: about 5.9 trillion miles!) A spaceship traveling 100,000 miles per hour would require about 29,000 years to get there. Just think of it: our Milky Way is said to have a diameter of 100,000 light years; yet compared to some of the other galaxies in the universe, it is not part of the big league! The largest galaxy known thus far is Markarian, with a diameter of 1.3 million light-years. And here we are on planet Earth, a mere grain of sand in the vast expanse of the universe whose limits, if there are any, are beyond our comprehension. Indeed, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” (Ps. 8:4, NKJV).

Similar awe-inspiring facts would come to light if we used an electron microscope to study the 20,000 to 25,000 genes each individual possesses, or the millions of cells in the visual cortex of the brain. The plant world provides us with some amazing statistics. How many of us realize that *Gerhard Pfandl is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in Silver Spring, Maryland.*
image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was ‘very good,’ declaring the glory of God.” In this Fundamental Belief, it is clearly spelled out that we believe (a) that God created heaven and earth and all that is therein in six days, and (b) that the Sabbath is a continual reminder of the six-day creation.

Yet, this did not stop some scholars and scientists who see Creation extending over millions of years from advocating a modified form of theistic evolution. The General Conference, therefore, initiated a series of Faith and Science conferences from 2002 to 2004 in which the various issues surrounding the Creation/evolution controversy were openly discussed. The final report of the International Faith and Science Conference Organizing Committee in 2004 was submitted to the 2004 Autumn Council of the General Conference. It stated that though there is widespread affirmation of the church’s position on creation, “[W]e recognize that some among us interpret the biblical record in ways that lead to sharply different conclusions.”

The 2004 Annual Council, after careful discussion, produced a response to the report in which the members strongly endorsed the church’s historic, biblical position of belief in a literal, recent, six-day Creation. To close any possible loophole by which a day could mean something other than a 24-hour day, the council stated “that the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week.” The response also called upon all boards and teachers at our schools to uphold and advocate the church’s position on origins.

The importance of belief in a six-day Creation cannot be emphasized enough. Once this article of faith is compromised, the Sabbath and the historicity of the first 11 chapters of Genesis stand on shaky ground. And if we cannot be sure that the Fall of humanity and the Flood are historical events, how can we know that the plan of salvation and the Second Advent are? Solomon wrote, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5, NKJV). Wise counsel indeed!

REFERENCES


during the summer, full-grown trees may get as much as 40 gallons of water up to their branches and leaves every day—without electric pumps. The secret is that “when water evaporates from the leaves, it creates a constant compensating suction of water below. The suction continues through twigs, branches, and trunk down to the roots.” Our finite minds are simply unable to comprehend all the wonders of the created world.

Yet, in spite of overwhelming evidence for design in nature, i.e., evidence for a creative mind or a Creator, most people, at least in the “sophisticated” Western world, believe that everything came into existence by chance over billions of years. Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution, ridiculed at first, has truly captured the mind of modern humankind. Atheists and agnostics see evolution as the only viable option to explain the origin of life, and individuals who still believe in a supernatural being are frequently so overwhelmed by the “evidence” of the scientific establishment that they opt for theistic evolution. The General Conference in session, therefore, initiated a series of Faith and Science conferences from 2002 to 2004 in which the various issues surrounding the Creation/evolution controversy were openly discussed. The final report of the International Faith and Science Conference Organizing Committee in 2004 was submitted to the 2004 Autumn Council of the General Conference. It stated that though there is widespread affirmation of the church’s position on creation, “[W]e recognize that some among us interpret the biblical record in ways that lead to sharply different conclusions.”

The 2004 Annual Council, after careful discussion, produced a response to the report in which the members strongly endorsed the church’s historic, biblical position of belief in a literal, recent, six-day Creation. To close any possible loophole by which a day could mean something other than a 24-hour day, the council stated “that the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week.” The response also called upon all boards and teachers at our schools to uphold and advocate the church’s position on origins.

The importance of belief in a six-dayCreation cannot be emphasized enough. Once this article of faith is compromised, the Sabbath and the historicity of the first 11 chapters of Genesis stand on shaky ground. And if we cannot be sure that the Fall of humanity and the Flood are historical events, how can we know that the plan of salvation and the Second Advent are? Solomon wrote, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5, NKJV). Wise counsel indeed!

REFERENCES